

## **New & Revised Course Descriptions**

**2012-2013**

**Updated: October 29, 2012**

### **Pol 342 Politics, Resistance, and Grassroots Movements in Developing Countries (revised title from: Political Participation)**

Full course for one semester. This course examines the broad theoretical subject of political participation by using empirical evidence from party rallies. Why do parties conduct rallies? Why do voters participate in rallies? What is the relationship (if any) between voter turnout at rallies and elections? Will parties continue conducting rallies in the mass media era? We are going to examine these questions by studying classical theoretical works about political participation, and empirical works about rallies in authoritarian, semi-authoritarian, and democratic regimes in West and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the United States, and Latin America.

Prerequisite: One 200-level political science course. Conference.

### **Pol 347 Understanding Populism: Power, Politics, and Democratization (revised title from: Machine Politics in Comparative Perspective)**

Full course for one semester. What transformations and continuities can we find in comparing past and present forms of clientelism and vote buying? What does the existence of political machines imply for the quality of democracy? What are the prospects for the persistence or extinction of machine politics in the future? We will address these questions by studying various theoretical and historical explanations, as well as by careful examination of empirical evidence about the persistence and demise of machine politics in the early history of the U.S. and present day advanced European democracies. We will also examine in detail cases in Latin America: Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, and Peru, and beyond the region: India, Africa, and Japan. Prerequisite: One 200-level political science course. Conference.

### **Hist 398 Animals: An Intellectual History**

Full course for one semester. This class traces the history of the relation between man and animal, principally as it has emerged in Western Thought. It poses a series of questions. What does it mean to be an animal? How have our answers to this question figured in the development of our moral, political, and religious traditions? How have we made recourse to the notion of animality to make sense of what it means to be human? How have these issues played out in practices such as science, slaughter, sex, consumption, companionship, ritual, jurisprudence, and dressing your dog in silly sweaters? These are some of the questions broached by the burgeoning field of "animal studies," and we will address them by means of primary source readings, complemented by secondary readings and film. The narrative of the course proceeds as follows: from ancient ideas about animality, soul, and dominion; to their reception in medieval, early-modern, and enlightenment philosophy, theology, science, and law; to the Darwinian revolution; to post-Darwinian arguments about animal lives, laws, and loves; and finally to recent efforts to rewrite the history of Western thought through the prism of the human-animal boundary. Conference.

### **Ling 313 African American English**

Full course for one semester. The variety currently known as African American English (AAE) is perhaps the most studied by sociolinguists yet remains the least understood by the general U.S. public. This course presents the history, linguistic structure, and socio-cultural patterns of use of the English of African Americans in the United States. Prerequisite: Linguistics 212, or consent of the instructor. Conference.

### **Rel 131 To Live a Good Life: An Introduction to Comparative Religious Ethics**

Full course for one semester. What does it mean to be a good person and live a good life? This course approaches such questions comparatively as well as analytically. We will begin and end our inquiry with recent writings by intellectuals within the United States today, some working within and some working outside of colleges and universities. The path of the course will move from the present day, to classical Greek sources, to classical Chinese sources, to classical Jewish sources, and return to the present day. Lecture-conference.

### **Rel 174 Space, Time, and Religion**

Full course for one semester. This course will examine space, time, and religion in a comparative perspective. We will begin by examining experiences of space and time in modernity and postmodernity. Then, we will study specific religious/cultural groups and their ways of setting out sacred and ordinary space and time – our cases will include the modern Kodo of Indonesia, modern and ancient Mayans, and ancient and modern Jews. Finally, we will return to “our” senses of space and time, looking at added complexities and alternative visions. Lecture-conference.

### **Rel 331 Reading Rabbinic Texts: Miracles, Mysticism, Myth, and More**

Full course for one semester. This course examines the texts of classical late ancient Rabbinic Judaism. Our readings focus on elaborate and well-crafted literary units within forms of rabbinic expression known as Midrash and Talmud. The themes of these units will show some of the most creative and dynamic elements of rabbinic religiosity, including holy men, miracles, magic, mysticism, myth, martyrdom, and dream interpretation. Prerequisite: Religion 201. Conference.

**Rel 372 The Body, Religion, and Ethics**

Full course for one semester. This course addresses the ways that ethical theory and practice comes to terms with human embodiment. We will attend to human vulnerability, fragility, gender, and race. Through considering contemporary perspectives, influential twentieth century writings, and ancient thinkers from multiple cultures, we aim to gain a strong basis for both comparative and constructive thinking about the body, the psyche, and the ethical life. Conference.