CORE 1010 Seminar offerings
Fall 2015

Department of Rhetoric and Composition
Academy of Liberal Arts
The American University in Cairo
Course Titles

1. Creative Expressions of Resistance
2. How do we know what's true?
3. Imagining Exile
4. Of Heroes and Demons
5. Filming Difference: Perceptions of Nations, Borders, Race and Identity
7. Advertology
8. Exploring the Big Questions: The Human Quest
9. Who Am I?
10. Imagined Worlds: Utopias and Dystopias
11. Vision Machines: The Story of Inventions and Everyday Life
12. High and Low: Culture and Context
“Creative Expressions of Resistance”

What is the role of the artist in the face of oppression? How can artistic expression be itself a form of resistance? In this course we will reflect on creative responses to oppression and explore various ways individuals and societies have expressed resistance to power. Artistic expressions such as poetry, music, visual art, and comics will be studied in conjunction with their political and cultural groundings.

Main Texts

Books:

Films:

Plus many poems, music, short stories, visual art, articles, and political cartoons.

“How Do We Know What’s True?”

how much of our beliefs about what’s true rely on gut feelings rather than from a critical evaluation of facts? What affects our judgment? How reliable are human perceptions and memories? How far can science help us determine what is more likely to be true? How conscious is much of our decision-making? How important is taking multiple perspectives before drawing conclusions?

Many of us have accepted that the path to truth feels a lot like this…

Or perhaps worse, this…
Readings and Themes

Elizabeth Sherman “Science and Antiscience in America.”
“So what if science doesn’t inform the decisions we make as a country, a people, a world? The answer is that people suffer.”

David Grann “Trial by Fire”
How did so many well-intentioned people get it so wrong?

Answers of Cognitive Science and Psychology
Daniel Schacter. “Building Memories: Encoding and Retrieving the Present and the Past.”
Susan Engel. “Then and Now: Creating a Self Through the Past.”
Sarah Trenholm and Arthur Jensen. “Interpretive Competence.”
Roger Schank. “Understanding Other People’s Stories.”
Stanley Milgram: “Some Conditions on Obedience to Authority.”
Malcolm Gladwell, Blink.

Another case
Doubt, the film (or the play by John Patrick).
Do you have friends or family who have lived abroad? Do you think in your lifetime you might live in another country? What is that process like? How does that decision affect individuals, families, and cultures? How much should a person integrate into the new society? And where does a person call home?

In today’s world, nearly a quarter of a billion people have begun this journey and crossed borders to new lands. Join with us as we explore and imagine these experiences in exile...
Main Texts

With global news and the movement of people around the world always changing, this course uses a variety of current news articles, popular films, documentaries, as well as a selection of academic articles.
Filming Difference: Perceptions of Nations, Borders, Race and Identity
Through **comparative reading** of a variety of genres of films from different eras and countries, students will develop skills to turn their in-depth analyses into **interpretations** and explore theoretical issues related to identity.

Within this structure, the course is designed to aid them in the development of a **capstone project** that builds upon their understanding how film media can illuminate the human experience and ameliorate their knowledge of self and “other.”

**Selected Readings**

*Introduction to Documentary Film* (Bill Nichols, 2nd Edition) E-Book

*Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity* (Viola Shafik) E-Book

*Alfred Hitchcock: Frame by Frame The Auteur*

*The Four Hundred Blows* (Francois Truffaut) 1959

*M* (Fritz Lang) 1931

*Metropolis* (Fritz Lang) 1927

*The Asphalt Jungle* (John Huston) 1950

*The Man with the Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertoz) 1929
Of Heroes and Demons

Heroism is... the individual’s attempt to rise to the challenges and overcome the insurmountable and be remembered for having tried.

Heroism can be learned, encouraged, modeled, and achieved.

What are the qualities that set humans apart and express their aspirations to ‘reach the stars’? How are values and beliefs in humanity told both through heroic tales and those who tragically fall? This course looks at folktales, myths, films, and textual explorations of the mythical, literary and historical to formulate concepts of the heroic and demonic.
Readings

- The Tragicall History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus
- The Hero with a Thousand Faces
- The Lucifer Effect
- Of Gods and Men
A Beautiful Mind: 21st Century Learning

“Let knowledge grow from more to more,. But more of reverence in us dwell.”

Lord Alfred Tennyson (Poet Laureate)

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” Alvin Toffler (writer and futurist)
Students will:

Contextualize their educational experiences within a constellation of emerging ideas about learning that promote motivation, creativity, synthesis, and discipline.

Examine the relationship between education and success.

See the possibilities of their university career.

Readings mainly from:
Advertising and Neuroscience

- What are the modalities used for neuroimaging?
- How is neuroscience related to advertising?
- What is Neuromarketing and how does it predict consumer behavior?

Advertising Concepts and Ethics

- How the concept is defined?
- What is the purpose of using such a concept?
- What are the techniques used in each kind?
- What are the possible benefits of this concept as well as the risks and pitfalls associated with its use?
Who am I?

A practical and theoretical exploration of different approaches to human consciousness and the self in the sciences, psychology, philosophy, the arts, and religion.
The Human Quest: Exploring the “Big Questions”

Weeks 1-4: Who am I?
   How do we maintain our identities in an age of globalization?

Weeks 5-9: Where do we come from?
   Why have some societies come to dominate others?

Weeks 10-12: What does it mean to be human?
   What do the arts tell us about the human condition?

Weeks 12-14: Where are we going?
   What are some of the moral and ethical issues facing humankind?

Readings

Poems by Leslie Marmon Silko, Naomi Shihab Nye, Scott Momaday, and an Aztec poet.

Imagined Worlds: Utopias and Dystopias

From Plato’s *Republic*, to Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*, literature is full of examples of imagined utopias that promise harmony and happiness for their citizens... but as the rules multiply to ensure their success, these imagined utopias often turn into their very opposite: dystopias...

- What are utopias and dystopias?
- Why do we desire to establish a paradise on earth?
- What can go wrong with this?
- Where is the line between the dream and the nightmare?
- How can the enchanted world help us to deal with the real world?
MODULE 1: Utopias: “Paradise Gained”
“something’s wrong with the world today...”
Happy Worlds: “Sweet dreams are made of these”
Propaganda: Barbarians at the gate!
Gated communities:
Good fences make good neighbors

MODULE 2: Dystopias “Paradise Lost”
1984: “One has to compel people to freedom” (Rousseau)
Cyborgs and Cyberpunk: Anime and Manga
The Fantastic Imagination
Vision Machines

What impact have inventions had on human life?
What moral questions do they raise?
How is our knowledge of ourselves and others mediated by technology?
How have inventions changed our bodies and our relationship with the environment?
How have writing, knowledge and communication been altered by the digital age?
How have inventions intended to improve and facilitate life, instead complicated them?
Module 1: The body: electricity and the age of invention.

Module 2: The text: inventions and everyday life

Module 3: The image: cameras, death and power.

Kenwood Electric Chef from RetroCake
What do we associate with the “refined” tastes and sensibilities of high culture?

Om Kulthoum songs, opera and “classic” black and white films…?

They are everything that the street, slums, vulgar music, and “popular” culture are not.

**This course will explore the two worlds that these “high” and “low” forms of culture inhabit.**

By looking at a series of concepts that are commonly held in opposition to one another, this course will enable students to think critically about common categories and realize the value of exploring grey areas “in-between.”
Texts

Students will examine at a diverse set of texts, songs, films, television programs, comics, and visit a number of locations (the Cairo opera house, downtown, the Egyptian museum and the mall) to nourish a critical eye of what they see and do in their everyday life.
Clockwise from top left:
Nahdet Masr. Statue.
Mohamed Mokhtar.
Boushret Kheir. Music video still.
Al-Kaboos Abu Hafiza. TV program.
Ahmed Adawiyya. Album cover.
Mohamed Mounir. Shababeek. Album cover.
Watch out for Zouzou. Film poster.
Korombo. TV program.
Abla Fahita. Puppet.
Al-Lemby. Film poster.