

# Interdisciplinary Studies Program (ISP) - Spring 2009

## Theme B: Perspectives on the Extraordinary

### Course Descriptions

<p><b>B1 Risk, Fear, Decision</b> Monday 9:40 AM – 12:10 PM &amp; 5:30 – 8:00 PM Profs. Goodman &amp; Scott Law, Soc</p>	<p>Risks are often the spices of life. They can inspire us. But they can also do us harm. When and how do individuals and institutions decide which risks to pursue and which to avoid? What compels us to take a risk in the face of our fears? How might we be transformed after a risk has been taken?</p>
<p><b>B2 Ethical &amp; Moral Dilemmas in Criminal Justice</b>  Monday 12:30 – 3:00 PM Prof. Stein Crj, Psy</p>	<p>Can a hit man be a good dad? Would you steal to save your spouse's life? Should cops do "whatever is necessary" to catch a bad guy? Do criminals really act "without conscience"? This course will examine the continuum of moral behavior as it operates at both the individual level and in larger systems of justice.</p>
<p><b>B3 Saint or Sinner</b>  Monday 12:30 – 3:00 PM Profs. Green &amp; Crowder Dra, His, Spe</p>	<p>Certain individuals inspire strong and contradictory reactions. The person that one group loves might be the same person that another group loves to hate. We will look at examples of these extraordinary figures in history, drama, and literature in order to understand why they generated controversy in their own lifetimes and how later generations reinterpreted their legacies.</p>
<p><b>B4 Extraordinary Journeys: Exploring Inner &amp; Outer Life</b> Monday 5:30 – 8:00 PM Profs. Thomas &amp; Rothschild Eng, Lit, Mus</p>	<p>Music and literature can transport our very being into realms where different possibilities come alive. We can experience the meditational ecstasy of an Indian Raga, become a Lilliputian or even visit the dark side of the moon. In this course, we will explore the inner and outer life of the mind through an examination of texts and music by those who have dared to go where no one has gone before.</p>
<p><b>B5 Extraordinary Legal Eagles</b>  Monday 8:00 – 10:30 PM Prof. Johnson Law</p>	<p>From the famous to the infamous— Thurgood Marshall, Louis Brandeis, Sandra Day O'Connor, William Kuntzler, Johnny Cochran, Roy Cohn—the American legal system has been challenged and changed in every generation by extraordinary lawyers and judges.. This course will analyze the ways in which our legal system reflects their influence.</p>
<p><b>B6 Life on the Verge</b>  Tuesday 9:40 AM – 12:10 PM &amp; 5:30 – 8:00 PM Profs. Sherman &amp; Green Dra, His, Spe</p>	<p>When do our understandings and our lives seem on the verge of great changes? What circumstances lead individuals and societies to reconsider everything? In this course we will use the perspectives of literature, drama, and history to explore these questions and suggest answers.</p>
<p><b>B7 Who Shall Judge? The Banning of Ideas</b>  Tuesday 12:30 – 3:00 PM Profs. Blitz &amp; Sarna Eng, Law, Lit</p>	<p>A community tries to ban the wearing of "saggy" pants; school districts and politicians work to keep certain books off the library shelves; legislators propose laws to prohibit some uses and abuses of the American flag; textbook publishers require authors to remove 'undesirable' portrayals of people, social groups, even disabilities. Who decides to impose these bans? How and why are some bans successful and others not? Can the banning of ideas be reconciled with our ideas about democracy and freedom?</p>
<p><b>B8 Extraordinary Gods: Heroes &amp; Villains of Myth</b>  Tuesday 8:00 – 10:30 PM Prof. Rothschild Eng, Lit</p>	<p>From Sigmund Freud's problems with his mother, to Stan Lee's <i>The Avengers</i> and Kevin Sorbo's muscled morality tales, the myths &amp; legends of other cultures have managed to find their way into our popular culture. But what exactly are they, and what might we learn about ourselves and these cultures by studying them in both their original forms &amp; their modern manifestations?</p>

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<p><b>B9 Sex, Class and Repression: Themes and Perspectives on an Extraordinary History</b></p> <p>Wednesday 9:40 AM – 12:10 PM &amp; 5:30 – 8:00 PM          Profs. Haw, Sarna, Sherman, Struhl          Eng, His, Law, Lit, Phi</p>	<p>For two centuries, the world has been dominated by two contradictory impulses: the desire for social order and the urge for personal freedom. Most often, these impulses have become manifest in a rigid class system and the desire to break through this system through romantic and sexual contact. How do we navigate social laws and customs in the search for romantic and sexual fulfillment? What happens when we prioritize one over the other, when we choose social status over love, or love over family ties? This class will consider these and other issues through the lens of some of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century's greatest writers.</p>
<p><b>B10 Sex, Race, Music</b></p> <p>Wednesday 12:30 – 3:00 PM          Profs. Aman &amp; Stein          Crj, Dra, Psy, Spe</p>	<p>Why sing the blues? What's the drum solo playing behind a stripper's bump and grind? Is rap music racial rebellion or just another capitalist scheme? This course will explore the ways that music gives expression to unspoken-or even unconscious-thoughts and feelings about race and sex and, conversely, how music may end up narrowly dictating the way that we think and feel about those hot button issues.</p>
<p><b>B11 Psychopaths in the Neighborhood</b></p> <p>Wednesday 8:00 – 10:30 PM          Prof. Kimora          Crj</p>	<p>Is there such a thing as a "psychopath," and if so, what characteristics define this individual? Could there be a psychopath living next door? Would he or she be recognizable as such? How does the idea of psychopathy affect the criminal justice system? Is it the responsibility of society to help, or to punish, the psychopath? This course will explore these issues through criminal justice cases, popular media and literature, and current events.</p>
<p><b>B12 Slaves, Villains, &amp; Heroes: Reading History Through Science Fiction</b></p> <p>Thursday 9:40 AM – 12:10 PM &amp; 5:30 – 8:00 PM          Profs. Paulino &amp; McKible          Eng, Eth, His, Lit</p>	<p>Science fiction can make the ordinary world seem extraordinary, and it can just as easily make extraordinary events seem like the most normal things in the world. What happens when the conventions of science fiction are brought to bear on our understanding of the past? In this course, we will explore the intersections of historical record and science fiction in novels, graphic novels, and films in order to examine how both ordinary and extraordinary people deal with some of the crises and opportunities of the past.</p>
<p><b>B13 Literature of Space, Time, &amp; Infinity</b></p> <p>Thursday 12:30 – 3:00 PM          Prof. Blitz          Eng, Lit</p>	<p>How big, and how old, is the universe? Is time travel possible? How long does eternity last? How big is infinity? And how do such questions influence the ways in which we live our lives, do our work, create our families, or see ourselves in relation to the 'everything else' around us? Through a variety of literature, film, and thought experiments, we will explore these ideas.</p>
<p><b>B14 The Drama of Sexual Addiction</b></p> <p>Thursday 8:00 – 10:30 PM          Profs. Kimora &amp; Landowne          Crj, Dra, Spe</p>	<p>This course will explore the cognitive distortions involved in a behavior that devastates many people. We will examine and analyze some of the risky responses associated with sexual addiction. The negative consequences of this addiction are explored in terms of criminal justice as well as through the plays <i>Baal</i> by Bertolt Brecht and <i>Streecar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams.</p>
<p><b>B15 Internships - by arrangement</b>          Prof. Goodman          Soc</p>	<p>96 hours per semester, including both <b>on-site</b> and regularly scheduled weekly seminar meetings with ISP advisor. Students should expect written assignments and a semester project. [Cross-listed with A8]</p>