Rutgers
School of Arts and Sciences

Signature Courses
Fall 2013
WAR: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES
01:920:273 and 01:988:270 (3 credits) Core: 21C, SCL
Professor Ethel Brooks, Women’s and Gender Studies, Sociology

Has the “war on terror” affected your life? In the absence of military conscription, do United States military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, or Guantanamo influence everyday life within our country? Are there connections between genocide and gang membership, or between war and particular modes of labor and production, or between military bases and sexual violence? What are the lived experiences, cultures, and historical contexts of war?

“War: Critical Perspectives” contrasts the study of war as an instrument of statecraft and a means of destruction dominant among international relations scholars with a modern, analytically rich, consideration of war as a mode of production, contestation, and transformation of nations in ways that are deeply racial and gendered. Rather than strategies and armaments, “War” considers displacement, migration, refugee experiences, nation building, changing labor regimes, production practices, and rights regimes.

This course is particularly recommended for students pursuing majors or minors in sociology, women’s and gender studies, criminal justice, geography, history, journalism and media studies, Middle Eastern studies, political science/international relations, psychology, and social justice. This course carries credit toward the major and minor in sociology and women’s and gender studies. It can be used to meet the SAS Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Social Analysis [SCL].
Do you worry about nuclear annihilation? Does the possibility of bioterrorism scare you? Are you dismayed by growing political violence and ongoing cultural genocides in places such as Darfur? Are you concerned about habitat destruction, catastrophic climate change, widespread famine, or newly drug-resistant diseases? Ever wonder what it means to be a species that can imagine its own demise, understand its role in the demise of another, or contemplate the end of all life?

“Extinction” takes a multiperspective, interdisciplinary approach to understanding extinction as a biological and cultural process, and probes the meaning and significance of such processes for humans around the globe in the 21st century.

This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in anthropology, various area studies, biological sciences, ecology, geography, history, linguistics, philosophy, political science and public policy, religion, sociology, and women’s and gender studies. This course carries credit toward the major and minor in anthropology. It can be used to meet the new SAS Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C], Natural Sciences [NS], and Social Analysis [SCL].
CONSERVATION
01:450:214 (4 credits) Core: 21C, SCL
Professor Richard Schroeder, Geography

What do we owe the future? The amount of land contained in conservation areas has more than tripled worldwide over the past three decades, now enclosing roughly 12% of the earth’s land surface. Despite this massive intervention, countless species of plants and animals are rapidly declining to the point of extinction, as are valuable habitats that support human populations.

Why do parks and protected areas so regularly fail in their mission to protect the environment? Are they just poorly designed, or do they suffer because of local resistance? Do we need more parks, or fewer? What else can be done? And, who should do it? Global organizations? Governments? Environmental organizations? Local people? Is stewardship a moral obligation? Is conservation necessary? Should we focus on human needs, or on nature’s? Which humans? Which nature? Can we afford not to do both?

“Conservation” considers the scientific, moral, political, and economic dimensions of the 21st century global challenge of balancing nature conservation and human needs, and the debates surrounding whether and how to do this.

This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in geography, anthropology, area studies, biological sciences, chemistry, ecology, economics, geological sciences, philosophy, political science, and public policy. It carries credit toward the major and minor in geography. It can be used to meet the new SAS Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Social Analysis [SCL].
ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE
01:556:143 (4 credits) Core: 21C, NS
Professor Alan Goldman, Chemistry, with Faculty from Marine Science, Earth and Planetary Sciences, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Physics, Planning and Public Policy/Economics, and Environmental Sciences

Wondering what the “energy” problem is all about? Here is your chance to learn what energy is, where it comes from, how we make it, how we use it, and how we will have to change the way we make it in the coming decades. “Energy and Climate Change” introduces nonscience majors to science and scientific method in the context of one of the most critical challenges facing us today: society’s need for energy and the resulting impact on climate and the environment. The course surveys climatology, physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, economics, and public policy as they relate to energy and sustainability considered from a global perspective.

This course is particularly recommended for students pursuing majors or minors in the social sciences and in areas of the humanities impacted by energy and climate, and it is of interest to students in engineering and the natural sciences. It can be used to meet the new SAS Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Natural Sciences [NS].
Why do humans get sick? Why are diabetes and obesity on the rise? Why have cancer and cardiovascular diseases become so prevalent? Is there a mismatch between the environments in which we evolved and environments in which we now live? Why did cholera, measles, mumps, whooping cough, and malaria become epidemic diseases? Why has evolution failed to make us immune to disease?

Based in cutting-edge genetic and evolutionary biology research conducted at Rutgers, “Genetics, Evolution, and Human Health” explores what science can tell us about what it means to be human and why humans get sick. How can genetics be used and misused? What social, political, environmental, and medical changes would be required to improve human health in the 21st century?

This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in anthropology, criminal justice, ecology, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, public health, public policy, and sociology and it is of interest to students in the biological sciences and chemistry. It can be used to meet the new SAS Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Natural Sciences [NS].
EATING RIGHT: THE ETHICS OF FOOD CHOICES AND FOOD POLICY
01:730:252 (4 credits) Core: 21C, AHo, WCd
Professor Andy Egan, Philosophy

Thought much about food lately?

Eating can be mundane or sublime, but either way it is an occasion for moral decision making within cultures that have a range of traditions and structures surrounding human nourishment. What are the social and environmental consequences of various eating habits? What ethical obligations, if any, do we have toward nonhuman animals? Do the answers to these questions generate moral obligations to adopt (or to abandon) particular eating habits? How are our individual and societal decisions about what to eat expressive of aesthetic, moral, cultural, and religious values?

What is the moral (and policy) significance of particular cultural culinary traditions? How does membership in cultural groups with specific culinary traditions relate to individual well-being? What choices should we as individuals make and what actions should we as a society take to influence how our food is grown, processed, marketed, sold, and consumed?

This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in the various area studies, anthropology, business, history, life sciences, philosophy, political science, public policy, religion, social justice, and sociology. The course carries credit toward the major or minor in philosophy. It can be used to meet the new SAS Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C], Arts and Humanities [AHo], and Writing and Communication [WCd].
School of Arts and Sciences Signature Courses are foundational courses covering engaging topics of grand intellectual sweep and enduring importance. They are designed and taught by our renowned scholars and scientists who are not only recognized for their specialized research but are also eloquent and demanding award-winning teachers. Each course is made up of a combination of capacious lectures by faculty and small discussion sections led by graduate students from our nationally ranked graduate programs. They establish a common basis for intellectual exchange and define us as the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) community of students and scholars working together.

The Signature Courses are specially designed for the innovative new Core Curriculum, which consists of three groups of learning goals that form the core of a modern liberal arts and sciences education at a leading public research university:

- 21st Century Challenges [21C]
- Areas of Inquiry
  - Natural Sciences [NS]
  - Social [SCL] and Historical [HST] Analysis
  - Arts and Humanities [AH]
- Cognitive Skills and Processes
  - Writing and Communication [WC]
  - Quantitative and Formal Reasoning [Q]
  - Information Technology and Research [ITR]

All SAS Signature Courses meet goals in at least two of these groups, and some meet goals in all three.

The Core opens the door to new worlds of intellectual adventure, advanced study in particular majors, and success in a wide variety of postgraduate programs and careers. Developing a range of critical thinking skills, students build their capacity to face the public and private challenges of local and global citizenship and develop the habit of questioning the known and exploring the unknown. The Core Curriculum and our Signature Courses prompt students to examine both what they want to be and who they want to be, by discovering their values, talents, and passions. Learn more about the Core at sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/requirements/core.

View our videos at sas.rutgers.edu/signature.