

Feit Interdisciplinary Seminars Fall 2019

Art of Words

MWH

Wednesdays 11:10-2:05

Zoe Sheehan-Saldana, Fine and Performing Arts

Cheryl Smith, English

When we want to demonstrate our knowledge, tell someone how we feel, or make a point, we usually speak, write, or type. In one way or another, we use our words. But what other ways can we communicate? This course will push the boundaries of what we commonly think of as “language” as we explore how both text and image can work to shape meaning and tell stories.

Most of us have been exposed to the interplay of word and image from an early age; we may have read graphic novels or richly illustrated books, for example. Yet, we don’t give much thought to how different symbolic systems can be used and combined to shift a message or tell a very different story. Students will study examples of the art of words—instances where the textual and visual come together—and will also experiment with crafting meaning across different forms, including graphic representations and artwork, computer code, and various modes of storytelling. Along the way, students will consider how writing and image making are symbolic forms; how the creative acts of writing and image making intersect and play off each other; how meaning is translated in the acts of creating and consuming art and writing; and how memory, metaphor, text, image, object, and voice work, both independently and together, to tell a story. No previous artistic experience is necessary, just a willingness to explore, innovate, take risks, ask questions, and create.

Spike Lee vs. Alfred Hitchcock

URH

Thursdays 6:05-9:05

Arthur Lewin, Black and Latino Studies

Stephen Whitty, Film Critic

While many compare Spike Lee to Woody Allen, a more accurate comparison is perhaps to Alfred Hitchcock. These two original and prolific filmmakers are rooted in different genres – Hitchcock in suspense and Lee in social commentary – but they are in many ways similar. Though each received studio funding, neither was ever tied down to one particular studio. They were Hollywood “outsiders,” Hitchcock British and Lee African American. Spike Lee’s penchant for playing parts in many of his films echoes Hitchcock’s obligatory cameos. Both began directing in their twenties and both made a film a year for many years. And while they have each been revered as cinema icons, neither won the Academy Award. Both heavily sprinkled subliminal cues throughout their films. And each man's body of work can actually serve as an extended historical document. The course will be co-taught by an expert on the representation of Black Americans in the mass media and by a renowned film critic who has twice served as chair of the New York Circle of Film Critics.

The Nature of Science and Religion

ETRH

Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:45

Carla Bellamy, Anthropology

Rebecca Spokony, Natural Sciences (Biology)

In this course we will investigate a series of guiding questions that are all implicit in the course title. We will consider the ways in which nature is conceptualized in several religious traditions and we will contrast these conceptualizations with the ways in which modern science conceptualizes and relates to the natural world. We will then use our findings about nature in religious and scientific discourses to ask a series of related questions about the natures of religion and science as forms of discovery and knowledge creation and the potential flaws and limits