MALS
Winter 2015
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

☐ 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 student handbook or MALS Administrator for further details.

MALS 131: Social Science Research Methods
(May be used for Symposium Substitute Credit, see MALS Administrator)

Instructor: Kerry Landers, Graduate Studies

Schedule: Monday/Wednesday 11:30am to 1:30pm

Description:
Qualitative and quantitative data provide different kinds of information to the researcher. Quantitative research measures the reactions of large numbers of people and provides generalizable data. Qualitative research produces detailed data on a small number of cases for an increased depth of understanding. Conducting research in the social sciences requires knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Numerous qualitative methods exist with a great diversity of theoretical models. This workshop will focus on ethnographic research, often used by sociologists, anthropologists, and educators to look at the culture of groups and settings. The primary focus of this workshop will be on qualitative methods with discussion on survey methods.

Students will design their own research projects based on their scholarly interests (generated by previous classes) that they would like to further pursue for the basis of their thesis research.

Goals:
Students will investigate a social phenomenon that interests them. They will create their own projects and actively engage in the necessary components of conducting research in the social sciences. This requires students to develop fieldwork plans, identify interviewees, write interview questions, conduct 3-5 interviews, take observation notes, and learn survey skills.

Materials:
Students will need to purchase a tape recorder for interviews or plan on borrowing one from the Jones Media Library. In addition, students should come to class with a three ring binder with page dividers.

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MALS 226: Screenwriting
(Creative Writing)

Instructor: Bill Phillips

Schedule: Tuesday 5:00pm to 8:00pm

Description:
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.

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MALS 234: Telling True Stories
(Creative Writing)

Instructor: Tom Powers, MALS

Schedule: Monday 4:00pm to 7:00pm

Description:
The goal of the course will be to expand and refine the understanding of author identity -- the answer to the question raised by every piece of writing: who wrote this?

Students will be expected to write every week and to read everything that is submitted. There will be no other reading assignments -- just each other's work. Classroom discussion will focus on what makes individual pieces succeed or fail. In addition to the regular short weekly pieces of 3-4 pages, each student will be asked to write one longer piece -- 10 to 15 pages, which will be discussed at length in class.

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MALS 276: America in the 70’s  
(Cultural Studies)  

Instructor: Julia Rabig, MALS  

Schedule: Tuesday/Thursday 10:00am to 11:50 am  

Description:  
The 1970s has been defined by the “oil crisis” that had Americans lined up for gas, the “crisis of confidence” diagnosed by President Jimmy Carter, and the “crisis” of narcissism described as the “Me Decade.” Scholars until recently overlooked the 1970s, dismissing it as trite, with embarrassed references to defeat and self-indulgence. Yet the 1970s was the decade in which far-reaching changes brought about by the political rebellion and cultural upheaval of the 1960s took hold in unexpected ways. Leftist activists of the 1960s sought to institutionalize feminism, black power, and sexual liberation, while the New Right sharpened the cultural politics and grassroots strategies that would yield the major conservative victories that defined the 1980s. Experiments in financial and government deregulation accelerated patterns of globalization; workers fought a losing battle against the erosion of the New Deal. While devolving, breaking down, getting loose, and dropping out, Americans responded to globalization, environmental crisis, social inequality, and cultural upheaval in conflicted, but enduring ways. In this course we’ll reappraise the 1970s through a close analysis of primary texts and new scholarship, and through assignments that include a review essay, an annotated bibliography, a major research paper, and a brief oral presentation.  

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MALS 289: American Cultural Studies  
(Cultural Studies)  

Instructor: James Dobson, MALS/IWR  

Schedule: Monday/Wednesday 1:45pm to 3:45pm  

Description:  
This seminar course offers a broad survey of methodologies and approaches for the study of American culture. We will read both classic and contemporary work in several representative or emergent areas in the study of American culture including science and technology studies, food studies, critical race theory, queer and feminist theory, and the study of material culture. Throughout the term we will think critically about the methodological choices and commitments of the critics and theorists that we encounter by turning to a core text, an edited volume of keywords for the study of American culture. Additional readings may include Slavoj Žižek, Lauren Berlant, Lee Edelman, Pierre Bourdieu, Eric Lott, Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, and Caleb Smith. Two shorter papers will provide the opportunity to interrogate oppositional positions within American Studies and a final seminar paper will examine an object (film, text, a piece of music, visual or material object, etc.) of your choice.  

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MALS 337: The New Global Order: Development, Democracy, and Revolution
(Globalization Studies OR Interdisciplinary)

Instructors: Misagh Parsa, Sociology and Evelyn Gick, MALS

Schedule: Tuesday/Thursday 2:30pm to 4:30pm

Description:

Globalization and the pursuit of market-led development have become two crucial concepts that re-emerged full-blown in the wake of the Cold War as the West emerged victorious in its longstanding struggle against socialism and communism. Led primarily by policy-makers and intellectuals in the United States--the sole remaining superpower--defenders of both processes argue that democracy is an inevitable outcome of this ongoing process of globalization. Yet, this process of globalization has also been highly uneven and, according to its critics, augments the divisions between rich and poor in the world. Who is right? The three supposedly interlocking aspects of the newly emerging globalized world--democracy, markets, and globalization--have been the subject of numerous studies and critiques. In this course, we examine the links between them in greater theoretical depth, through studying a number of practical applications around the world.

The first part focuses on globalization in general, its impact on the economy of countries as well as its impact on single firms. The tensions between globalization and moral questions will be elaborated as well. The second part of the course will build upon these arguments and will analyze influence of globalization on political structures---ranging from democracy to revolution and to state failure. Case studies in Part II include Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines.

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