Signature Courses
Fall 2017
GLOBAL EAST ASIA

01:098:250 (4 credits) Core: 21C, HST or SCL
Professor Paul Schalow, Asian Languages and Cultures

It touches your life every day, yet how much do you really know about East Asia—home to three of today’s most powerful nations and over a fifth of the world’s population?

China, Korea, and Japan are major economic, political, and cultural players in an increasingly global 21st century. At the same time, the push for globalization within East Asia is being met with an equally powerful resurgence of nationalism and regionalism. How do media empires, international sporting events, and regional flows of Japanese and Korean pop culture shape relations among East Asia’s people? How are the rise of China and the U.S. strategy to focus more diplomatic and military attention to Asia creating political divisions in the region even as it integrates economically? Can complex questions of Taiwan’s and Hong Kong’s autonomy, Korean reunification, and conflicting territorial claims be resolved peacefully, or could a geopolitical crisis lead the region into war in the 21st century?

This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in anthropology, area studies, Asian languages, business, economics, geography, history, journalism and media studies, political science, public policy, religion, sociology, and women’s and gender studies. It carries credit toward the major and minor in Asian languages and cultures. Global East Asia can be used to meet the Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Historical Analysis [HST] or Social Analysis [SCL].
THE COMING APOCALYPSE

01:358:205 (4 credits) Core: 21C, AHp
Professor Richard Miller, English

It’s boom time for the End Times.

Millennialists state with confidence that the world’s final hour is approaching: the signs are everywhere, for those who know how to see them. Scientists warn that our planet is warming dangerously: in your lifetime, you will see oceans rise; hurricanes and tornados of unprecedented intensity will become the norm; earthquakes, tsunamis, floods will sweep the earth. For those unmoved by such threats, there are other apocalypses from which to choose: a global plague set off either by super viruses or bioterrorism; population explosion followed by famine and a primeval struggle for basic resources; a dirty bomb; global economic collapse; colonization by extraterrestrials; the earth’s collision with a massive comet; the spread of zombies.

Every ending also heralds a new beginning, though; every apocalypse gives way to a post-apocalypse. In this large-format, discussion-driven course, we will spend the semester learning about how narrative works. By focusing on a range of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic novels, short stories, movies, and television shows, this course aims to provide students with the opportunity to consider the significance of the human predilection for telling stories about the end of humanity.

Students from all schools and disciplines are welcome to sign up for this course. The course carries credit toward the major and minor in English. The Coming Apocalypse can be used to meet the Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Arts and Humanities [AHp].
COLOR-LINES AND BORDERLANDS

01:595:202 (4 credits) Core: 21C, AHo
Professor Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Latino and Caribbean Studies, Comparative Literature

Today it is easier than perhaps at any other point in human history for peoples to know about each other and connect with each other. Yet we live in a time of violent divides and confrontations. What is at the root of these divides? And what resources are there to overcome the destructive effect that some of them have?

This class will examine the power of “color-lines” in producing divisions among peoples and individuals as well as explore the possibilities to cross borders of separation and create new forms of human connection in the 21st century. We will explore “color-lines” and “borderlands” through the work of a wide range of intellectuals, artists, and social activists and explore theories of blackness, Chicana feminism, Native American hip-hop, Afro-Asian connections, and artistic work related to the Black Lives Matters movement, among others.

This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in Africana studies, American studies, anthropology, comparative literature, English, Latino and Caribbean studies, political science, and sociology among other fields in the humanities and social sciences. This course carries credit toward the major and minor in Latino and Caribbean studies, and it is appropriate for students across the humanities and sciences, including life and physical sciences, seeking to fulfill Core requirements. Color-Lines and Borderlands can be used to meet the Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Arts and Humanities [AHo].
Do you worry about nuclear annihilation? Does the possibility of bio-terrorism 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 pursuing 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. Extinction can be used to meet the Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C], Natural Sciences [NS], and Social Analysis [SCL].
SEA CHANGE: THE RISE AND FALL OF SEA LEVEL AND THE JERSEY SHORE

01:460:110 (3 credits) Core: 21C, NS
Professor Kenneth Miller, Earth and Planetary Sciences

What do woolly mammoths and the Jersey Shore have in common? How long until your dorm room has an ocean view?

Sea Change: The Rise and Fall of Sea Level and the Jersey Shore. Why is sea level rising? Is it our fault? Can we stop it? Should we? What are the economic, ethical, and political realities of dealing with rising sea level?

Viewing modern sea-level and climate change through a 100-million-year geological perspective, in this course you will reconstruct sea-level changes using different geological methods and try to predict the future, the impact on the Jersey Shore, and our options to fight back.

Designed not just for the environmentally conscious but also for skeptics and those simply curious about where we have been and where we are going, this course employs basic science concepts and helps nonspecialists build the scientific literacy needed to confront the economic, ethical, and political challenges of sea change in the 21st century. Leave your preconceived notions behind!

This course is particularly recommended for students pursuing majors or minors in the social sciences and in areas of the humanities impacted by changing sea levels, such as anthropology, art history, business, classics, economics, European studies, history, human ecology, journalism and media studies, Latino and Hispanic Caribbean studies, political science, public policy, and sociology. It is of interest to students in the physical and biological sciences. Sea Change can be used to meet the Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Natural Sciences [NS].

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RELIGIONS NOW: 21ST CENTURY CONTROVERSIES

01:840:105 (4 credits) Core: 21C, AHo
Professors Tia Kolbaba and Joseph Williams, Religion

Everywhere you look, religions—and religious controversies—are shaping our world. A powerful source of beliefs, moral claims, and cultural practices, religions profoundly influence our contemporary world.

For some, religion is held up as the key solution to various social ills such as poverty and racial tension. For others, religion is a major part of the problem. Religion generates critiques of inequality and capitalism while others invoke it to celebrate the free market and individual wealth. And, religious concerns shape views on policy issues as diverse as same-sex marriage, climate change, and government-sponsored health care. From challenges to evolution to debates on stem-cell research, religions juxtapose faith and modern science. Religions likewise factor prominently in various military conflicts around the globe and in the long-running debates over the proper relationship between religion and the state.

Religions Now focuses on how religions, both as belief systems and socio-cultural systems, are interwoven in today’s challenges. How are religions, themselves, changing in response to contemporary events and developments? How can the academic study of religions help us assess and make sense of religion’s role in 21st century societies?

This course is particularly recommended for students who intend to pursue majors or minors in American studies, anthropology, business, communication, criminal justice, economics, education, environmental policy or science, health sciences, history, Middle Eastern studies, philosophy, political science, religion, and sociology. It is also appropriate for life sciences and physical science majors seeking Core or elective credit. It carries credit toward the major or minor in religion and can be used to fulfill the Core Curriculum goals in 21st Century Challenges [21C] and Arts and Humanities [AHo].
Signature Courses and the Core Curriculum

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 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]

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/core.

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