

April 23, 2003

To: St. Olaf College Faculty
Fr: CEPC
Re: New Courses

At the May 1 Faculty Meeting, CEPC will move the approval of the following new courses.

ID 230: Communicating Science and Mathematics (0.25 credit)

Catalog Description:

Oral communication is an essential part of science and mathematics. Students work closely with a faculty member to learn and practice important aspects of communicating technical information to both expert and non-expert audiences. Enrollment by permission of instructor. Prerequisite: Previous participation in summer communication workshop.

ORC

Rationale:

For the last few years, FNSM faculty have organized a weekly lunchtime meeting with summer research students to discuss relevant aspects of scientific and mathematical communication. This “communication workshop” is part of our 10-week summer research program. Major topics covered include designing effective visuals; preparing oral and poster presentations; understanding scientific literature and the review process. Students have multiple opportunities to present their work and to receive feedback. Thus, students majoring in FNSM departments and programs learn about distinctive aspects of communication within their primary disciplinary communities. Student interest is high, and FNSM faculty expect to offer the workshop each summer.

The proposed course helps formalize students' experience with oral communication by offering a follow-up course that carries ORC credit. During the academic year following their summer research, students register for ID 230, and work with a faculty advisor to prepare a presentation for a local, regional, or national meeting.

Asian Studies 270: Visual Culture of Modern China

Catalog Description:

This course highlights major visual arts movements within China over the last century, from the end of the imperial era to current times. We look at a variety of issues: class and gender; China in the world art market; Chinese art past and present; and a variety of “isms” now seen as defining Chinese art. A major theme is to define “visual culture” in all its nuances.

Rationale:

The course has two objectives. The first is to study basic art historical methodologies and apply them to critical assessment of a wide variety of works in many different media. The second is to study modern China through the material culture that has been produced. Although the course focuses on modern China, the class will also include a basic survey of earlier Chinese artistic conventions, together with a grounding in Chinese religious traditions, geography, history, and language, as necessary. The course is not intended as a definitive treatment of 20th-century Chinese art forms, but rather as an exploration of themes that will make further contact with China more understandable. Students will also have the opportunity to improve their writing ability and oral presentation skills through in-class and online work.

The course fits with both Art and Asian Studies curricula—it offers a perspective on modern Asia not now found in either department. Although Asian Studies now offers a Chinese film course, it is placed within the context of literature rather than aesthetic and visual culture. Therefore, students of the proposed course will learn to look for threads related not only to literary themes but also to aspects of visual culture, found in both two- and three-dimensional works. Students will base their analysis on how imagery of the 20th century, regardless of medium, builds on or chooses to break from traditional images. With regard to Art offerings, the proposed course offers students their first opportunity to see in depth the world of Chinese art over the last 100 years.

Art History 250: The Arts of the African Diaspora**Catalog Description:**

This course surveys the diverse arts produced by people of African descent in the Americas (U.S. and the Caribbean), from the colonial period to the present. An examination of selected West and Central African cultural practices and art forms serves as a basis for understanding creative transformations in the African Diaspora. Important issues to be addressed include art and resistance, survivals and transformations, and ideas about race and the construction of identity.

ALS-A, MCS-D

Rationale:

The course's primary objective is to study basic art historical methodologies and apply them to critical assessment of a wide variety of works in many different media (painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, textiles, ceramics, baskets, body decoration, installations, and performance). Because the class focuses on understanding art works in their social and historical contexts, it will also survey the many religious and cultural traditions and the history of the African Diaspora. Assignments are structured to help students develop their creative abilities and improve their writing skills.

At present the Department of Art and Art History has no course dedicated to the art of African-Americans. While a select few African-American artists are occasionally mentioned in other courses, their work is largely marginalized in our curriculum. The proposed course will complement the existing course on African art. Given its focus on techniques and on examining art in historical context, the new course will also complement many studio courses.