

Course Descriptions CVEC Spring Term 2010

March 22 -- May 14, 2010

Registration Begins February 22, 2010

JAPANESE LIFE AND CULTURE TODAY Mary Wood mwoodinmn@gmail.com

The course will deal with significant experiences in Japanese history, the country's rapid rise as a world power, the shaking of the foundations after defeat in World War II, and the great changes in its life since then. But we will also consider the threads of tradition and continuity found in their family and social life, education, economy, arts and crafts and religions, which produce the distinctive Japanese culture today. Readings will include excerpts from newspapers and articles and a bibliography of selected books will be sent in advance. Slides and films will add to the discussions

Mary Wood, with her husband, Robert, lived in Kyoto, Japan from 1949 to 1968, where she taught at Doshisha University in the Sociology and Social Work Department. Their four children attended Japanese kindergarten and Elementary Schools. Coming to Northfield, she served from 1968-1988 as director of the Community Action Center. More recently, she and her husband have returned several times to Japan with students in the Associated Kyoto Program

IMPRESSIONISM Lauren Soth lsoth@carleton.edu

When it appeared on the Parisian scene in the 1860s and 1870s, the new painting that became known as Impressionism was met frequently with derision and scorn. Monet's painting was described as "wallpaper in its embryonic state." Manet was accused of "inconceivable vulgarity." But they and their artistic colleagues (Degas, Renoir, Berthe Morisot, Mary Cassatt, and others) remained true to their vision and now their art is the most popular of all time. Through close visual analysis (that is, looking at slides with an optional field trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art), we shall try to come to an understanding of what Impressionism meant to the artists who created it, what it meant to its contemporary audience, and what it means to us today.

Lauren Soth retired in 2004 after 40 years of teaching art history at Carleton. Among the 40 different courses he taught there was one on Impressionism. His academic degrees are BA, Yale; MA, PhD, NYU.

THE HISTORY AND CHEMISTRY OF CHOCOLATE Jerry Mohrig

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We will examine the allure and romance of chocolate while probing the history of cacao from the Mayas and Aztecs to its embrace by 18th century Europeans and finally to modern America. We will also explore where chocolate comes from, its constituents and chemistry, its health effects, and how chocolate's many varieties are manufactured. The class will hold a chocolate tasting session and will also take a field trip to a chocolatier in the Twin Cities. It would be natural to do some additional judicious sampling and the sharing of recipes. The enjoyment expressed by class members of this CVEC course last spring prompted Jerry to offer this repeat.

Jerry Mohrig, Ph.D. taught at Carleton College for 36 years and is an emeritus professor of chemistry. He has also been an amateur historian most of his life and believes that there is nothing wrong with having fun while learning the chemistry and history of one of our favorite foods.

THE HEROIC JOURNEY: CLASSICS OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE

FICTION Dick Bodman bodmanr317@aol.com

Science fiction is not about space ships but about journeys to other worlds in which we see a reflection of our own. Fantasy is not about magic, swords and dragons but about the journey into our inner self from which come moral and spiritual development. Both genres require heroes, heroines, an epic canvas, and moral imagination. We will read and discuss J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, Ursula K. LeGuin's *A Wizard of Earthsea* and *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*. The class will follow the normal spring schedule, **except that** the Tuesday March 30th class will be cancelled, and an additional class will be added on Tuesday, May 18th.

Richard Bodman taught Chinese and Asian Studies at St. Olaf College from 1980 to 2006 and has been an avid reader of science fiction and fantasy for most of his life. He has taught several courses on science fiction and fantasy for undergraduates, both in Northfield and in Shanghai. .

MOCKING THE SUPREME COURT Charles Umbanhowar Sr umbanhow@stolaf.edu

While many see the Supreme Court as the "least dangerous branch" and yet its work often stirs more political passion than the other two more dangerous ones. After a brief introduction to legal reasoning and how the Supreme Court functions, we will discuss a few recent decisions selected by the instructor. Then we will form ourselves as the Mock Supreme Court and select several cases from the current docket (2009-10) and collectively decide those cases through discussion and voting. The instructor will assume the role of the Chief Justice guiding the discussion and assigning opinions (briefs). While not absolutely necessary, access to a computer and ability to surf the internet is very important.

Charles Umbanhowar is Professor Emeritus at St. Olaf College where he taught, among other things, constitutional law for twenty-six years.

LAUGHTER THROUGH TEARS: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF NIKOLAI GOGOL

(1809-1852) Bill Woehrli wwoehrli@carleton.edu

During his brief and bizarre life, Nikolai Gogol probably made more Russians laugh than any other writer in that country's great literary tradition. But his works combined his own somewhat kooky humor with a deep awareness of the tragedy that underlies so much of human existence. Thus the term "laughter through tears" is often applied to Gogol's work. Against the background of Gogol's life, we will read and discuss his comic masterpiece, *DEAD SOULS*, his most popular play, *THE INSPECTOR GENERAL*, and a selection of his short stories that displays different aspects of his creative genius.

Bill Woehrli, Professor of History Emeritus at Carleton College, taught Russian and European history.

HOME GROWN: THREE MINNESOTA WRITERS Jim Holden Holden@stolaf.edu

Our rich midwestern soil has produced a remarkable crop of extraordinary writers, so in this course we will read and discuss works by three of them: Paul Gruchow, Jon Hassler, and Northfield's own Siri Hustvedt. Gruchow, who also lived in Northfield for many years, wrote eloquently about country life, changes in our national culture, the environment, and our relationship with nature, particularly in a book of essays we will read called Grass Roots: The Universe of Home. Hassler is one of Minnesota's most beloved contemporary novelists, and from his voluminous body of works we will read A Green Journey, a delightful tale featuring the sprightly retired teacher, Miss Agatha McGee. And from Siri Hustvedt, whose works often feature Northfield places, we will read The Sorrows of an American, a novel based in part on some experiences of her late father, Lloyd Hustvedt, and set in part in fictional Blooming Field (Northfield). Siri Hustvedt will be a guest in the class.

Jim Holden is a former Northfield High School English teacher (where he taught one of Jon Hassler's novels) and a retired St. Olaf Assistant Professor of Education who also taught first-year writing courses in the English department.

A PHYSICIAN'S GUIDE TO WELL-BEING IN RETIREMENT Ed Lufkin elufkin7@yahoo.com

This course will address many health issues faced by senior citizens (some of which issues we covered in my previous course two years ago). We will emphasize the practical steps we can all take as individuals in staying well. Students of this course can expect to receive The Mayo Clinic Family Health Book, Third Edition, at no extra cost.

A mix of presentation styles, including power-point lectures, short movies, break-out discussions, interviews with actual patients in our community, and guest speakers, **will be used**. Hand-outs of printed material **will be given** where needed.

Ed Lufkin was a clinical internist and endocrinologist for ~ 40 years, most of which he spent doing patient care and academic work at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, with special interests in women's health issues. He served as Medical Editor of the Mayo Clinic Health Letter, and retired in 1998. He then served as a medical advisor to Eli Lilly & Co. for 6 more years.

GREAT DECISIONS Robert Flaten (robertflaten@charter.net)

Upstage CNN! Join the Great Decisions program, produced by the Foreign Policy Association and used throughout the United States. Last year there were 60 Great Decisions groups with over 11,000 participants in Minnesota! We will participate, at the final session, in the policy recommendations of the Foreign Policy Association to our government. Great Decisions is designed as a discussion program, but we will have a lecture each week to get discussion started, and will benefit from outside speakers for selected topics. Texts will be available at \$16.

The topics this year are: The Special Envoy in American foreign policy, Halting Atrocities in Kenya and the Responsibility to Protect, China Looks at the World and the World Looks at China, The global Financial Crisis and its effects, Russia: Europe's 'far east': the uncertain frontier, The U.S. and the Persian Gulf, Enhancing security through peacebuilding

Robert Flaten *served as the American Ambassador to Rwanda from 1990 to 1993. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1994 after assignments in France, Pakistan and Israel and the State Department in Washington. He is presently Vice President of the United Nations Association for MN, Minnesota Rep for the Immortal Chaplains Foundation, a member of AFSA Upper

Midwest, MIC, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and Rotary. He is past Chair of the Executive Committee of the Nobel Peace Prize Forum and Ambassador in Residence at St. Olaf College.

AMERICA AND THE CLASSICS **Rob Hardy** rbhardy3rd@gmail.com

From Cotton Mather to Caesar's Palace, the classics—especially the language, literature, and images of ancient Rome—have had a wide-ranging influence on American culture. This course will explore that influence from colonial times through the present, with particular emphasis on the Founders, the Greek Revival and Jacksonian democracy, the classics and American slavery, and the place of the classics in the American educational system. The class will consist of readings of primary sources, discussions, and brief illustrated lectures to provide background material.

Rob Hardy has a B.A. in Latin and history from Oberlin College and a Ph.D. in classics from Brown University. He has taught classics at Gustavus Adolphus College, the University of St. Thomas, and Carleton College. His most recent article is on the influence of the Roman historian Sallust on eighteenth-century British and American political thought. He is also a poet and writer.

RECLAIMING THE WASTE LAND: LATE MODERN POETRY **Robert Tisdale**
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About 1955 poets began publishing poems that could be easily understood by their large and growing audiences. Made popular by readings by Dylan Thomas and the American "Beats," the new poetry was in the tradition of a different modernist, William Carlos Williams. The younger generation sought to be intelligible, even conversational, while still expressing many of the same concerns of their immediate literary ancestors. Their themes included personal estrangement from their own cultures, the loss of conventional religious faith, the hollowness of a materialist society, and, joy in personal intimacy and the minute details of nature. New themes included the place of women in society and their abhorrence of conformity, chauvinism, and racism. This course will consist in reading and discussion of poetry by writers as diverse as Robert Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin, Robert Bly, Sylvia Plath, Seamus Heaney, and Stevie Smith.

Robert Tisdale taught English and American Studies for 40 years at Carleton, his courses focusing mainly on 20th century and multicultural literature.