Agocs

Global Diffusion

This course aims at making students aware how local processes and identities are shaped by processes of global diffusion (“globalization”) and how these global processes are modified by local conditions (often referred to as “glocalization”). In the first half of the semester we will read and discuss some recent and classical approaches to globalization, touching on issues such as global economic processes, immigration, technology, cultural diffusion, and environmental problems. Examples range from marketing techniques to make international products appealing to local markets to influences of non-Western cultures on local popular taste and lifestyles. For their research projects, students will focus on and investigate one of these issues as it plays out in the Stockton region.

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Allen

Social Reality: Text and Self

“You’re hired!” That is all the president of a company has to say, and it becomes reality. In Social Reality: Text and Self we will examine the way we do things with words.

We often think of text as written or printed words, static, lifeless, and existing independently of who we are and the decisions we make. In this course, however, we will consider the written word as just one part of the larger text that we co-create as language users and that exists as the living fabric of the social realities we inhabit. We will develop an understanding of the subtle ways that language structures the self—the identities and roles we form through reading, writing, speaking, texting, etc.

Returning to many of the themes introduced in Pacific Seminar 1, our discussions and research will reveal the often invisible way that language shapes society—for better or for worse.

Questions include: How do texts and technologies change us? How does language signify who you are, where you are from, and what you believe? How does context or situation change the way we think and talk? How do we understand utterances we have never heard before?

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Bhattacharyya
Mathematics and Social Issues

Quantitative reasoning, a key component of scientific thinking, can provide insight into several of society’s problems. Indeed, we use numbers and data to quantify and thus to comprehend some of the themes and sub-themes addressed in PACS 01, such as Equity in Education, Free Market Economics, and the Environment. Is the death penalty linked to race? How extensive is racial profiling? How should public schools be funded? What is the most equitable way to allocate seats in Congress? How extensive is global warming? This topical seminar addresses these and other social issues from a quantitative viewpoint, thereby exploring the question, “What is a good society?” in a different way. We will use some basic techniques to analyze quantitative data arising in a variety of social arenas. We will also study several procedures to fairly distribute resources, as well as a variety of apportionment and voting schemes.

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Campi

Science vs. Pseudoscience

We will explore science, primarily from a psychological and consumerism / capitalism perspective, as it is understood, misunderstood, and misrepresented in the media (TV, movies, magazines, newspapers, internet, books, etc). We will begin with a general introduction to science, the scientific method, and the difference between science and pseudoscience. The remainder of the course will focus on critically examining specific topics in science and society that illustrate pseudoscientific claims and methods of inquiry (e.g., ESP, alien abduction, UFOs, medical claims, industry-biased research). Without the ability to critically evaluate “scientific claims,” we fall prey to anyone wishing to sell us goods or services, regardless of their efficacy, effectiveness, or even harmful qualities. We will watch videos and films, review newspapers (e.g., The New York Times, The Stockton Record), magazines (e.g., The Skeptical Inquirer and Skeptic), and scholarly journals, and discuss book readings in order to increase your ability to think critically about the world.

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Day

The Digital Citizen & Self

Internet communities require that we examine issues of what constitutes good citizenship and who we are just as we do in communities in the un-mediated real world. Through discussion, readings, following current events, experience in a user-constructed world created for the class (Opensimulator), experience in a designated MMORPG similar to World of Warcraft, participation in blogging and online forums, and reflection on interaction on Facebook, we will critically examine what it means to be a “good citizen” in a virtual and mediated world. The citizenship themes of the common good, civil discourse, the social contract, confusion of the
consumer and citizen, national vs. world citizenship will as well as some that arise from the uniqueness of digital communities such as the real vs. the fictional self. The blog and forum troll, the virtual world “griefer,” the forum anonymous character assassin, and the tasteless or malicious social networker will be examined to understand why people engage in such behaviors and what can be done to respond to them. Additionally we will explore how the “culture” of Internet communities limits or predisposes what we can become and in the process creates multiple selves that we somehow must manage.

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Duarte

**Latino USA**

This course examines how the growth of the Latino population in the U.S. exposes the promises and tensions of multicultural societies. The rise of Latinos prompts reconsideration of how the U.S. as a community and as a nation choses to see its Latino neighbors, co-workers, and friends. Are Latinos part of the social fabric of the U.S. or members of a foreign culture and thus “alien” to U.S. society? But also how do Latinos become “American” while still practicing distinct cultural traditions and customs, and thus creating hyphenated identities? We will examine this and other questions through the experience, contributions, and dilemmas of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Central Americans in the U.S. through essays, novels, films, music, and engagement with Latino community organizations.

This course has a community-based-learning component which asks students to work with individuals or agencies that address the needs of Latinos in Stockton. Students will share their community-based-learning experiences in a public forum organized by the Latino Community Outreach Office.

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Evans

**Crime, Punishment & Justice**

This course examines the ideal society in terms of several questions related to the causes of criminal activities and behaviors, the most effective ways to reduce the threat of crime in American society, and the philosophical underpinnings of Western notions of justice. We will examine these questions from the literary, the philosophical, and the sociological perspectives. In particular, we will define criminal behavior as it contrasts the “good” society, using the ideas of Plato and Dr. Martin Luther King. We will examine some of the causes of crime, especially the link between poverty and crime, psychological disorders and criminal behavior, and the influence of the media. In answering the question, “What measures reduce crime?” we will examine punishment and rehabilitation. Two books, *Tragic Flaws* by Scott Evans and *The Evil Next Door* by Amanda Lamb, will allow us to examine these issues from both a philosophical
and a literary perspective. Dostoeovsky’s *Crime and Punishment* & Camus’ *The Stranger* are recommended but not required.

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**Faulkner**

**How Not to Be Stupid, Globally**

This course will engulf students in the *political economy* of “Development Sociology” by engaging in a critical analysis of world systems and global inequalities. Students will be exposed to the realities of living conditions within our current world system. We will challenge the concept of “advanced culture and civilization” and what it means to be “A Good Society.” This course is designed to utilize C. Wright Mills’ *Sociological Imagination* as we look at profound global inequality and as we contemplate potential solutions.

Using a combination of course videos, readings, lectures, and class discussions we will examine in depth the three major systems of global stratification which operate in modern society: *class, race* and *gender stratification*. We will explore these topics in both historical and contemporary contexts. Special emphasis will be placed on the social and political conflicts that arise from social inequality, and on the efforts of individuals and groups who have struggled, and continue to struggle, to make our society and our world more democratic, more just and more humane.

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**Fortuna**

**What Should We Put Up With?**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to what many consider to be a central concept for a good society. Specifically, we will be considering the concept of toleration. Among other issues, we will be concerned with the following questions: What is toleration? What role can/should it play within a good society? Is such a concept coherent? Is toleration valuable, and if so, why? How can toleration be justified? What are its limits? On what basis should things not be tolerated? We will approach these issues through a close examination of both primary and secondary academic literature within the fields of philosophy, political science, history, law, and religion. We will also draw upon film, news articles, and blog posts which grapple with these issues—both in order to help deepen our understanding of the theoretical aspects of this concept, as well as bring to life the ways in which we still struggle with the question of toleration today.

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**Fraden**

**The Creative Class**
Richard Florida, a writer and theorist of urban studies, describes the “creative class” as the key to economic, political, and social vitality in the modern world. Members of this “class” could include poets and novelists, painters, musicians, actors, designers, and architects as well as scientists, engineers, and college professors. Florida argues that the “creative class” congregates in cities and the greater their concentration and the products they produce -- poetry, plays, buildings, restaurants, genetic tests, life-saving drugs – the more desirable a city becomes as a place to live and work. You will be reading and viewing selected artistic interactions with the great cities of the world (Poe, Baudelaire, O’Hara among others) as well as sociological critics of the city, including Florida. You will be interviewing members of the “creative class” and engaging with the new forms they create – (art, music, literature, technology, and buildings, for example). The creative students who take this course should think of themselves as in training to join this “class” and be interested in researching creative workers and/or creative work.

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Garbarini

American Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism was a religious, philosophical, literary, and political movement that evolved from New England Unitarianism in the 1820s and 1830s. An important expression of Romanticism in the United States, it is principally associated with the work of essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, journalist and feminist Margaret Fuller, Unitarian minister and antislavery advocate Theodore Parker, and essayist, naturalist, and political theorist Henry David Thoreau. The transcendentalists extended the Unitarian theological rebellion against Puritan Calvinism, moving toward a post-Christian spirituality that held each man and woman capable of spiritual development and fulfillment. They developed literary as well as theological forms of expression, making a strong impact on American artistic and literary culture. Course discussions will focus on the ideas of moral perfectionism, the concept of moral and spiritual equality, utopian social and cultural experiments, and the influence of the transcendentalists’ absorption of Asian religions and philosophies and their function as critiques of American society and politics.

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Garcia-Sheets

Who Gets What, and Why?

Income inequality in the United States has grown since the 1980’s—even among those who are college educated, work full-time, and consider themselves staunchly middle class. Downsizing, outsourcing, lower wages, and reduced benefits have led to continued, and growing, inequality. What has happened to create this environment? Who is really affected by our current state? What can be done to create meaningful change? This is a course in critical thinking and analysis where the subject of social stratification becomes a lens through which power, wealth, social position, opportunity, and life expectancy are explored. The influence of social stratification on subjects such as education, employment, wages, race, and government policy is examined,
developing a deeper understanding of the forces in action, affecting the way American society works. This **community-based learning** class continues the focus developed in Pacific Seminar 1 by asking students to consider their role as citizens and future policy makers in the quest to create a “good” society.

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Giraldez

**Big History**

[Description is under revision.]

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Hamilton

**War, Peace, and Religion**

War and religion have a long and often confusing relationship. The current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrate this: how does religious conviction factor into the way we describe these “wars”? Is religion (of any sort) inherently violent? Isn’t “peace” also a common religious concern? This course will examine the phenomena of war and peace and religion by surveying the basic teachings and practices of the world’s great religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism) as well as other, smaller and more local traditions. Picking up themes from Pacific Seminar 1 (citizenship, church and state, ethics), some of our work will be historical survey—what have religious traditions said and done in the past; some of our work will be contemporary analysis; and some of our work will be theoretical—what is it about religion as such that seems to pursue both war and peace? Students will read in original and secondary literature, visit some local houses of worship and local clergy persons, and present their findings in formal research papers and in class presentations.

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Helgren

**Raising Good Citizens**

The condition of children in a society tells us a great deal about its values. Family structure, relationships, and children’s place in the community reflect a society’s concerns about what makes a good citizen and a good society. The seminar extends PACS1’s study of family, interpersonal relationships, and civil society by exploring various past and present forms of childhood and family. Discussions will focus on a range of topics such as education, work, play, violence, sexuality, parents and experts, and media and popular culture. We pay close attention to the diversity of child and family experiences based on such factors as gender, race, religion, class, and sexuality. In addition to the academic study of the concept of childhood, the class will
engage students directly through community based learning. Students will choose a local non-profit organization whose mission interests them and, as a member of a group, students work on a service project that in some way involves children and families.

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Hether

**Social Media and Society**

The impact of social media can be seen and felt nearly everywhere: from the way businesses interact with their customers, to the way individuals manage their interpersonal relationships, to the way activists instigate social movements. Social media have had a profound and far-reaching impact on our society. However, amidst all the fanfare of innovation, it’s important to also consider potential consequences. Only by identifying potential downsides to innovations can we attempt to mitigate them, or even resolve them. In this course students critically examine the social and cultural changes that social media have initiated with a focus on better understanding the overall net effect of these media. The course examines social media’s influence on society, organizations, and individuals. Students discuss the theory and methods used to study social media, critically evaluate research about social media, and analyze the role of social media in their own lives.

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Jones

**Do Something About It!**

This course will focus on the individual’s power to create a better community through self-guided research, writing, and collective social action. Test for yourself the claim in *Born to Be Good* that altruistic, compassionate acts make life more satisfying. The professor will guide students in a model study of inequality in the United States, while students participate in social change projects of their own choosing and develop their own research project on issues ranging from climate change to racial profiling/police violence.

Students will pick two social actions that they think will help create a good society: One involving direct aid and another involving working with an existing group to create a change on a larger scale. For example a student might help a group that is organized against racial profiling or support a legislator that is helping police develop best practices or join a group that is raising consciousness regarding the need for changes in policy related to global climate change. These studies and experiences participating in community action will inform student writings for a classroom blog and a research report.

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Killick
Empower, Act, Change

In the past decade, Stockton has experienced a range of social conditions that have enabled the emergence of a range of poor health-related outcomes. High foreclosure rates, increasing unemployment, growing numbers of residents living beneath the poverty line and a host of problematic urban-environmental practices have led to five “communities of concern” being identified within the city limits. Formed in 2011, Project YES! (a coalition of eight community partner organizations) is dedicated to improving the health outcomes of these communities of concern. Applying your critical thinking and analytical skills, you will join Project YES! advocates to examine the health inequalities evident in Stockton. The influence of social, economic and environmental factors on residents’ abilities to lead healthy lives will be examined and problematized. Alongside invested community members, you will explore existing community-led initiatives and propose mini action-change projects of your own. This community-based learning class continues the focus developed in Pacific Seminar 1 by asking students to consider their role as citizens and future leaders in the quest to create a ‘healthy’ society.

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Kim

World Politics and the Law

How do states govern the interactions among themselves in the absence of a centralized authority? “World Politics and the Law” will examine the nature and consequences of international law to understand how and to what extent the rules, principles, and norms agreed upon between states provide order to world politics. Students will have opportunities to revisit such themes from PACS 1 as Civil Society, Citizenship, and Governance and Global Issues. We will extend the concept of a “good society” to the global, interstate level understanding that the law in relation to the interstate system, just as law in general, reflects beliefs and ideas regarding the question of what justice is. We will discuss such moral issues by analyzing concrete cases on various topics such as humanitarian intervention, world trade disputes, and the global environment.

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Lessard

The Art of Giving & Gift of Art

This course will draw on a range of both literary and critical texts in order to explore various ways of understanding the meaning of gifts and giving. Despite the priority given to self-interest in a market economy, some of our most sacred bonds, values, and actions are motivated not by profit, but instead by generosity, charity, and acts of giving. From a mother “giving birth” to the
blackmarket for human organs or the controversial gift of death through euthanasia, giving and generosity remain at the core of human existence, including the “gift” of life itself. Whereas “to cheapen” at first only meant to put a price on something, our current association of “cheapness” with a thing that has lost value is but one of many indications that we hesitate to put a price on everything. Instead, we describe that which we hold most dear as “invaluable,” not because it has no value, but because its value is so high that to put any price on it would be to cheapen it. Yet what we mean by giving and generosity are not always clear. Is there, for example, such a thing as a pure gift, or an act of giving that is entirely untainted by self-interest of one sort or another—even the very human desire to think well of oneself?

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Little (Jennifer)

Photography as Social Advocacy

This course examines the history of documentary photography and its use as a tool for social advocacy. It expands upon Pacific Seminar I themes related to labor, civil society, environmental sustainability, and the media.

First, we learn about the history of war photography through an in-depth study of photographs from the US Civil War, World War II, and the Vietnam War, conflicts in which all sides employed documentary photographs for propaganda. The second part of the course traces the influence of social documentary photography from its beginnings in the 1880s to the present day. We examine the social impact of early Progressive Era (1890s-1920s) documentary photographers, as well as the contributions of later photographers who documented the lives of tenant farmers during the Great Depression (1930s). These photographers all sought to improve society by exposing the difficult living and working conditions endured by the poor. The course concludes with a look at the history of landscape photography advocating for conservation and environmental sustainability.

This course helps students refine their ability to critically analyze the messages that governments, mass media, and advocacy groups convey through photographs, and addresses the impact that socially conscious photography has had on our culture and history.

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Little (Mary)

Humor, Laughter, and Satire

From the time of the ancient Greeks to the new millennium, humans have been laughing at themselves, and it turns out that laughter and humor are not only enjoyable outlets, but also good for our health. This course will examine humor, laughter and satire as essential ingredients for a good society. Laughter can alleviate pain, both physical and emotional, and it can provide a brief vacation from the cares of the world. Historically, humor alleviates times of stress and war
in a country, and in tragedy, humor provides comic relief. Humor can also help “defuse conflict” (Keltner 66) as stated in *Born to be Good*, when leaders negotiate difficult issues.

Although humor is healthy, we might ask if it can be hurtful? When does humor stop being fun and turn into painful teasing, ridicule and stereotyping? Does a good society need boundaries for a balanced sense of humor?

During the course, we will contemplate types of humor from bawdy and slapstick to intellectual and satirical. We will discuss the quality and the intent of humor in the disciplines, the arts, and the media as we evaluate works by Aristophanes, Twain, and Swift, and on to current examples of our choice. Students will be able to work individually and collaboratively on humorous writing for jokes, standup comedy, improv and television scripts.

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Lohr

**Chosen by God?**

Within Judaism and Christianity one finds the idea that adherents are not only in possession of truth, but are in fact divinely favored, specially blessed, or “chosen by God.” These religions, foundational to American life and thinking, affirm the idea of “choseness” or what scholars call “election.” But can a good society exist in which a subset of people view themselves in this way? And what is the status of those not belonging to the chosen group? Are they hated, whether by God or those on the “inside”? Further, often America, like nations before it, considers itself to be specially blessed, indeed an “exceptional” nation in the world. Can the world exist as a good society when one nation views itself this way? This course will explore these and related issues through the lens of Jewish and Christian conceptions of divine election, tracing them back through the Bible, eventually moving to explore how nations, in Europe as well as America itself, have considered themselves to be chosen people. Key to the course’s investigations is a recognition of the complexities of nationalism and the important reality that often ideas of choseness or specialness are crucial to a nation’s persistence and prosperity.

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Lund

**The 1980’s**

This course will review the social and political issues of the 1980’s. Foremost, students will be exposed to the critical events of the decade. Following a seminar discussion of each topic, students will be asked to connect events of the 1980’s to modern times. Important issues from each year of the decade will be covered. Accordingly, students will be able to recognize the integral origins of important events.

Our conversations will explore important social developments, such as those within the technological field (computers), environmental issues (oil spills and ozone depletion), and legal
precedent. Politically, students will examine the impact of 11/9/89 (the fall of the Berlin Wall) on today’s governmental structures; similarly, students will leave understanding how events of the 1980’s chillingly foreshadowed the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001. Positions of authority described in the PACS 1 anthology (Orwell and Plato), will be applied to the authority figures during the Cold War. Students will develop two essays and debate the social and political issues we study.

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Speak Now or Hold Your Piece

This course examines the First and Second Amendments to the United States Constitution. The Freedom of Speech and Religion touches some aspect of every American life. Students from all disciplines can benefit from understanding Constitutional rights. The expanse and potential limitations of speech, expression, and religious freedoms will by thoroughly reviewed. Recent tragedies involving guns in America compel a discussion of the nature and limitations of the right to bear arms under the Second Amendment. Using Supreme Court caselaw as a guide, various sides of the American gun debate will be reviewed. Student expression and debate will be encouraged.

Chapter 3 of the Pacific Seminar I reader will be a significant portion of the course curriculum. Specifically, the Locke, Declaration of Independence, and Eck articles will be considered in light of our topic. A book and Supreme Court caselaw will support the PACS 1 reader. Approximately ¾ of the course will be dedicated to the First Amendment; for which a research paper will be assigned. About ¼ of the course will cover the Second Amendment. In addition to the research essay, debates, presentations, and writing assignments will test student understanding of the material.

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Mahala

Performing Civil Rights

From the Civil Rights Movement to Occupy Wall Street, activists have used art to assert their rights as citizens, participating in national dialogues that call for a more equitable society that recognizes and protects basic human rights. In this class we will study performance as a means of asserting those rights. Students will then create their own performance projects based on their own interests and engagement with the course material. Some of the artist/activists we will study include: hip hop activist Mos Def, Chicano/a playwrights Luis Valdez and Cherrie Moraga, Czech politician, poet, and playwright Vaclav Havel, SNICC member and co-founder of the Free Southern Theatre John O’Neal, various music of and about the Civil Rights Movement, and filmmaker Dustin Lance Black and his projects Milk and 8 the play.

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McCarthy

The American Dream

From the beginning, America was built to be “a city on the hill,” a beacon of light, a shining example of what constitutes a good society held up for the rest of the world’s view. Yet this “city” was built on a dream—the American Dream. But what is this Dream? Many have tried to define it, but the dream has taken as many shapes and forms as the dreamers themselves. In this course we will discuss these questions and examine the many forms the American Dream has taken within our society: freedom and liberty, equality, wealth, power, love, family, community, education, justice, a meaningful life, and the pursuit of happiness. We will also see how it informs our notion of what is a “good” and “bad” society and explore how this dream can sometimes turn into nightmare. Students will be required to read various essays and literary texts that inform the discussion throughout the semester.

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Meler

Art and Controversy

This course focuses on controversy and censorship in the arts, from attacks on the definition of art itself and accusations of blasphemy to outright political propaganda and government funding of the arts. Cases of controversial reception—sometimes resulting in criminal prosecution, imprisonment, or even murder—as well as artists engaging with controversial issues are included. Changing ideas about morality and freedom in different time periods and within different political contexts will be examined in case studies of national memorials, provenance, graffiti, activism, ownership, authenticity, public space, and commissions. Primary emphasis will be on visual art but regulation or censorship of literature, music and cinema will also be addressed.

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Meyer (Peter)

Economics and Social Welfare

We will focus on contributions economists have made to answer the question “What Is a Good Society?”

Problems of markets: Do we get the best results if we let markets run without regulation? When should the government step in? What can it do when there are problems of pollution? Scarce resources? Ignorant consumers? Dangerous conditions? Collusion?

Problems of entire countries: What can a country do to develop? Should it protect its own industries or engage in international competition, joining the WTO?

Problems of the best macro-economy: Should policy fight inflation, unemployment, or stagnation?

We address the theme “What Is a Good Society?” by looking at economic problems and solutions. We will look at various economic problems, from unemployment to poverty to natural resource depletion to underdevelopment, and compare the answers given by various economists, from laissez-faire to socialism.

Our objectives include having students understand the economic causes of many problems. Students will analyze some economic problems, consider the various solutions, and evaluate them, often from the perspective of who is served who is hurt by a policy proposal.

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Meyers (Joan)

Teams at Work

Workplaces are where we spend most of our waking adult lives, where we develop adult social skills, and where we increasingly form our adult identities. One of the most significant changes in workplaces in the last few decades is the restructuring of corporate hierarchies and the enormous growth in teamwork and employee self-management. While teamwork offers workers opportunities for greater creativity, control, and satisfaction at work, it also creates an unfamiliar—and often treacherous—field of action, demanding new capabilities and approaches from workers and managers. This course will examine the interpersonal dynamics and effects of these transformations. We will combine practice in strategies to effectively participate in work teams with analysis of social and structural factors that affect team formation and functioning. To this end we will study academic and industry writing on these topics, and explore relevant issues through case studies and class experiences. Students will leave this class with a clear sense of workplace transformations, with a developed set of team skills to take into their 21st century careers, and with a stronger understanding of their workplace contributions to changing social life.

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Rohlf

Think Globally, Act Globally
Why do people go abroad to volunteer for work you would have to pay them well to do at home? They build houses in Guatemala, plant trees in Senegal or teach English to little kids in Vietnam without being paid a cent. For-profit businesses even coordinate overseas volunteer placements for those who are willing to pay for the experience. And it’s not just for Americans. Countries like Australia, Japan, Taiwan and Germany have thriving overseas volunteer programs. Does the popularity of this experience for college students and graduates from many different countries prove that the sense of a “Good Society” now encompasses the entire world? In this course we will try to understand why overseas volunteering has become so popular all around the world. You will also choose and plan an overseas voluntary experience for yourself (either actual or imaginary) and reflect on why you want to do it, what you think you can “give back” overseas, and what you think you will gain from experience. The course is designed to follow Pacific Seminar 1 consideration of issues like Nations in a Global society, Work and Education.

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Sample

The Perfect Society’s Citizens

If a good society is good, a perfect society has to be better, right? Drawing on themes of the state and civil society, this course will examine modern historical attempts at creating the “perfect society,” and particularly the way in which these attempts to carve out perfection defined citizenship in ways that were often deadly for individuals in those societies. Particularly in the 20th century, a number of countries attempted to create perfect societies and concluded that doing so required eliminating those people who weren’t “real citizens” of their nation, whether those were Jews, class enemies, or others. We will examine the causes and consequences of genocide (from the Holocaust to Rwanda) and other types of state organized mass murder in the course, both through the social scientific lens and through accounts of individuals within those societies. What is genocide? How does it differ from other kinds of state mass murder, and to what extent does that difference matter? Finally, we will examine the role of the citizen, ethically and practically, in a state that is determined to create “the perfect society” at any cost necessary.

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Savelieva-Thompson

Society in Fiction & Film

Can a person be good in modern society, and if so, how? The goal of this course is to explore this question in greater depth. In doing so, we will read 3-4 novels and screen several feature films. Each of these works encompasses the question of the individual within modern society. Also, each work touches upon the quest for identity and meaning. The course will require three essays: these papers will form the basis for an original research paper. Students who enjoy reading novels and poetry are strongly encouraged to enroll.

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Schmeling

Meeting in the Melting Pot

How does your cultural background influence and shape your view of the world and of other people, and how do you interact with others as a result of this? How do belief systems, values and behaviors vary across cultures? We will focus especially on friendship and family relationships in this context. This class will explore these questions with a three-fold approach: Firstly, we will be looking at the “hard facts” and examine relevant cross-cultural research. We will be focusing especially on the concepts of Individualism and Collectivism. Secondly, we will combine those hard facts with contributions from fiction, autobiographical narratives, film and radio that shed further light on the questions of our cross-cultural differences (or similarities!). Lastly, we will draw from our personal experience: the final project of this class will be to develop a written narrative examining one's beliefs and values drawing on the material covered in the class. In addition, there will be a group research project, where students will come up with their own research question and present their results to the class. Required readings for this class will come from an immigrant anthology with fictional and autobiographical contributions, as well as scholarly articles.

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Smith (Amy)

Arts and Community

Do the arts matter? In this difficult economy, should school districts use resources to teach children music, theater, and other ‘non-academic’ arts subjects? How can arts be used for social good by non-profit organizations? This course will give you the opportunity to consider the role of different types of arts in education and in the community at large. Can a ‘good society’ exist without arts—and arts education available to all a society’s members? Since this is a Community Based Learning section, you’ll choose a local non-profit organization whose mission interests you and, as a member of a group, you’ll work on a service project that in some way involves drama, dance, visual arts, literature, or music.

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Smith (Anne)

Christian America?

Is this a Christian nation? What did the Founding Fathers really believe? How have Christian religious movements changed the shape of U.S. society and the course of U.S. history? And what
difference does it make? This course explores how Christianity has shaped U.S. society since the first British colonists arrived in Virginia. What has the function of our dominant religion been? How has the tension between church and state really played out—are our assumptions and the conventional wisdom accurate? How do the many stripes of Christianity respond to our society’s problems, and what solutions do they propose? This class will survey the history of Christianity in U.S. to understand the ways our society has been shaped by different expressions of this religion, and then look at the current societal landscape and ask what influence Christianity may have in society now and in the future, particularly in areas such as social norms, politics, economics, the environment, and social justice.

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Stewart

America: Global Caretaker

This course will examine and question America’s role as a global superpower in other countries, particularly military and humanitarian actions. Does America’s involvement improve (a) the society in the host nation, (b) the global society and (c) American society? How does America’s influence as an arguably “good” society impact other nations with different values and beliefs as to what defines a “good” society and how does this affect the world as a whole?

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Thiel

Divided By Faith

When Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States in 1830 he described the unique American tension of religion and democracy as a “harmonization of heaven and earth.” One might suspect that if Tocqueville returned today and witnessed the searing inferno of rhetoric regarding church and state he might invoke a different metaphor. This course relates to the overarching theme, “What is a Good Society?” Although church and state are kept separate by the US Constitution, religion and politics are often connected in a number of ways and mutually influence each other. A glance at the major news stories in recent years (Supreme Court nominees, justification of war, stem cell research etc.) reveals that the American society continues to live in the tension of the first amendment. This course connects most closely to the chapters in PACS 1 on the family and interpersonal relationships, civil society and the proper role of the state, as we will discuss the hotly contested role of religion in these three aspects of American life. This course will examine contributions from Native American traditions, religious thinkers and activists, constitutional framers and theorists, and the implications of significant court decisions. Historical and contemporary church/state dilemmas will be examined and critiqued as we seek to form a more civil society.

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Turpin

**Media & Pop Culture Critique**

An introduction to the field of mass media, rhetoric, and cultural studies. The course is designed to develop students’ abilities to critically examine how factors of identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality take shape in messages of mass media, including television, radio, internet, and movies, as well as in media messages like advertising. Students will be introduced to principles of persuasion and to ways of doing media criticism. The theme “What is a good society?” will continue through learning to research and write about how depictions of identity in mass media play a role in civil society, producing a critical evaluation of a media artifact (magazine, television show, etc.).

Students completing the course should be able to:
- Describe how the Communication discipline critically frames the PACS 1 question “What is a good society?”
- Explain how answers to “What is a good society?” are affected by markers of identity, including gender, race, class, and sexuality.
- Analyze media messages in terms of their persuasive dynamics.
- Develop research questions and skills in retrieving, evaluating, and documenting information for scholarly assignments.
- Critically reflect on the relationships between mass media and American culture in written and oral work.

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Webster

**Can You Feel My Pain?**

This course will explore the question (and importance) of the role of empathy in a good society. The course will begin with a thorough discussion of what empathy is from a cognitive and social perspective, and we will trace its development in families and cultures. The impact of empathy for individuals and groups will then be discussed within the context of social problems such as bullying, crime and punishment, and mental health. Finally, we will discuss the importance of, and challenges to empathy in global society.

This course will explore the following questions:

1. What are the cognitive and social components of empathy? How and when does empathy develop?
2. What enhances, and what inhibits the development of empathy?
3. How is empathy involved in the commission of crimes?
4. What is empathy’s role in mental health?
5. Can empathy become part of a group process, and if so, how?
6. What contextual and social factors enhance or inhibit empathy at the individual, group, and global levels?

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West-Sell

**Medicine, Health & Sport**

In this course, students will explore the connections between medicine, health and sport and how they influence our society. This course will draw on the concepts of self and self-reflection as well as family and interpersonal relationships from PACS 1 as they relate to advances in medical science, individual and community health, and participation in sport. Students will be asked to consider several questions throughout this course. Which medical advances have made our society better? Are advances in medical science always beneficial to society? What aspects of sport are good for society? What defines a healthy society and do we meet that definition today? What aspects of sport contribute to improved individual and community health? Does a “win at all cost” attitude create an environment conducive to cheating? This course will culminate in a research paper and presentation where you will evaluate a specific aspect of medicine, health, or sport, either separately or in combination and its’ influence on a good society.

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Zorea

**And Justice For All**

This course will explore the complex relationship between the rule of law and the good society. This course is designed to explain the law though the same case-briefing method used in all major law schools. By learning how to “think like a lawyer,” students will develop an understanding of how the law is organized, applied, and the particular moral and philosophical issues that are raised in the context of legal dispute. Class time will be spent analyzing relevant legal cases, applying legal theories, and practicing arguments. You should have ample opportunity to develop and demonstrate strong listening, thinking and speaking skills.

The course will be divided into an introductory overview and three sections. The first section will concern obligations which arise under civil law. The second section will cover obligations which arise under criminal law. The final section of the course will concern the obligations that society owes its citizens—constitutional law.