

# Fall 2017-2018 Catalyst Course Descriptions

## Catalyst 220 – Interdisciplinary Integration

**M W F 11:15AM – 12:25PM**

**R 1:05PM – 1:55PM**

### **CTL 220.01: Democracy Counts**

**Professors Wingenbach and Young**

**Four credits**

In 1998, the professional wrestler Jesse “The Body” Ventura was elected Governor of Minnesota in a three-way race, despite the fact that the majority of voters preferred the other two candidates. Was this the result of an unfair election? Are all elections unfair, or does it just seem that way if your preferred candidate loses? In this integrated course, we will use concepts from political science and mathematics to analyze different voting systems and debate the purpose of voting in a democratic society. Students will propose solutions to real world voting issues, such as the challenge of constructing fair congressional districts, the impact of partisanship on representation, the appropriate role of shareholder voting in controlling company management, or the role of the Electoral College in selecting the President.

### **CTL 220.02: Bring Out Your Dead: Infectious Disease Through History**

**Professors Kainz and Matzke**

**Four credits**

The history of humanity has been interwoven with the history of disease, and despite medical advances in the past century, infectious diseases remain a threat to human well-being worldwide. This interdisciplinary course will explore infectious disease from two different disciplinary perspectives: biology and history. We will study outbreaks of devastating diseases in world history—including the Black Death, smallpox, and influenza. We will examine the biology of disease, including transmission, diagnosis, and control, as well as how those diseases affected humans throughout history. We will use historical methods to investigate human reactions, political responses, and social and economic consequences. We will also look at portrayals of infectious diseases in American pop culture, including movies and TV.

# Spring 2017-2018 Catalyst Course Descriptions

## Catalyst 220 – Interdisciplinary Integration

M T W F 10:10AM - 11:00AM

### **CTL 220.01: Saints, Witches, and Queens: Depictions of Medieval Women in Historical Drama**

**Ann Pleiss-Morris**

**Four Credits**

Do you enjoy the dynastic power struggles of *Game of Thrones*? Do you love the sometimes accurate sensual politics of *Reign*? Did you think the scope of the epic *Hollow Crown* was impressive? If the answer is yes, then this might be the course for you. We will be examining the ways in which playwrights, especially those from the time of Shakespeare, depict medieval women and their involvement in matters of war, state, and familial politics. Our readings will be paired with historical documents to investigate how playwrights use both their source materials and their contemporary social and political environments in their characterizations of these women. At the heart of our study will be Shakespeare's War of the Roses plays in which you will meet fiery Joan of Arc, devilish Margaret of Anjou, easily persuaded Anne Neville, and the practical Elizabeth of Woodville. Along the way, we will explore larger questions about how our own contemporary arts and popular culture depict medieval women and what that might tell us about our own political agendas and gender constructs. *This course will include regular meetings with Professor Mockridge's course "Bachelorettes and Wives: Medieval Women in Love and Marriage."*

### **CTL 220.02: Bachelorettes and Wives: Medieval Women in Love and Marriage**

**Diane Mockridge**

**Four Credits**

Would you want to compete in the television reality show *Married at First Sight* and meet your mate at the altar? Or appear in *Arranged* and let your parents pick your spouse? Or would you prefer to star in *The Bachelorette* and pick your own spouse? Imagine for a minute what it must have been like for medieval women as they negotiated love and marriage. Most would have had little choice over what we consider the most personal of decisions. Over the course of this semester we will examine medieval attitudes toward love, sex, and marriage and how those attitudes affected gender roles. We will also look at how one's marital status affected the amount of autonomy a woman had during the Middle Ages. Attitudes toward these subjects will be gleaned from an examination of various works of art, literature, and historical documents.

*This course will include regular meetings with Professor Pleiss Morris' course "Saints, Witches, and Queens: Depictions of Medieval Women in Historical Drama."*

### **CTL 220.03: Who Rules the Street?**

**Brian Bockelman & Molly Margaretten**

**Four Credits**

Whether in a big city or a small town, the street is a crucial public space that enables and shapes community life. But not everyone agrees what kind of place it is or who should control it. Throughout history and around the globe, the street has always been a contested terrain, subject to competing definitions and uses. Is it a thoroughfare or a place to hang out? A shopper's delight or a sinner's paradise? A series of buildings or somebody's turf? This interdisciplinary course will explore the many concepts, cultures, and conflicts of the street from the perspectives of anthropology, history, and related fields in the humanities and social sciences. Students will learn how different disciplines approach similar questions about public spaces, deepen their knowledge of effective research and communication methods for the study of societies past and present, and improve their abilities to collaborate across liberal arts fields on the examination of a long-standing problem of street life (homelessness, property rights, prostitution, riots, protests, road maintenance, gang violence, substandard housing, informal economy, etc.) in a specific cultural and historical context.

### **Catalyst 220.04: Poetry, Prose, Pinterest: Writing and Contemporary Collage**

**Rafael Salas and Megan Gannon**

**Four credits**

We are relentlessly bombarded with words and images. It is the creative mind that controls this "social scrapbooking" to make it meaningful. In this class, we will explore Pinterest, poetry, prose and collage to discuss how art and writing parallel and at times conflict, and how together they can enrich and complicate our experience. A number of questions will guide our study. How do writers and artists address the same subject matter in multiple genres while avoiding redundancy? What must complement or contrast in text and art to make them both more powerful? Students will complete original projects that combine image and text and will use these projects to organize themselves into groups with classmates who share similar aims or styles. They will then collaborate to present research on established artists and writers who have inspired these artistic "schools" or movements. Prior experience in visual art and creative writing is not required.