

AQUINAS SCHOLARS
Honors Seminars
Spring 2014

Date: October 21, 2013

Note: All seminars are two credits.

Spring 2014

IDSC 480-01 (CRN 22642) – Death & Resurrection

Spring 2014 – T 1:30-3:10 PM Location: MHC 211
Faculty: Gloria Frost (Philosophy) and Steve McMichael (Theology)

The seminar will focus on the topics of death and resurrection of the human being in theological and philosophical perspectives. The course will deal with such topics as the relation between soul and body; the resurrected body and the immortality of the soul; redemptive suffering; theodicy; the existence of evil; the themes of eschatology (last judgment, purgatory, heaven and hell). We will also look at these themes in interfaith perspective, i.e., how Jews, Christians, and Muslims view death and resurrection. The primary focus will be how these themes appear in medieval literature but we will also look at how contemporary theologians and philosophers treat these themes.

IDSC 480-03 (CRN 22674) – Thinking About Music

Spring 2014 – T 9:55-11:35 Location: ASC LL07 (Dance Room)
Faculty: Greg Robinson-Riegler (Psychology) and Suzanne Schons (Music)

Have you ever wondered why you can't get a tune out of your head? Why your aesthetic response to a popular song on the radio can be so different from a friend's? Does music really "make you smarter," as is sometimes implied by educational product sales pitches? Why is music such a powerful force in advertising? Music, an art form that pervades everyday life, is full of complex and fascinating psychological phenomena. Dr. Gregory Robinson-Riegler and Dr. Suzanne Schons will join together to lead students in an exploration of these questions and many more, including how musical ability develops, how musical creativity emerges, how we perceive and pay attention to music, and how music and memory are connected.

IDSC 480-05 (CRN 21340) – World Music & Culture

Spring 2014 – M 3:25-5 PM Location: BEC 111
Faculty: Chris Kachian (Music) and Bob Werner (Geography)

This course will analyze how the histories and cultures of various societies in the world use music in their cultural contexts or as rituals, and contrast it with the Western perspective of music as a cultural product, or as entertainment.

In this course, you will learn how to connect music with the culture that produces it. What is the function and context of a culture's music? On what occasions do people play it? What religion or ideology or history does their music express? Do the materials they use in their instruments reflect the physical surroundings in which they live? Who participates in the music? Are gender roles different? Is the music accompanied by other activities like dance, dress, or ceremony?

For example, consider the music of the Andes. It is traditionally played by all village men and older boys on instruments made of local materials, including armadillo shells, cane, wood, bone, and animal skin. It is much more important that all men and boys play, rather than playing the "right" notes. It is a communal activity that bonds people together, so is played at carnivals, weddings, and funerals. Women dance modestly to the side, in regalia woven from two of the four camelid animals who live there (llamas or alpacas) in colors that represent their local village. The music can be sad, lamenting the loss of land and culture at the hands of the conquistadors; it often expresses their heartfelt bonds to Pachamama; or can simply pine for a girl away at college.

The teachers will model this inquiry in the first six weeks of the course, relating music and culture in five case studies: Native American plains Indians, Jamaica, West Africa, the Hmong, and the Asmat of

western New Guinea. During this time, you will chose a culture and plan your own such synthesis through a prospectus discussed in and evaluated by the class. Thereafter, you will individually investigate the music and culture you chose, culminating in a paper you present to the class. This presentation should teach your peers, and include clips of representative music, and use of graphics to show the music's context.

IDSC 480-02 (CRN 22645) – The End of Growth? Ecology and the Economy

Spring 2014 – M 1:35-3:10 PM Location: AQU 301

Faculty: Adam Kay (Biology) and Jim Vincent (Economics)

“Questioning (economic) growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists, or revolutionaries. But question it we must. The idea of a non-growing economy may be an anathema to an economist. But the idea of a continually growing economy is an anathema to an ecologist.” Tim Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth*

In an age of rising energy costs, a changing climate, land use degradation, and an ever growing population, the importance of ecological constraints on human activities are becoming increasingly obvious. However, conventional economics is based on the assumption that the environment is merely a subset of the economy, resources can be infinitely substituted for one another, and human population growth and consumption can continue indefinitely. Growth is held out as the elixir for our social and economic ills such as unemployment, poverty, and the staggering government and private debt. But if environmental constraints have brought us to the end of growth, what will our future hold? How will the end of growth affect our social structures? How will it affect our lives? What should we do to prepare our systems and ourselves for the end of growth?

This seminar will focus on incorporating ecological constraints into economic theory. We will discuss foundational topics in ecology and economics in order to understand the basic conflicts in the assumptions of the two fields. We will also discuss the feasibility of an alternative economic paradigm that incorporates basic ecological principles such as resource depletion, negative density dependence, and waste-related negative feedbacks. Our goal will be to provide students with knowledge to have productive discussions across the traditional boundary between the life sciences and economics. We will also spend considerable time discussing the feasibility and real-world consequences of an ecological transition to a steady state economy. Conversations should be wide ranging, dynamic, and fundamentally important to our societal and personal futures.

IDSC 480-06 (CRN 21067) – Foreign Experience

Spring 2014 – R 5:15-6:45 PM Location: AQU 301

Faculty: Lon Otto (English) and Amy Muse (English)

This seminar—which students take both before they depart for study abroad and upon their return—gives Aquinas Scholars who study abroad the opportunity to 1) examine ways of approaching, understanding, and articulating the impact of foreign experience; 2) practice the techniques of observation, exploration, and self-reflection exemplified in the materials studied; and 3) communicate the particular discoveries that resulted from their experience abroad.

Please note: You must begin your work in the seminar before going abroad, and you must reserve the Thursday 5:15–6:45 class times both before and after your study abroad semester or year. The Spring 2014 meetings of the Foreign Experience Seminar will be determined in the near future. However, you don't *register* for The Foreign Experience seminar until you register for other courses to be taken the semester you *return* to St. Thomas. *Just show up to the first meeting.* Questions? Contact Lon Otto l9otto@stthomas.edu or Amy Muse ammuse@stthomas.edu.

IDSC 480-09 (CRN 21724) – Feeding the World

Spring 2014 – T 3:40-5:15 PM Location: TBD

Faculty: Jonathan Seltzer (Marketing) and Chester Wilson (Biology)

The combination of a growing human population and rising mean consumption rates (standards of living) are increasing demands upon our ability to produce and distribute food, fuel, and fiber across the globe.

This course examines botanical, biological, business and social aspects of this situation. We will consider the benefits, costs, and consequences of past successes at meeting human needs (e. g., the Green Revolution), current proposals for improving our ability to meet these needs (e. g., genetic modification of crops), and related policy discussions (e. g., relative investment in agricultural production of food, fuel, and fiber; constraints upon continued population growth; health of individuals and the role of individual choice). Cases will focus on examples drawn from a variety of cultures and economic systems.