MALS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS  SUMMER 2015

☐ MALS 127: Independent Study & ☐ MALS 137: Thesis Research, are offered every term. Enrollment is determined based upon completion of prerequisites, and committee approval. Please see MALS website or MALS Administrator for further details.

MALS 120: Summer Symposium, “The Theory & Practice of Doing the Right Thing”  
(Credit/No Credit Degree Requirement for all Concentrations)  
Moderator: Don Pease

MALS 132: Writing Methodologies: Strategies for Creative Writers  
(Research Methods)  
Instructor: Anna Minardi – French & Italian

This is a discussion based course focused on the preparation and discipline writers need to develop as they progress in their chosen genres. The text selected as the basis for class conversations offers a discussion of various writing concerns that all writers face as they consider such questions as audience, goal, use of language, placement of oneself. The text will be supplemented by short student pieces that may reflect the issues raised by Todd and Kidder in the book.

The course goal is create a sense of familiarity with the writing process for students who are starting to write. For students with more experience, the goal is to articulate the questions related to the areas they want to develop. The exchange between beginning and more advanced writers will be valuable in creating an awareness of the questions that propel writers at all levels and in all genres.

The class will be enhanced by visits from MALS writing professors and creative writing thesis students.

MALS 226: Screenwriting  
(Creative Writing)  
Instructor: Bill Phillips

One should emerge from this course with 1) the first draft of a professional-quality feature length screenplay and 2) the knowledge of how to do subsequent revisions. No previous creative writing experience is necessary.

Whether your idea is "commercial," "artistic," or "personal" will not matter in terms of the focus of this course, but we will be concerned with your producing something that will hold up to professional scrutiny. We will emphasize the following: 1) a comprehensible story with a beginning, middle and end 2) a sympathetic protagonist 3) a worthy antagonist 4) an appropriate "love-interest" (if any), 5) how to keep your story a "page turner," so the reader will want to keep going; 6) proper format and length (100-120 pages) and absence of typos, 7) and originality of premise and dialogue.

Since you will be expected to write an entire first draft of a feature script within this course, it behooves you to be somewhat prepared. It would help if you have a story in mind, a protagonist, a worthy antagonist, a love-interest (if appropriate), and at least an idea of your beginning, middle and end. It also really helps to have at least 30-40 situations (scenes) to string together to support a feature-length film. We will go over all of this in class, but if you get a head start on your thinking, it will be a tremendous help to you. I can also make available some handouts ahead of time that might assist you in this work.
MALS 280: Legitimacy of Global Modernity  
(Globalization Studies)  
Instructor: David Peritz, Sarah Lawrence College

What are the main sources of social order in an increasingly global world (dis)order? We reside at the far end of vast, rapid and complex processes of social transformation referred to as modernization. These processes include the development of new ways of organizing economies, politics, culture, and society—the fundamental building blocks of human communities. One central issue addressed in this course is the worth or legitimacy of modernity. Which of the institutions and ideas that structured and guided processes of modernization are worth defending or reforming? Which should be rejected? Or should we reject them all and instead embrace a new, post-modern political epoch? To approach these questions we will focus on the market economy, the nation state, discipline and discourse, and we will read from the giants of modern social theory: Smith, Marx and Weber, Tocqueville and Mill, Foucault and Habermas. Processes of modernization also draw more and more persons and societies into the net of interconnectivity, mobility, and hybridity that we refer to as globalization. Understanding modernity as inherently global, originally imperial, and now increasingly post-colonial raises a further set of issues. Once we are attentive to the roles played by colonial domination and racial exploitation in generating modern social orders, does this fundamentally alter our verdict on these processes? What are implications of the fact that many of the tools of resistance to Western imperialism and domination seem to have been forged in the process of modernization itself? Does the Eurocentrism of the tradition of modern social theory invalidate its central concepts and insights? Or can they be reformulated in a way that divorces their critical power from the prejudices that informed their elaboration? Are ‘Europeans’ increasingly ‘provincialized’ as Western political, social and epistemic hegemony declines in an ever-more global world? This course tackles these issues in tandem. It pairs some of the most important modern social theorists with some of their most trenchant global and post-colonial critics, exploring several dimensions of the interchange between ‘the West and the rest’ and in the process throwing into sharp focus the question of the legitimacy of global modernity.

MALS 318: Cultural Studies  
(Cultural Studies or Interdisciplinary)  
Instructors: Donald Pease and Patricia McKee

Perhaps because of its capacity to cut across social and political interests and transgress disciplinary boundaries, Cultural Studies has provoked highly contradictory descriptions of its politics and academic location. Cultural Studies has been described as the academic location where the politics of difference -- racial, sexual, economic, transnational -- can combine and be articulated in all of their theoretical complexity. It has also been depicted as an academic containment strategy designed to tame cultural otherness through the universalization of the “idea” of culture and the resistance to theory. In this course we shall analyze the work of scholars -- bell hooks, Douglas Crimp, Janice Radway, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Andrew Ross, Meaghan Morris, Elsbeth Probyn, Michael Warner, Rey Chow, Cornel west, Kobena Mercer, Judith Butler, among others -- who explicitly reflect upon the importance of conceptualizing and defining this diverse and often contentious enterprise. In addition to examining the social and institutional genealogy of the field, we shall deploy disparate methodological practices developed within the field of Cultural Studies to analyze a range of cultural artifacts including: film noir, television soap operas, rap music, Hollywood blockbusters, borderlands discourse, whiteness studies and postcolonial theory.

MALS 361: Global Media and Culture  
(Globalization Studies, Cultural Studies or Interdisciplinary)  
Instructors: Ronald Edsforth and Joanne Devine, Skidmore College

This course provides students the opportunity to study, discuss, and write about global media and the transformation of cultures and relations between peoples since the 1980s. Although most historians argue that globalization is an old process that began with the establishment of inter-regional trade many centuries ago, they agree with other social scientists who see this most recent phase of globalization as qualitatively different from earlier stages of the process. The most important of these changes is the development and diffusion of new global media. Indeed it seems fair to say that what most people mean when they use the word “globalization” today would not exist without the new global media.
We begin the term by examining various conceptual discourses about the character and meaning of globalization, the media, and cultural change and survival. We then explore the recent rise of global media with special attention paid to technological innovations, transnational corporate consolidation, and political deregulation. In the second half of the term the seminar focuses its attention on more specific cases of the cultural impacts of the new global media in both rich and less developed countries.

Seminar requirements:
This is not a lecture course. To be successful, all members of the seminar have to participate in discussions of course materials. Students are required to finish assigned readings and videos as preparation for in-class discussions. Readings include several required books, as well as articles that are available on-line. Videos include documentary and feature films on reserve at the Jones Media Center. Participation in discussion will count for 20% of the final grade.

Students will be required to write a series three related papers focused on global media in a particular country of their choice. The first, short paper (1000 words) will report on media development in that country. The second paper will report on the ways media in that country have covered a news story of global importance (i.e., Charlie Hebdo). The final paper will present students' research on a media subject of special relevance to their country.

MALS 369: Stories that Matter
(Creative Writing or Interdisciplinary)
Instructors: Barbara Kreiger and Chris Wren

This creative writing course is aimed at those with a special interest in narrative non-fiction and long-form journalism. We'll address such things as development of the story itself, style, voice, and the use of reflection as we consider both the ambiguous nature of experience and the responsibility to be accurate. Writing background is preferred but is not a prerequisite. What is required is a commitment to the imaginative exploration of experience and a serious desire to devote oneself to the writing process.