

WINTER 2009 Course Descriptions

THE GREEN CONNECTIONS: IS NATURE REALLY IMPORTANT TO OUR LIVES? **Nalani McCutcheon** mccutchn@rbnc.org

The human connection to the natural world is critical to healthy development, yet adults and children spend significantly less time outside and in contact with green spaces every year. We'll read excerpts from historic and contemporary nature writers to decipher the role nature plays in the human condition. We'll also examine the research that confirms its connection to the healthy development of children, the inhibition of violence in adults, the ability to restore attention and relieve stress, and in the promotion of community. We'll discuss how our society's move toward technology, human built spaces, and reduced interaction with the natural world is affecting our future generation. Course will include a field trip to River Bend Nature Center.

Nalani McCutcheon is the Executive Director of River Bend Nature Center in Faribault MN. Prior to coming to River Bend she directed the School Nature Area Project (SNAP) based out of St. Olaf College, working extensively with 211 schools throughout the state of Minnesota to help them establish and utilize nature areas. She has a BA in Biology from St. Olaf College and an MS in Natural Resource Management from UW-Stevens Point. A lover of nature writings, Nalani has become increasingly concerned about people's connections with the outdoor world, and the negative effects isolation from nature can have on the future of the environment and society.

AN EVERYDAY STORY? **Torild Homstad** homstad@stolaf.edu

In this course we will explore the works of a variety of well-known and lesser-known Norwegian women writers in English translation. The course will focus specifically on how these works of fiction illuminate Norwegian society and culture through the lives and situation of women. We will also look at how these perspectives compare with women writers writing in English during the same periods, exploring areas of commonality and divergence within the context of narrative. What are the everyday stories in the lives of women?

Torild Homstad is the North American Administrator of the Oslo International Summer. During the school year she has her office at St. Olaf College in Northfield, in the summer she is at the ISS office at the University of Oslo, Norway. She's an avid collector of Norwegian literature.

FRANCE – FOR THE ARMCHAIR TRAVELER **Hartley Clark** clark@carleton.edu

We will spend our sixteen hours in France, transported there via projected still and motion pictures. Exciting and pleasurable discoveries will be our objective. Impromptu remarks and questions from class members will always be on the agenda. We will "travel" to any part of France with present-day traces of the following: 1. Early France (prehistoric, megalithic, tribal, Gallic, and Roman), and the early kings. 2. Romanesque and Gothic architecture and stained glass. 3. The time of trouble. Dominion Over England. Joan of Arc and the French monarchy and nobility. 4. The France that overlaps its neighbors (Breton, Flemish, Rhenish, Italian, Catalanian, and Basque France), and the religions of France. 5. The Third Estate, the revolution, and Napoleon. 6. Wars over

Germany. “Discovery” of the Alps and the seashore. 7. Paris. Wine. Food. 8. Painters, sculptors, and writers. France and the European Union. Reading recommendations will be mailed to persons who register for the course.

Hartley Clark, Ph.D., Prof. Emeritus of International Relations, Carleton College. Prof. Clark has taught CVEC courses on international relations for six Fall Terms. He has traveled all over France during his many visits to that country.

MORE HILLERMAN, LEAPHORN, CHEE, AND THE GREAT SOUTHWEST

Mary Flaten ursa24@charter.net

In this course, we will again read and discuss 7 of Hillerman’s Chee and Leaphorn mysteries, one for each week after the first meeting. We will look at maps of the area and talk about the culture, history, beliefs and ceremonies of the Navajos and of the Pueblo Indians. This is a different series of books than we read last winter. We will start with Dance Hall of the Dead and subsequently read Listening Woman, The Ghostway, Skinwalkers, Talking God, Sacred Clowns, and The Fallen Man. These books will be available from Monkey See Monkey Read.

Mary Flaten lived in New Mexico for 15 years, after having lived and worked at Grand Canyon, Arizona for part of one year. Because of her time in the Southwest and her love for that high desert land and people, she is able to enrich the experience of reading Tony Hillerman’s novels. A St.Olaf grad, Mary taught French for many years and more recently has taught classes and workshops on dreams.

ECONOMICS FOR THE MODERN PERSON **Bill Carlson**

carlsoncharbill@msn.com

In this class we will examine how Economists look at the economic activities that are part of our modern world. Our goal is to better understand economic ideas and to consider how they apply to our modern society. Procedures and methods that derive from economic theory and practice will be developed and discussed. More importantly numerous applications and contemporary issues will be discussed, using both the perspectives of the teacher and the wide experience of class members. Topics will include markets, production, marginal costs and revenue, macro theory, economic policy and much more. We will examine the history of modern economic systems with emphasis on the industrial revolution. This leads naturally into the effects of international trade and globalization, with extended examination of India and China. Readings will be supplied in the form of a packet of small articles and notes.

Bill Carlson is Professor Emeritus in Economics at St. Olaf College. His principle teaching emphasis was statistics and quantitative economics. In addition he has led a number of International Study Programs leading students to many places in the world. He has written three textbooks, numerous papers, including considerable research on highway accidents. He was the only member of the St. Olaf faculty with an undergraduate degree in Mining Engineering.

GLOBAL CINEMA **J Eric Nelson** nelsoner@stolaf.edu

Anyone who has spent time outside the U.S. has seen how popular American movies are abroad. People throughout the world constantly see stories about us, not just in theaters but on television as well. In this course we will return the compliment by watching and discussing films made far from Hollywood, one from a different country each week of the term: Britain ("The Third Man"), France ("Jules and Jim), Norway ("Kitchen Stories"), Germany ("The Lives of Others"), China ("Raise the Red Lantern"), Japan ("Woman in the Dunes"), and Australia ("Breaker Morant"). We will explore the ways these movies by internationally acclaimed directors are both universal and specific to a particular culture. Because some of these films are not readily available locally, we will need to schedule a time for common viewings in addition to the weekly class meetings.

Eric Nelson is Professor Emeritus of English, St. Olaf College. He holds degrees from Wittenberg and the University of North Carolina. He has completed six courses in a screenwriting program, done an internship at the Minnesota Film and Television Board, and taught courses in Film Studies and screen writing at St. Olaf College.

THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION: DOES THE EARTH REALLY MOVE?

Richard Noer rnoer@carleton.edu

The idea that the earth rotates on its axis and moves in an orbit about the sun was first considered absurd, later highly controversial. Yet that idea has finally come to be accepted as “fact” by virtually everyone. How this came to be is the story of the 17th century “scientific revolution”.

We'll look first at the fixed-earth theory, which explained with remarkable success the motions we see in the heavens. Then we'll look (non-mathematically) at the arguments of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton that “in fact” it is the earth that moves. Was this, as is often claimed, a case of “enlightened” scientists battling the refusal of reactionary religious thinkers to accept the “logical truth” of the sun-centered view? And what can we learn from all this about how scientific ideas evolve and become accepted?

Rich Noer taught physics at Carleton for 38 years. He also became interested in the history and philosophy of science, co-authored a text for liberal-arts students, and taught freshman seminars and interdisciplinary courses aimed at connecting the sciences with the humanities.

THE ETHICS OF VIRTUE (AND VICE) **Perry C. Mason** pmason@carleton.edu

Rather than trying to spell out moral rules or laws that determine which actions are right and which wrong, many recent ethical theorists have returned to an earlier tradition of focusing instead on the question of which character traits make one a morally good person and which make one a morally bad person. This older approach, best exemplified in the West by Aristotle, identifies virtues as the morally desirable traits and vices as the undesirable ones. We will use Aristotle's theory of moral virtue as a springboard for our own attempts to ask what virtue and vice are, which human traits are virtues and which are vices, and why.

Perry C. Mason is a Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Carleton, where he taught philosophy of religion and ancient Greek philosophy for over thirty years.

IMPROVING YOUR VISION WITH YOUR CAMERA **Fred Gonnerman**

fhgonnerman@msn.com

Course Schedule: Winter Term -- Five two-hour sessions, each two weeks apart.

Suggested dates: Jan. 8, 22; Feb. 5, 19; March 5, 2009

Course Description:

Nearly everyone has a camera. Unfortunately, many camera users are too frequently disappointed with their photographs. Camera technology can make the taking of photos almost too easy. But even point-and-shoot photographers – whether using film or digital cameras – can be overwhelmed by all the choices they have in subject matter, lighting, timing, composition, angles of view and backgrounds. "Improving Your Vision with Your Camera" challenges every member of the class to move beyond taking snapshots to creating photographs. Every participant must bring a working camera to class. Anything from the simplest "point-and-shoot" model to a 35 mm SLR (single lens reflex) to any digital camera will do.

Improving Your Vision with Your Camera is an experiential course. It has no textbook, but the class meets every two weeks so that students can take photos that fulfill the assignment given at the end of each of the first four classes and bring those photos to the next class for critique and evaluation.

Fred Gonnerman has nearly 40 years experience in public relations and photography. While director of information services at St. Olaf, he headed the college's photographic services for 23 years. He also headed the photo service of Luther Seminary in St. Paul during the last nine years of his career. His photos have been published in magazines, calendars, and travel books, and he has mounted nearly a dozen one-man photo shows. He has taught photo skills to college students, continuing education classes, and 4-H members, as well as Elderhostel and Collegium courses.

GREAT DECISIONS – NEW ISSUES 2009 **Robert Flaten** flaten@rconnect.com

Great Decisions program is produced by the Foreign Policy Association and used throughout the country by World Affairs Councils. The 2009 topics are, U. S. and the rising powers, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Energy and the global economy, The Arctic, Egypt, Global food supply, Cuba after Castro, and Human rights. We will discuss one topic each week for eight weeks. Briefing books will be available for \$14 per person. Great Decisions is designed as a discussion program. We will have a lecture each week to get discussion started. We will benefit from some outside speakers. Students will be encouraged to participate in the discussions.

Robert Flaten served as Ambassador to Rwanda from December 1990 to November 1993. He retired from the Foreign Service in May 1994. He is recent Chair of the Executive Committee of the Noble Peace Prize Forum which works with the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo to honor and promote the work of recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize. He is a Distinguished Lecturer in Political Science at St. Olaf College, Vice President of UNA/Minnesota, and a Minnesota Representative of the Immortal Chaplains Foundation. He is also a member of the Minnesota International Center, AFSA Upper Midwest, the St. Paul – Minneapolis Committee on Foreign Relations, and Rotary.

PATTERNS AND SYMMETRY **Judy Cederberg** cederj@stolaf.edu

We will explore a variety of patterns found in nature, quilts, tile floors, wallpaper and Islamic art to determine characteristics responsible for their beauty, sense of balance, and harmony – qualities often described by the term *symmetry*. Starting with simple figures, we will construct patterns using the symmetry-generating motions known as reflections, rotations and translations. We'll learn how these symmetry motions help us understand elementary geometric concepts and how similar motions create beautiful computer-generated shapes known as *fractals*. This course will gently introduce mathematical ideas from a different perspective than most saw in school and will not require use of formulas or algebraic techniques. Brief handouts will explain major ideas in the course.

Judy Cederberg was a member of the St. Olaf mathematics faculty for 39 years. Her major area of mathematical interest is geometry and she is the author of the college text, *A Course in Modern Geometries* (2nd Ed., 2001). Her recreational interests include travel and gardening.