FSSY (FSSY)

FSSY 110. The Greek Hero Since Antiquity. 4 Units.
The Greek Hero and Heroic Culture since Antiquity: the Classical Tradition in Literature and the Arts is the specific topic of this seminar. The influence of ancient Greece on subsequent Western civilization has been profound. This course focuses on the impact of Greek mythology on the literature and arts of five later periods: the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Baroque, the Revolutionary Age (1750-1848), and the Modern period. While there are many aspects of Greek mythology that we might investigate, the story of the Trojan War will serve as a central, unifying myth for exploration. The concept of the hero evolved considerably between the time of Homer and the time of Euripides; yet, the Homeric heroes continued to appear in literature and the arts from ancient times onward. How has the concept of the hero inherited from Homer changed in literature and art since antiquity? Does the word "hero" still have value? Are there relevant and meaningful applications of this very specific Greek word outside literature and art in our time? These are just some of the questions we shall consider in our study of the Greek Hero and Heroic Culture since Antiquity in literature and the arts.

FSSY 112. Shakespeare - Still a Hit. 4 Units.
What is the enduring appeal of the works of William Shakespeare? Not only are the plays themselves popular today; there are also many film versions and adaptations, some recent and some dating back to the early days of cinema. In this First Seminar, students will read approximately six Shakespeare plays, including at least one history, comedy, and tragedy. In addition, they will view at least one film version or adaptation of each play. With the help of Kelvin Smith Library, the films will be made available on streaming video with password-protected access, enabling students to view them when convenient and as often as necessary. Since this class (like all First Seminars) is writing-intensive, students will complete four formal essays as well as frequent in-class writing activities. There will also be in-class readings from the plays, discussions of the various film adaptations, and one or two short oral presentations or activities.

FSSY 113. Movies and Meaning. 4 Units.
This course explores methods for interpreting films. To interpret a film is a more aggressive and creative activity than is simply viewing one. How do critics and researchers of cinema "make meaning"? What strategies do they use? How does one mount a film interpretation that is both novel and persuasive? The course will emphasize close reading of films as, each week, we screen a film and together discuss what meanings we can infer from it. Also each week, we'll read an essay that offers an interpretation of the film. We'll analyze the reading in light of our sense of the film under consideration. Students will write short essays, approximately one every two weeks, in which they analyze the rhetorical and interpretive strategies of a given film analysis. Students will share their essays with the class, and these readings will serve as bases for class discussions. Final writing projects will consist of student interpretations of a film. At least twice during the semester, the class will, in substitution for the weekly required evening screening, attend a film off campus—either at the Cleveland Cinematheque or at the Cleveland Museum of Art. The course emphasizes writing instruction and discussion in a seminar format. There will be required evening screenings each week.

FSSY 119. Art, Music and The Museum. 4 Units.
This four credit-hour course provides an introduction to art, music, and the museum, particularly the intersections between and among these three subject areas. Formal training in these disciplines is not required. The course will be characterized by intense yet open-ended intellectual inquiry and guided by readings and the experience of artworks from a wide range of styles and cultures. A strong emphasis will be placed on academic writing. The goals are to enhance basic intellectual skills including critical reading, thoughtful analysis, and written and oral communication (including PowerPoint presentation); to introduce basic information literacy skills; to encourage a global and multidisciplinary perspective on the learning process; to facilitate faculty-student interactions; and, in the most general sense, to provide a supportive intellectual experience for first-year students at Case.

FSSY 131. Death and Representation. 4 Units.
This four credit-hour course will explore the ways death has been represented in visual culture, from ancient times to the contemporary epoch. Can death, something abstract and never directly experienced, ever be represented? Throughout the ages, how have artists, patrons, and viewers influenced the imagery of death, and how, in turn, have they been influenced by it? The course includes multiple visits to the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Natural History Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

FSSY 137. Cultural Representations: Ideologies, Images, and the World. 4 Units.
Narrative forms, such as myths, folktales, novels, films, and the media make significant contributions to the varied ways that people understand and imagine the spatial structures of the world. Specifically, this course will help you a) to develop an understanding of how narratives and the media have an impact on the ways we come to terms with geopolitical regions and how geopolitical regions are invented and imagined; b) to point out and address geopolitical assumptions, over-generalizations and to engage concepts such as the 'East' and 'West', etc. critically; c) to analyze travel narratives, films, and current media representations of certain areas of the world and situate your observations into a wider set of theoretical problems; and d) to develop a set of reading skills that will help you to decipher texts (both primary and secondary) so that you can formulate productive questions and articulate your intellectual discoveries in a compelling way.

FSSY 141. "Renaissance" Men and Women: Polymaths from Late Antiquity to Leonardo Da Vinci. 4 Units.
The term "Renaissance man" is often used to refer to a polymath, someone whose expertise spans numerous and diverse subject areas. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), perhaps the most famous polymath of all, was an artist, scientist, engineer, musician, and indeed a man who lived during the Renaissance. Yet already in late antiquity and the Middle Ages many of the great thinkers were polymaths, and they were not all men. This course examines the intellectual contributions of Leonardo da Vinci and two earlier polymaths: Saint Augustine (390-430CE), a north African bishop, philosopher, and theologian who became a Doctor of the Church; and Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), a German nun who was a composer, philosopher, herbalist, and mystic visionary. Through discussion of writings by these three figures and of secondary literature about them, the course explores their intellectual diversity and the cultural forces that shaped them. It also examines what it meant to be a polymath at various points in history, why polymaths have become associated with the Renaissance and with men specifically, and why there are relatively few polymaths today.
FSSY 146. Doc Talk: Language & Medicine. 4 Units.
This course explores the role of language in constructing, experiencing, treating, and understanding the states we call "health" and "illness." We will ask questions such as: Why do we fight cancer but mend broken bones? When (and how) do some experiences (e.g., sadness, hunger) become symptoms of disease? Why do doctors ask where it hurts rather than when or how? Is there a difference between saying that a patient is "med compliant" and that she has "taken her prescription medicines"? To answer these questions (and to ask dozens more), we will read primary research on medical language, visit several of Cleveland's nationally renowned cultural institutions, and discuss the symbolic and social meanings of a variety of medical terms, images, objects, and patterns of communication.

FSSY 147. Art and Physics. 4 Units.
The twentieth century's advances in physics, from relativity to quantum mechanics and string theory, have offered distinctly new ways of looking at ourselves and the world around us. It is no surprise that they have equally impacted different branches of the arts, revealing new possibilities for what to represent and how to represent it. This course intends to explore the relationship between physics and art by examining two of those signal advances - Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle - and considering how they inflect artistic models of expression such as painting (Cubism), music (atonal composition), and literature (postmodern metafiction). Our goal is not to trace specific trains of influence (although they do exist) so much as to consider how parallel developments in the sciences and the arts emerge contemporaneously, and on that basis to reconstruct the conversation between them. We will try to ask what each of these discursive models has to say to the others, and how the apparently unbridgeable gap between science and art might find some points of common contact.

FSSY 153. What is Mind?. 4 Units.
This seminar introduces students to the systematic study of the human mind, with a primary focus on general topics as the nature of perception, consciousness, intentionality, mental causation, and free will. In addition, we will take up the more specific topics of the transition from anatomically modern to behaviorally modern human beings, as well as debates over whether mind is identical with the brain, or if mind is an outcome of brains, body, and environment.

FSSY 154. The Imagination Project. 4 Units.
For the first years of our schooling, we are taught to play make-believe. Then, we are taught to understand facts. Whatever happened to the imagination? What is it? What are the theories that help to explain it? And what is its place at a research university? In this class, we will read, talk, think, and write about the purposes and scope of the human imagination, which is often understood as the symbolic realm of images and ideas that exists as part of our mental life. We will look at how the imagination has been understood by various thinkers and artists, and we will consider how the physical world interacts with the imagination in stories, music, film, and scientific ideas. Even though we may think that imagination means "something from nothing," it is much more complicated and collaborative than that, as we will see in our examination of larger imaginative projects such as the Sistine Chapel, Star Wars, Legos, and Disney World. We will examine the role of the imagination in as many disciplines as possible, including physics, sports, fantasy, politics, and the media. As we interrogate these sources, we will learn the basic tenets of argument and research that will help you in your upcoming SAGES courses. Are there imaginative practices that can help us succeed here at Case? How can we turn our own imaginations into reality?

FSSY 157. Pursuits of Happiness. 4 Units.
What is Happiness? And why do Americans consider its pursuit a self-evident, inalienable right? To what extent is happiness a component of the American Dream? How have writers used stories to illustrate the possibilities and limits of this ideal? This course examines the various ways that thinkers have defined happiness, using both theoretical frameworks and literary examples. Students will carefully analyze the validity and utility of these models, selecting elements to construct their own personal philosophies of happiness.

FSSY 158. Ecology in American Literature and Film. 4 Units.
How can American literature and film help us understand environmental issues? This course will explore that question by investigating several of the foundational texts of the ecology movement in the United States. Many American authors and directors are sensitive to the natural beauty of the American continent and, therefore, emotionally and spiritually affected by environmental destruction. Scientific and political questions will be important for our inquiries, but we will emphasize the cultural and spiritual aspects of environmental thinking. While science strives to understand nature and provides data documenting environmental conditions, and politics should propose pragmatic solutions, the will to act on scientific facts or political ideas requires emotional and ethical engagement, which literature and film particularly stress. The expressive content and moral messages in literary memoirs and films complement scientific work and politics by allowing us to reflect on an obligation to preserve the natural environment. Consequently, this class will consider environmental awareness and the human connection to the natural world by examining writers' experiences. Our exploration will also consider dystopian stories that imagine where environmental disasters might lead. Possible texts include Walden, Desert Solitaire, A Sand County Almanac, and movies like Jeremiah Johnson, Into the Wild, and Wall-E.

FSSY 15B. Jazz Attitudes. 4 Units.
Despised by the church, revered by New Orleans society, Jazz was the bad boy music of the early 20th century. But by WWII it was the most popular music style in the US. Since then, jazz has become a minority taste, embraced by the academy, but viewed with an intimidated indifference by the general public. How did this happen? How have views of this odd marriage of European and African musical styles changed through the years? Can jazz regain relevancy? Should jazz musicians even care about relevancy? And if not, what does the future hold for them and their music? In this course, we will examine the history of the development of jazz, what makes the music so important in American culture, and some of the reasons why—despite this importance—few people listen to it anymore. Students need not have prior familiarity with jazz, only a willingness to listen to, and read about, the music.