

25 September 2002

To: St. Olaf College Faculty  
Fr: CEPC  
Re: New Course Proposals

At the October 3 Faculty Meeting CEPC will move the approval of the following courses:

**Media Studies 240: World Cinema**

Catalog description:

This course seeks to familiarize students with cinemas from outside the domain of Hollywood and Western Europe by exploring questions of representation, production, distribution, and reception within a global economy. Salient in this context are themes of migration and modernity, of borders and bounded spaces, of global cities and the reconfiguration of centers and peripheries. We will also assess how cultural products circulate in a global market, focusing on challenges to exhibit and promote international discussion of unconventional and non-Western films.

Rationale:

This course addresses a distinct need in the Media Studies and General Education curricula. At present the College offers a small selection of film-related courses that frame the subject primarily from national or literary perspectives. The College does not, for the moment, offer a basic film studies course that addresses various aspects of film history and theory, or film as a cultural product that circulates in an increasingly global sphere of influence. The proposed World Cinema course frames the subject in these latter terms, and in so doing provides a valuable opportunity for the increasing number of Media Studies concentrators and other students with a strong interest in film.

N.B. This course will be taught by Dr. Angelica Fenner, visiting Assistant Professor of Media Studies, using the .17 FTE allocated to Media Studies. No existing course will be eliminated or taught less often because of this offering.

**German 149: German Cinema**

Catalog description:

A survey of German films from *Caligari* (1919) to *Beyond Silence* (1997) in the context of twentieth-century German history, this course offers students a chance

(1) to become familiar with the classics of German cinema and some of its major directors; (2) to develop analytical and critical skills in “reading” films both as aesthetic artifacts and as historical documents; and (3) to heighten awareness of the increasing social and political importance of mass media for our understanding of the past.

ALS-A, HWC

Rationale:

German 149 was initially offered as an Interim course, and is now being proposed as a semester course. (Moving this course to spring semester is necessitated by staffing considerations in the German Department.) While two related courses on German film were offered during the 1990s in the Paracollege, the German Department has not had a film course in its regular curriculum.

Given the significant role that film has played and continues to play in German history, we want to offer to the general student population (including also students in Media Studies and in German) an introduction to German film both as art and as history, a course that focuses on the history of German film and the filming of German history. Given the increasing importance of mass media in contemporary society, German 149 offers students an opportunity to develop analytical and critical skills in reading films as texts and thus to develop visual literacy.

**Asian Studies 310: Buddhism Through Text and Image**

Catalog description:

This course examines Buddhist images and their relationship to textual sources. Beginning with a close reading of Buddhist texts in translation, students study how Buddhist images and architecture derive from textual sources, and often move beyond them. The course considers the interrelatedness of text and image in Buddhist practice. Attention is also paid to Western notions of Buddhism and the development of Buddhist art studies in the West.

ALS-A, MCS-G

Rationale:

The course takes a distinctive approach to the religious traditions of Asia. Utilizing recent translations of seminal Buddhist texts, the course investigates how Buddhist traditions move from scriptural to representational. This will be the first course offered at St Olaf College that will take an in-depth look at the religious arts of Asia, thereby bringing depth to both the Asian Studies and Art and Art History course offerings.

The aim of the course is two-fold. One aim is to afford students the opportunity to closely read and discuss Buddhist texts, focusing on those elements that come into play in representational form, but also recognizing and considering why certain elements do not. Within this context, issues related to patronage and popularity of various Buddhist sects will also be considered.

The second goal is to help students more clearly understand how Buddhist art and architecture served as well as reflected the desires of the various societies in which it was produced. With this aim in mind, issues related to the fundamental goals of both Buddhist text and image production will be pursued.

### **History 134: Trail of Tears**

Catalog description:

This course examines the origin and lasting effects of the Indian Removals of the 1830s. Topics covered include the culture and history of the Native peoples of the Eastern woodlands, U.S. - Indian Policy, frontier life in the early U.S.- Republic, and the life and personal involvement of Andrew Jackson. Students read from a wide variety of secondary literature and primary source material, and have the opportunity to conduct their own research.

WRI, MCS-D

Rationale:

This first-year course introduces students to the history and culture of Native American peoples in the era of Removal. Given its subject matter, the course will help the College meet its larger goal of providing a diverse curriculum, and exposes first-year students to the subject of Native American history. The course might thus serve as a springboard for students with a deeper interest in Native American history---at least two other, more advanced, courses pertaining to Native Americans are offered in the History and Sociology/Anthropology departments. Secondary education majors may also find this course beneficial, given current secondary education guidelines in Minnesota and neighboring states requiring instruction in Native American history.

### **Biology 383: Evolutionary Biology**

Catalog description:

The synthetic theory of evolution, the single most important unifying paradigm in biology, is considered in historical perspective, including the contributions of Darwin, early genetics, and geology. Modern theory is examined in depth, including recent contributions of molecular biology, genomics, population genetics, systematics, ecology, and paleontology. Recent challenges to classic

theory are considered, including that of the macroevolutionists. Lectures and class discussions, with extensive literature review.

Prerequisites: Biology 125, 126, 233, 261.

#### Rationale:

The biological theory of evolution is the single most important unifying concept in biology, and cuts across all specialized areas in biology. An understanding of it from historical perspective, as well as the basic tenets of current synthetic theory, and the recent macroevolutionist challenge, are central to any understanding of modern biological concepts. Increasingly, it is becoming necessary for our majors, going on to graduate and professional school to be conversant in this important area, and this includes the new expanding fields of molecular and cell biology, medical genetics and evolutionary medicine. New methods of quantitative analysis, including complex modeling, morphometric analysis, database mining, along with new technology-based analysis methods from precise methods of fossil dating, to DNA sequencing allowing genetic distance estimates, have resulted in a coming together of classical and modern tools, allowing for evolutionary analysis in previously unimaginable ways. For some time we have wanted to put a full semester course in evolution into our curriculum, and we now have sufficient qualified faculty to offer this course on a yearly basis, and without addition of faculty or compromising our current curricular offerings and responsibilities.

#### **Art/Art History 117: Foundation Digital Media**

##### Catalog description:

This course provides the technical and conceptual foundations for use of digital media for artistic expression. It focuses on the interaction of the conceptual and the technical through readings, lecture, screenings, and assignments that address fundamental issues of digital arts, such as digital reproduction, representation, intermedia, and interface. Students acquire basic technical skills and apply them in the development of digital projects that span four realms: raster graphics, vector graphics, 3D graphics, and web page construction.

ALS-A

##### Rationale:

Digital and time-based media are a major part of the ever-evolving visual art aesthetic in the world today. The Department of Art and Art History has been at the forefront of animation, digital, video, and time-based media for the past 35 years. This course fulfills the Art Department's commitment to keeping on the edge of new developments in media and content for all our faculty and students.

The opportunity to begin this media at a foundational Level I course will prepare students for greater interaction with other traditional art materials/methods and provide stronger preparation for advanced work in the upper level classes.

Course objectives include the following:

Technical competence in digital tools on the Mac, including: operating system, Adobe PhotoShop (raster graphics), Illustrator (vector graphics), and HTML web page programming. The goal is to give students a thorough introduction to these tools and to illuminate the important technical concepts that recur throughout all digital forms: resolution, bit depth, color spaces, compression, etc. A secondary goal is to prepare students for advanced art courses in the curriculum: Motion Graphics, Computer-Based Imagery, and Video Art Production.

Conceptual understanding of basic issues underlying digital art forms including: ramifications of digital reproduction, limitations of digital representation, effect of convergence and fluidity on digital forms, how interface changes relationship between the work and viewer. These issues will be approached in the creation of projects in the course, by readings, discussion, and by viewing and evaluating important historical digital art works.