

**Syracuse University**

College of Arts & Sciences  
Advising and Career Services

**CAS 100 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS  
FALL 2017**

## Being Human: Climate and Society

Extension ID: A01

Our everyday life and our societies are fundamentally shaped by their relationship with the natural environment. From the natural resources needed for survival to how we manage our trash, how our food and water is produced and delivered, how our dependence and perceptions of nature shape our world, the relationship between the environment and society shapes every aspect of our lives. In many ways nature-society relations are a continual, ongoing history of socio-political, cultural and economic processes that we need to understand. Therefore, our technological advancements, resource-use practices and access to natural resources are closely tied to historical shifts in this relationship across every scale - from the body to the global.

## Environment Justice: Here and the World

Extension ID: A02

Our everyday lives and our societies are fundamentally shaped by their relationship with the natural environment. Our fundamental access to and right to basic resources of the world, such as water, air, food, shelter and health are very powerfully shaped by our relationship with our environment and the societies we live in. This course explores the question of socio-economic and socio-political justice in relationship to the environment and will draw on theoretical work and case studies of environmental justice struggles from both the United States and around the world, to deepen our understanding of environmental justice. This course delves into how intersecting social relations of race, class, gender, ability and other axis of difference can shape our relationship and access to resources for our everyday life and our struggles for it.

## Fairy Tales Uncloaked

Extension I: A03

Most of us are familiar with fairy tales through the works of the Brothers Grimm and their widescreen adaptations by Walt Disney. But these stories span a wide range of time and space, and they are not always soft and friendly. This course will introduce students not only to the fairy tales that came before they were mass marketed, but also those tales which were retold in resistance to cultural pressures. Fairy tales are a site for exploring questions of justice, community, and gender. They offer warnings against sexual danger and social impropriety as often as they provide ideals and social values. We will read and watch fairy tales old and new in concert with folkloristic scholarship and feminist theory, exploring their subversive potential and considering their impact on those who consume them.

## Food and Bodies

Extension ID: A04

We obsess over food, particularly about the relationship between our diets and our bodies. This obsession is not new, and it has changed dramatically over time. This course focuses on the historical and contemporary relationships between food and bodies, drawing on both scientific and cultural ideas about eating. It also examines the ways that companies have deployed ideas about diets and bodies to influence what people eat.

## Imagining Technology in the Past, Present, and Future

Extension ID: A05

While new technologies are exciting, imagining the next technology is perhaps even more exciting. Sometimes our imaginations of the future are grounded in the possible, but people have often extended their imaginations to what they wish—or fear—the future will be. Looking at sources from the past and the present, this course looks at how past predictions about new technologies have compared to historical reality. It then turns to the present and looks at what we can learn about the future of technology from studying contemporary predictions of the future.

## Lytic Experiments & Poetic Forms

Extension ID: A06

What is poetry? Poet and scholar Myung Mi Kim has said that “Poetry is simply how you participate in language, and we all do that.” While poets may feel, see and hear poetry everywhere, those who do not consider themselves to be poets may wonder what makes something a poem or even why poems matter. Building on Kim’s framework of inclusivity, this course will introduce students to the impressive and exciting range of experimental techniques and forms that make up the field of contemporary poetry. We will read works by a diverse range of writers, all of which will broaden our definition of what poetry is and how we can engage with it. We will treat writing as an essential component of thinking and engage a combination of creative and critical writing practices.

## The Medieval World in Popular Culture

Extension ID: A07

From *The Lord of the Rings* to *Game of Thrones*, we are surrounded by images and fabrications of medieval life. In this class, we explore what is peculiarly modern about these uses of the medieval world, as well as how our own culture and identity is reflected in these fictionalized images, whether they are overt or hidden. Vikings, wizards, and dragons are easy to identify as “medieval”—but what about Captain America? Why is “medieval” a shorthand for brutal violence? How is the “medieval” world gendered and racialized? This course will survey the popular culture that borrows from the medieval world alongside the medieval sources from which it came, in concert with secondary readings in feminist scholarship, disability studies, and studies of gender and sexuality. In so doing, we will ask: what is accurate or inaccurate about these medievalisms? Should we care about their historical accuracy? What do they say about our own priorities?

## Poetry of Struggle: Writers on Social Justice

Extension ID: A08

Who controls what we get to imagine? Do words have an effect on the world? Writers have always given their audiences intimate contact with the complexities of human experience. Where politics and media tend to be controlled by market powers, the world of literary art lies predominantly outside of what can be bought or sold. In this course, we will explore how the poetic imagination can extend our understanding of what is possible, bear witness to social and environmental suffering, and counter the apathy, amnesia or cynicism of our age. We will read a range of contemporary poets whose work addresses social issues such as racism, sexism, environmental catastrophe and imperialism. These works will invite us to think critically about subjective experience in the context of an unequal social world. We will treat writing as an essential component of thinking and engage a combination of creative and critical writing practices.