

## Spring Tutorials and Seminar 2011-12

Dear seniors,

Attached are the list of tutorials and seminars offered this spring in lieu of your present AS English 4 class. As you will see, there are many exciting choices in cultural history and music; in law and politics; in economics and linguistics, as well as a range of offerings in history, religion, science and literature.

The breadth of the offerings and the structure of the tutorial program are designed to allow you to pursue your own academic interests and passions. Working closely with a faculty member and a few peers on material that you are particularly interested in but that may lie outside your normal curriculum provides you with a rich, culminating academic experience: it allows you to exhibit your strengths as students and thinkers in reading and writing—not merely as students of literature, but as scholars of other disciplines as well.

The tutorial format described below also demands an ability to work independently and use time effectively. Because each tutorial meeting is centered around the essays and problems you as students will be presenting, it is absolutely essential that you meet deadlines established by your teachers. Late work will not just hurt your own learning, but it will slow the progress of your classmates as well and is not acceptable. The value of the tutorial for you and your classmates will depend in large part upon the discipline and engagement you bring to it.

Each tutorial will share a number of common features:

- It will meet at least twice weekly, once to discuss that week's materials and a second time to discuss student writing.
- It will be composed of approximately three or four students or fewer.
- It will possess a strong writing and oral component. In each tutorial students will demonstrate their understanding of the material through the delivery of a weekly essay or presentation of a prepared problem (three to four pages) and discuss their results orally.
- In tutorials of two or more students, students may alternate giving essays or presenting problems, with the faculty and remaining students acting as critical readers and respondents. (The other students would be asked to turn their work in to the instructor for assessment.)
- Students will be expected to do five to six hours of work outside of class in preparation for the tutorial.

There is also one seminar opportunity. Some students may be directed to the seminar based on their work in their English class this year. Others may choose the seminar for its larger discussion format and greater structure and direction that may be more helpful to different learning styles.

Both the tutorials and the seminar are designed to help you develop the skills that will serve you well in college and beyond: research, writing, argumentation, and problem-solving, among others.

Please review these offerings carefully to select your top five choices. You will be instructed via an email from Mrs. Henson as to how to submit your choices on a Google document form. We will attempt to place you in your first or second choice, but, as you know, this may not always be possible.

The deadline for submission of your choices is the end of the school day on Friday, February 18. Please be in touch with one of us or with the relevant instructor if you have any questions about the tutorial format or content.

Mr. Costa and Mr. Speers

## **1. African Literature: Four Points of the Continent**

### **Ms. Hamilton**

This course will study four works about Africa, written by Africans from the North, South, East, and Western regions of the continent. Naguib Mahfouz's novella, *The Day the Leader was Killed*, will take us on an exploration of a typical family's lifestyle in Egypt during times of governmental turmoil. Ishmael Beah's memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, will take us to the Sierra Leone as we manage to sympathize with the life of a child soldier, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's famous play, *I Will Marry When I Want*, an uncensored play that was the cause of the author's arrest, will take us to the political turmoil in Kenya in the 1970s. Finally, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* will lend a female perspective to growing up in Rhodesia (modern day Zimbabwe). Each piece has a character whose journey of self-awareness is complicated by turmoil far out of their control. We will explore each author's methodology in surfacing the character's obstacles in relation to the political atmosphere.

## **2. "And justify the ways of God to men": A "First" Reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost***

### **Mr. Costa**

This tutorial offers a first of hopefully many readings of John Milton's Christian epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, a telling of the story of Satan's fall, the creation of the world, and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve. It explores the poetic problem of being "first," as well as the "justification" of God's ways as presented by this great English classicist, humanist and Christian apologist: the problem and allure of evil within the divinely created universe, and the quandaries of reconciling fate and human will, divine omniscience and human reason.

## **3. (un)making (un)civilization: studies in Post-Apocalyptic Literature**

### **Mr. Porter**

The Apocalypse has long been a literary device that comments on the nature of civilization through its imagined dismantling. This class will look at the way writers portray life after the Apocalypse: what survives, and why? How are we both doomed to repeat the failures of our past and worthy of the world in which we live? Historical context will play an important role in our studies, as these writers use the trope of the post-apocalypse to critique the forces that shape the age in which they live, such as industrialization in Richard Jeffries' *After London* (1885), colonization in Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* (1912), nuclear war in Nevil Shute's *On the Beach* (1957), language in Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* (1980) and Octavia Butler's "Speech Sounds" (1984), and xenophobia in Carol Emshwiller's "Killers" (2004). We will conclude by reading Cormac McCarthy's elegiac and oddly hopeful novel, *The Road* (2006).

## **4. Creative Writing: Poetry**

### **Mr. Childers**

Rim, net, goal post, and end zone: rules and constraints give meaning to games and allow individual excellence and creativity to shine. In this tutorial students will learn the formal rules of the game of poetry in English by reading classic and contemporary poems and writing their own. They will begin to play with the engrossing and delightful problems of making verse and in the process will work to hone their sensitivity to and facility with the English language as well as their ear for its music.

## **5. Creative Writing: Fiction**

### **Mr. Childers**

We have all been spellbound by stories, drawn inexorably on their current towards conclusions that move and delight. But how do stories succeed? What makes us so willing to suspend disbelief and surrender to the dream of fiction? In this tutorial students will study elements of successful fiction while reading accomplished stories and writing their own. We will complete short weekly writing assignments practicing a different aspect of storycraft (such as detail, character, scene, and plot) and will then put it all together in one longer story.

## **6. Language, Communication, and Linguistics**

### **Dr. Taylor**

Everything that we think of as distinctive of humanity—culture, morality, science, art, religion, and education—depends on language. But where does language come from? What are its fundamental properties? How did it evolve in us as a species? How do infants learn language so quickly—and without instruction (or homework!)—whereas it takes older children and adults many years of study? Are babies born with an innate knowledge of the essentials of language? Can an ape, if raised like a human child, learn human words or grammar? Does language influence our minds, so that speakers of different languages think differently? Is any language better than any other?

These questions form part of the field of linguistics: the study of the uniquely human faculty of language and of the diverse language systems created by that faculty. In this tutorial we will read a selection of essays and book extracts written by linguists in which these questions are discussed and possible answers proposed and argued for. In addition to regular, weekly writing assignments on the readings, students will prepare a final research paper on a topic agreed in advance with the instructor.

## **7. Latin American Fiction**

### **Ms. Hastings**

This tutorial will focus on a selection of Latin American fiction by a variety of twentieth and twenty-first century authors. Since magical realism is at the heart of much of Latin American fiction, we will begin the course with a discussion and exploration of this concept. Our reading will begin with some of Jorge Luis Borges' stories from *Labyrinths*; we will then continue on to a selection of Julio Cortazar's stories from *Blow-Up* before considering Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novella, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. The tutorial will conclude with reading a longer novel; the possibilities for this text are Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, Manuel Puig's *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, Juan Jose Saer's *The Investigation* or – depending on the students' interests – Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (although Morrison is American, her work is distinctly influenced by the work of Latin American authors).

## **8. Parts of the Whole: Short Stories as Collections**

### **Ms. Hastings**

We often think of – and read – short stories as individual units. However, there are many collections of short stories that authors place together to create one larger text. In this course, we will read some of these collections and talk about how the stories work to create a single work of literature: How do we come to understand the whole text through the sum of its parts? How does our reading of the individual stories change when we think of them in the context of the whole?

Possible texts for the course include Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street*, Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time*, Elizabeth Strout's *Olive Kitteridge*, Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller* and Junot Diaz's *Drown*.

This course will also be offered as a Senior Seminar.

## **9. *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *Memoirs of a Geisha***

### **Mrs. Roach and Ms. Ramírez**

In this tutorial, we will read Gabriel Garcia Márquez's novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* and Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The richness and versatility of these narratives reveal the fine line between fiction and truth through the love stories of Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza, and the Chairman and Sayuri. Through the lens of these love stories, we will explore the construction and deconstruction that time has on souls and cities, memory and identity, freedom and discovery of self.

## **10. Shakespeare's Comedies**

### **Mrs. Hurtt**

In his classic comedies, Shakespeare's theatrical devices—disguises, mistaken identities, irony, and insult hurling—send characters into crisis and provide audiences with amusement and food for thought. This tutorial will read three plays: *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. We will attend a performance of one of the plays and view film adaptations of the others, in order to discover what makes Shakespeare's plays so relevant and enjoyable today.

## **11. *The Brothers Karamazov*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

### **Mr. Speers**

There's a story that a college professor's son told his dad he was dropping out of college because he was disengaged, uninspired, at loss. His father told him he could do whatever he wanted to, but he asked his son if before he did so, would he just read *The Brothers Karamazov*. The son agreed; he read it in a single setting; he went back to college intellectually hungry and morally reinvigorated.

This is one of the great novels of all time, about family, murder, religion, treachery, spiritual crisis, and forgiveness. This is a book that changes lives.

## **12. 9/11/2001**

### **Mr. Everhart**

For this tutorial, we will explore what happened on the day of September 11, 2001, and we will look at how that day came to pass. Our primary textbook will be the Pulitzer Prize winning *The Looming Tower* by Lawrence Wright, and we will read a number of primary sources as we investigate the following questions: Who is Osama bin Laden? What is the history of al-Qaeda? Why was the United States attacked? Why wasn't the United States government able to prevent the attacks? What is the philosophy behind a group like al-Qaeda, and how should the United States respond? Why did the United States go to war with Iraq? Who is the United States fighting in Afghanistan?

9/11 is a date that has helped to shape much of the history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and this class should be a great chance to think, debate, discuss, process, and write about all the long term and immediate reasons and repercussions of the attack.

## **13. Apartheid: South Africa's Shame**

### **Mr. and Mrs. Hyde**

Apartheid—a term that originates from the Afrikaans word for “apartness”—was the social and political policy of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by white minority governments in South Africa. This tutorial explores the era of apartheid in South Africa, from its birth in 1948 to its dismantling in the early 1990s. We will examine the emergence of apartheid and how it grew in strength and power; the fall of apartheid (especially Nelson Mandela's role in this process); and how South Africa has rebounded since the end of this oppressive era. We will use a variety of sources to explore these and other issues in South African history.

## **14. The History of Jazz**

### **Mr. Geiersbach**

What is this thing called jazz? Louis Armstrong famously replied, “If you have to ask, you’ll never know.” In this tutorial we will study Ken Burns’ important documentary on the topic through the lenses of important jazz scholars and we will attend a live performance. Ability to read music is helpful but not required for this tutorial.

## **15. In the Shadow of the Sesquicentennial: The Civil War in American Memory**

### **Ms. Pressman**

Writer Robert Penn Warren claimed that “The Civil War is our only ‘felt’ history – history lived in our national imagination.” Over the last 150 years, Americans have returned to this conflict over and over, remembering, reimagining and re-fighting (sometimes literally) the Civil War in an effort to understand and define who we are as a nation. In this tutorial, we will consider the competing narratives that have been crafted about the War, and what these narratives tell us, not only about the Civil War, but about ourselves in the nearly century and a half since Appomattox. For, as historian David Blight argues, how we as a nation remember “our greatest events . . . has a profound impact every day, in every way on the present in which we live – and in fact, almost all important questions of historical memory are always about the present.”

Some of the specific topics we may explore include the “Lost Cause” and competing narratives of the war in the postbellum period; the role of women in shaping Civil War memory; the work of monuments and memorials in crafting understandings of the War; reenactors and the “sacred” space of the battlefield; the memory of the Civil War at the centennial (1961-1965, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement); the continuing controversy over the Confederate battle flag; the recent (fall 2010) controversy over Virginia textbooks’ reference to “black Confederates”; representations of the Civil War in literature and film; Virginia’s declaration just last year of “Confederate History Month.”

Sources will include David Blight’s *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*; Tony Horowitz’s *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from America’s Unfinished Civil War*; the feature films *Birth of a Nation*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Glory* and *C.S.A.*; and a variety of primary sources ranging from records of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and Daughters of the Confederacy, to photographs of the Civil War Dead, to War monuments and memorials – including some field work exploring local monuments and what they tell us about the complex memory of the war in border states.

## **16. U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America: Cuba - A Case Study**

### **Mr. Miller**

The United States has a unique relationship with Latin America due to historical coincidence and geographical proximity. Perhaps no other country in Latin America has as special a relationship with the United States as Cuba. Cuba's destiny has been inextricably tied to the foreign policy decisions of the United States since before its independence from Spain until now, the fifty-year mark of the Cuban Revolution. In this tutorial, politico-historical in nature, we will brush the pre-Cuban independence period, concentrate more closely on the pre-Revolution era and then focus sharply on the Revolutionary period in relations. We will also dissect the present state of affairs, which are ever changing due to Fidel Castro's failing health, the passing of power to his brother Raúl and the advent of a new administration in the United States. In short, we will endeavor to comprehend the dynamics of the U.S.-Cuban relationship in order to better understand the framework that will shape the next phase of relations between the two nations.

## **17. Social Realism, Art and Film of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **Mr. McGiff**

This tutorial begins by examining the attention French Realist painters of the mid-19th century brought to issues of poverty and social injustice and focuses on the work of 20th century filmmakers who carried this mission forward. We will study the work of both European and American directors from Antonio de Sica (*The Bicycle Thief* and *The Roof*) to Spike Lee (*Do the Right Thing*), whose main interest is in portraying the social inequalities and lives of marginalized persons through the lens of realism. Weekly papers will discuss the specific ways in which our chosen artists answer this basic question: can art be a tool of transformation, both of the individual and society as a whole?

## **18. Atheism in a Post-9/11 World**

### **Mr. Harney**

At various points in history, including the time following Darwin's discoveries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the aftermath of the Holocaust in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scientific advances or tragic events have led some to turn to atheism.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a significant rise in atheistic books and articles, commonly known as "The New Atheism." Best-seller lists have since been populated by books such as *The God Delusion*, *God is Not Great*, *The End of Faith*, and *Breaking the Spell*, by authors Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett, respectively. This increase in publication has been followed by a flood of books by Christian authors, countering the arguments of the New Atheists.

In this tutorial, we will carefully examine writings of the New Atheists. We will seek to answer the question, "What is 'new' about the 'New Atheism'?" by comparing their writings to those of previous atheistic authors such as Bertrand Russell, and to determine whether this atheistic wave is related to the events of 9/11 or simply coincidental timing. We will also study a number of the books and writings that challenge the New Atheists and will try to determine whether the New Atheists' arguments are sound or problematic. In the process, we hope to place this brand of atheism into historical context and to understand both its arguments and its motivations.

## **19. Modern Microeconomics: Game Theory**

### **Mr. Finch**

Game theory explores the strategic interactions between agents whose decisions affect one another. The "prisoner's dilemma" is a classic example in which individuals pursue their own self-interest, yet create a non-optimal outcome. Such a result flew in the face of Adam Smith's economics. The game theory work of John Nash earned him the Nobel Prize because his "Nash Equilibrium" became instrumental in understanding topics as diverse as democratic elections, industrial organization, and the Cold War.

Students in the tutorial will be presented the basic tenets of game theory. Each week they will be responsible for solving a particular problem and presenting it to the group. The culminating assignment will be a paper that uses game theory to analyze a current conflict or problem. Boarding school admissions and interactions between faculty and VI Form students over submission of homework were among the topics analyzed by past participants.

## **20. Thinking Like A Lawyer**

### **Mr. O'Connell**

This course begins by asking, "How do lawyers in America analyze conflict?" To answer this question we will identify and write arguments on each side of some actual event. For example, some students have examined their own criminal culpability for encouraging aquarium fish to fight. Other students considered the possibility of criminally prosecuting a soccer player who grabbed a St. Andrew's player's crotch. Next, we will ask what functions we can reasonably expect law to perform. Can a legal system be freed of problems of interpretation and indeterminacy? Key texts are Alan Morrison's *Fundamental of American Law*, Kenneth J. Vandavelde's, *Thinking Like a Lawyer* and Paul Campos' *Jurismania*. These texts will be supplemented with statutes and case law relevant to our chosen legal problems.

## **21. Frailties of the Mind**

### **Mr. O'Connell**

No longer viewed as a splendid, all-purpose learning machine, recent evidence from neurobiology and psychology suggests the human mind is more like a Swiss army knife—a limited tool with specialized capacities. By looking at circumstances where people fail to make wise decisions or truthful insights, we hope to discover a distinctive set of human mental weaknesses. We will also ask how we have come to possess these weaknesses, and what we can do about them. Our sources will include Robert Burton's *On Being Certain*, Dan Gilbert's *Stumbling On Happiness*, Dan Ariely's *Predictably Irrational*, Gary Marcus' *Kluge*, and Johnah Lehrer's *How We Decide*.

## **22. Thinking You Know While Not Knowing You're Thinking**

### **Mr. Kemer**

This tutorial explores the revolutionary work of three eminent social psychologists who, during the past decade, have uncovered the amazing role of unconscious thinking in our lives: Timothy Wilson of the University of Virginia (author of *Strangers to Ourselves*), John Bargh of Yale University (editor of *The New Unconscious*), and Daniel Wegner of Harvard (author of *The Illusion of Conscious Will*). In this tutorial students will read excerpts from these books along with various journal articles that describe this research. The students will also explore these findings via personal introspection and in conversation with others. The writing assignments will include expository summaries of the research, reflections on personal experience with of the ideas, and analyses of possible implications of this research with respect to moral responsibility, social order, and the criminal justice system.

## **23. It Smells Like Science**

### **Mr. Kemer**

This tutorial will be anchored by the book, *The Emperor of Scent*, by Chandler Burr. This book chronicles the work of a maverick biophysicist named Luca Turin, who proffered a radical theory of how our sense of smell works. *The Emperor of Scent* reads like a detective story as it presents an insider's view of how professional science "works," particularly with regard to its human elements, including ambition, competition, and bias. Turin's "rogue" theory is compelling, but is it true? Is Turin the next Einstein of smell or a goose that has laid a rotten egg? Students will work toward their own conclusions by evaluating Turin's evidence and argument and by weighing it against those offered by the status quo scientists in the field. The students should discover a thickening of the book's smelly plot as they follow the trail that leads beyond its final page.

## **24. A Natural and Human History of the Upper Appoquinimink River, Delaware and Vicinity**

### **Dr. McLean**

Do you know much about the natural history of your backyard, whether here or at home? What do you know of the greenery, the flowers, the fruit that surround you? What do you know of the animals these plants support? How about the surrounding soil, water, and air? What has geology contributed? What has been the effect of these resources on the quality of life for humans and our communities? What has been the human influence on the natural resources over time?

We will answer some of these questions and, in the process, further appreciate the natural world; we will apply what we learn from our readings to a very real setting, our "backyard." We will explore the outdoors or at least outside the classroom, an experience that will help us better understand the notion of sustainability and encourage its practice. We will learn a process and gain an appreciation that can be repeated in the backyards of our hometowns, and the more we appreciate our backyards, the better care we will give them.

## **25. Save the Whales!**

### **Mr. Wallace**

Whales have roamed the oceans of the world for 35 million years. As our human civilization has expanded and "advanced," the populations of these majestic mammals have precipitously declined. This tutorial will explore the impact humans have had on whales over the past 400 years. We will read from *Entanglements*, *The Urban Whale*, *Moby Dick*, *The Whale Warriors*, and *In The Heart of The Sea*. In addition, we will watch videos and slide shows related to the biology, threats, and conservation efforts involved with whales. Overall, this tutorial will instill a deep respect for whales and ways that humans have intentionally and unintentionally threatened their existence.