Honors Tutorials – Spring 2016

Based on the Oxford style of teaching, “Honors Tutorials” pair a small group of honors students (typically two to five) with a distinguished MU faculty member to discuss a topic, author, book/s, or issue very intensely over the course of a semester. Meetings take place in the faculty member’s office (or other, non-classroom setting).

Please find a description of each tutorial below.

If you would like to participate in one of these tutorials, please email a one-page statement to the tutorial professor about why you’d like to enroll in the tutorial, addressing the following questions:

- Why does a tutorial method of learning appeal to you?
- What do you think you’ll gain from the experience?
- And why are you interested in the particular topic?
- Make sure to indicate your major/s as well as your overall GPA.

*Tutorial Applications are due Friday, November 20th, 2015*

Performing History  
(C. Black)  
Section 1  
BlackC@missouri.edu

This course will introduce students to a range of dramatic texts that offer artistic interpretations of historic events, in order to consider these and related questions. Their final project will require them to research a historical event, using primary sources, and render it in a dramatic form. In addition to writing a performance text based on actual events, students will include a brief process paper explaining/justifying their choices for the method of ‘reporting’ chosen and why it is appropriate depending on the affect they wish to produce, and a bibliography of historical sources used. The sample texts we will read include a range of choices/modes of dramatizing history and the length of the text is TBA, depending on format chosen, but probably something that could be performed/read in an hour or so. I will also include selected primary documents related to the topics dramatized, TBA. (for example, the Salem witchcraft trials, the Scotsboro trials, the Scopes trial, etc.). These documents will be available to students via Blackboard or ERES. The film Lincoln is available thru Amazon online. At this point, Lincoln, although a screenplay, is included, partially because it is written by one of
America's foremost playwrights. Social justice is a recurring theme throughout course content, as the historical events dramatized deal with racism, xenophobia, homophobia, domestic violence, political oppression, and war.

Issues of Social Justice:  
Contemporary and Historical  
(J. Bowers)  
Section 2  
bowersjd@missouri.edu

This tutorial aims to explore the concept of social justice as it plays out in the national discourse of the United States, helping students to examine how the U.S. must grapple with its legacies as it moves forward. The case studies of the U.S. judicial and prison systems and our racial history will be examined in some depth. Students will grapple with the complex dynamics of decision-making, reparations for past actions, racial social constructs, and the overall levels of commitment that the state and the people make towards a developing society that is built on the principles and practices of pursuing social just ice, as well as understanding the deep historical legacy that underpins our present-day situation. And on our campus, such conversations are needed, now more than ever.

Dystopian Societies  
(J. Bullion)  
Section 3  
bullionj@missouri.edu

In this course, we will read and discuss four classic dystopias written in modern times. If Sir Thomas More’s Utopia was a fabled perfect place, these writers’ dystopias were perfect examples of highly imperfect and indeed disastrous societies. We will read them as works of literature, with an eye to appreciating their literary qualities, but we will also study as critiques of present times and as predictions of grim futures.

Climate Change  
(W. Folk)  
Section 4  
folki@missouri.edu

This tutorial focuses upon climate change. We will study (through readings, discussions, films and lectures by invited speakers) the profound changes occurring to our planet and biosphere, and means by which harmful changes might be mitigated. Students in the tutorial will contribute to the concurrent Science and Public Policy Course (GH2230) by helping lead discussions pertinent to their area of study.
Articulating Resistance:  
Exploring Robust Voices in American Public Discourse  
(R. Fox)  
Section 5  
Foxr@missouri.edu

Since the days of Thomas Paine, Emma Goldman, and Martin Luther King, dissent and resistance have served as healthy, nurturing staples for our democracy. Regardless of where these writers and speakers fall on the political continuum, each develops her or his own unique and powerful “voice” or “persona”-how they look, how they sound, and how they write. The individuals studied will be drawn from the sometimes-overlapping fields of politics and government, culture, education, arts, and history. Due to our rapidly changing cultural, political, and technological landscapes, this tutorial is highly relevant for helping us things out. We will study a variety of powerful voices, especially writers, as we explore a few representative texts of each person, whether they be articles, excerpts from books, editorials, essays, speeches, performances, or videos. Our primary focus will be analysis of each text in question, as we also try to situate the writer and text within the contexts of time, place, race, socio-economic class, and gender.

Speaking of Culture  
(G. Fried)  
Section 6  
friedg@missouri.edu

Students in this tutorial will help administer Speaking of Culture, a new monthly lecture series on the humanities sponsored by the Honors College. The series features dynamic MU professors and staff speaking on a variety of fascinating topics, from “Hugh Hefner to Baudelaire’s Paris. Responsibilities will vary, but will certainly include supporting the promotion (e.g. writing press releases, maintaining social media), interviewing and introducing the speakers, and on-site production of the series. Please note that this tutorial will require occasional Sunday afternoon commitments.

How Reproductive Technology has Changed Society  
(R. Geisert)  
Section 7  
geisertr@missouri.edu

Provide students with in-depth information on the development of reproductive technology controlling the reproductive process in humans and animals and how this technology and therapies have changed societal and moral viewpoints over the past 70 years.
Photographic Representation of Race, Ethnicity, Identity, and Culture
(B. Hudson)
Section 8
hudsonb@missouri.edu

We will look deeply into photographic images from around the world. In doing so, we will consider how those images represent race, ethnicity, identity, and culture. Our focus primarily will be the still image, rather than the moving one, found in photojournalism and documentary photography. Those approaches, however, often overlap with fine art photography, and we will look at the imagistic borderlands, too. We will study photography from a practical viewpoint as well as a theoretical one. This tutorial will provide an overview for those who are becoming image-makers and those who simply want to learn to see more critically. We won’t make pictures, but we will meditate how pictures are made.

Being Human in the Age of Genome
(S. Humfeld)
Section 9
humfelds@missouri.edu

Our knowledge of the genetic basis of human characteristics and disease has increased exponentially in recent years. This course will explore some of these new findings and how they might impact our culture in the years to come. We will base most of our discussions on reading from two books: The Epigenetics Revolution by Nessa Carey and The Language of Life by Francis Collins. We will begin by discussing the importance of the data generated 13 years ago in the Human Genome Project, the hope that it might help cure many genetic disorders, and the surprising patterns that scientists are still discerning. Our discussion of the new field of epigenetics will help students understand why mapping an organism’s genetic code is not enough to determine how it develops or acts and, more importantly, how nurture combines with nature to give humans their specific traits. In the second portion of the class, students will examine potential cures for human ailments that are based on cutting edge biotechnology and genomic tools. We will discuss the potential of ‘personalized medicine.’ In the final portion of the class, we will examine the intersection of genomics and culture: how do we make personal decisions after arming ourselves with personal genetic data? What does genetics tell us about our evolutionary history, and “disorders” that might actually be adaptations in extreme environments? How do we understand ‘race’ in the context of genetics?
Ritual and Form in the Music of Stravinsky
(N. Minturn)
Section 10
minturnn@missouri.edu

Musical form in two works of Stravinsky, Le Sacre du Printemps (1913) and Les Noces (1923), departs markedly from traditional musical form such what one might encounter in, say, Mozart’s music. Stravinsky’s music exhibits disjunctions—moments where motives, tempi, and orchestration change simultaneously—that are far more dramatic, crisp, and thorough than anything we might find in the traditional classical repertoire. In an article from 1962 (“Stravinsky: Progress of a Method”), Edward T. Cone grappled with what he described as “the apparent discontinuities that so often interrupt the musical flow.” As part of his rescue of Stravinsky from the maw of discontinuity, Cone proposed a new way of conceiving of form in Stravinsky. Stravinsky himself would appear to affirm formal discontinuity. Robert Craft reports Stravinsky saying that Les Noces “might be compared to one of those scenes in U! Jesse in which the reader seems to be overhearing scraps of conversation without the connecting thread of discourse.” Discontinuous and unconnected bits of information can challenge the listener to find smooth continuity in the unfolding drama. How, then, can we understand this formal musical collage?

Writing about Running or Crossfit or...
(P. Okker)
Section 11
okkerp@missouri.edu

This Honors Tutorial focuses on students writing about a sport in which they are currently engaged. This course is open to athletes of any ability and any sport (running, CrossFit, football, equestrian, etc., etc.). During the semester, students will complete a series of shorter essays about their training and experiences as athletes, and as a class, we’ll discuss the connections between academics and athletics. The course will culminate in a book of essays, created by the class. When submitting applications for this tutorial, students should indicate their current and past involvement in the particular sport(s) and provide a brief description about why they are interested in writing about these experiences.

Zombies and Social Justice
(L. Roth)
Section 12
rothl@missouri.edu

Increasingly, the living dead are shuffling across the landscape of America in films, video games, comic books, and “zombified” literary classics. Few monsters have captured the national imagination as pervasively as these curious and contagious
creatures. Starting with the assumption that zombies are rich cultural texts, this tutorial explores the meaning of this immensely popular - albeit often maligned - cultural phenomenon. We will apply a variety of theories to examine the origins of the zombie legend, the paradox of how zombies can be alternately horrifying and hilarious, and how zombies function as "empty vessels," embodying societal anxiety about almost everything - from slavery, communism, and capitalism to disease, bio-terrorism, and scientific experimentation gone amok. If Annalise Newitz’s claim is true - that "nothing is more dangerous than a monster whose story is ignored" - then this tutorial offers valuable intellectual weaponry.