NEW HUMANITIES COURSES AY 17-18

**En 102 – Origins of Science Fiction.** 9 units (3-0-6). First term. Most histories of science fiction leave out medieval literature entirely, and often much of the early modern era – and some even skip straight forward to begin in the 20th century. But many of the fundamental characteristics of modern science fiction in fact have their origins in much earlier literature. In this course, we will read several classics of modern science fiction alongside medieval and early modern texts, considering how and why science fiction has remained such a powerful imaginative form for so long. Modern readings may include Ursula Le Guin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Miller’s *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, or Octavia Butler’s “The Book of Martha.” Medieval and early modern readings may include Mandeville’s *Travels*; More’s *Utopia*; medieval bestiaries, lapidaries, and herbiaries; alchemical texts; Kepler’s *Somnium*; or Margaret Cavendish’s *The Blazing World*. Instructor: Klement

**En 139 - Reading Resistance in Cold War American Literature.** 9 units (3-0-6). First term. This course will examine the complexities and contradictions of US Cold War culture. Through literary texts featuring a diverse range of protagonists, we will engage characters who question the status quo, often by exploring the limits and exclusions of national belonging in this period. Though the 1950s saw the rise of McCarthyism and the threat of nuclear war, landmark events in these years also galvanized the civil rights movement and demands for social justice. Course readings in Cold War fiction, drama, and poetry will demonstrate how mainstream social identities conditioned by racial, class, gender and sexual norms, were being challenged and subverted in ways that would intensify and take on collective expression in the 1960s. Authors studied may include: Gwendolyn Brooks, William Demby, Lorraine Hansberry, Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, Carson McCullers, Mitsuye Yamada, Sylvia Plath, and John Okada. Instructor: Sherazi

**En 140 - African American Expatriate Culture in Postwar Europe.** 9 units (3-0-6). Second term. In the years following World War II, an unprecedented number of African American writers and artists moved to Paris and Rome, many seeking greater personal liberties and a refuge from racial discrimination at home. As we explore literature, nonfiction, and visual culture created by African Americans in postwar Europe, we will consider: how and why does the postwar creative scene in Paris differ from that of Rome? We will analyze postwar African American expatriate writing’s unique and often critical perspectives regarding American society and culture and identify the literary strategies that writers used to address the changing times, promote social justice, and advance new narrative forms, often by crossing traditional boundaries of genre and nation. Authors and artists studied may include: James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Barbara Chase-Riboud, William Demby, Maya Angelou, and Ralph Ellison. Instructor: Sherazi
H 131 - History of Extinction. 9 units (3-0-6). Second term. Humans are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction – the first to be caused by human activity. Extinction has been viewed in changing ways over the past 200 years, and this course takes an interdisciplinary approach to learning about the extinction process from a historical as well as a modern perspective. Our focus will be on the extinction of biological entities, but we will also touch on other systems that have disappeared: languages, technologies, habitats, and ways of living. Central to our endeavors will be asking what it means to live in this time of loss: Should we mourn? And if so, how do we mourn for what many or most of us do not see, but only read about? Finally, we will scrutinize what the practical effects of extinction have been, are, and will be. We will also make at least one visit to a natural history museum to view some extinct species behind the scenes. Instructor: Lewis

H 132 - Humanistic Ecology. 9 units (3-0-6). Third term. Humans’ conceptions of nature have changed dramatically over time. Ecological systems influence human culture, politics, law, and many other spheres, and in turn, humans influence those systems. This class introduces students to the field of humanistic ecology – a discipline that looks to a number of cultural, political, historical and economic elements to better understand the role of ecology in a larger sphere outside of its scientific structure and uses. Humanistic ecology is designed to provide context for the study of ecology, and in a fundamental way, focuses on the appropriate role of humanity in its relationship to nature: what is ethical, or not, what is useful, or not, and a variety of other matters that should be considered when taking a fully three-dimensional view of ecological science. Instructor: Lewis

H 136. Caltech in the Archives. 9 units (3-0-6); first term. This class will introduce students to the methods of archival work in the humanities and social sciences. Over the course of the quarter students will receive an introduction to factors surrounding the collection, organization, and use of various types of archives as a background to several small-scale projects working in an archival collection of their own choosing. The seminar will center around weekly projects and synthetic analytical essays about the archival process and archival discoveries. Students hoping to combine their course work with an archive-based research paper may sign up for a separate independent study and conduct research concurrently, with instructor approval. Instructor: Dykstra.

H 139. Translation Theory and Practice (Chinese Historical Sources Seminar). 9 units (3-0-6); first term. For description, see L 139. Instructor: Dykstra.

L 139. Translation Theory and Practice (Chinese Historical Sources Seminar). 9 units (3-0-6); first term. This seminar will introduce students to the problems and practices of historical translation for academic purposes, with a focus on primary materials from Chinese history. Students will take responsibility for an individual translation project, participate in seminar discussions and collaborative projects to improve the translations being made, and discuss the philosophical and methodological questions at the heart of the practice of translation. Advanced proficiency in written Chinese is required. Students who write analyses (4,000 words) of the sources being translated may enroll in this class as H 139, which satisfies the advanced humanities credit. Instructor: Dykstra.
**H 144 – The History of Women and Art.** 9 units (3-0-6). Second term. According to Pliny, the history of art began with a woman tracing the profile of her sleeping lover on the wall by candlelight to preserve his memory. Yet women’s artistry has rarely been seen as true art in the eyes of posterity, though female creativity has constantly outstripped narrow definitions of art practice and found expression in myriad forms. This course sweeps from the Renaissance city states to New Mexico, from the Baroque courts of the Popes and Catholic Spain to the Dutch Golden Age, from Bohemian Paris to the dust bowl of the Great Depression. Instructor: Vickery

**H 145 – Women in Modern America & Britain.** 9 units (3-0-6). Second term. This course covers women’s lives from the Civil War to the Second Wave of Feminism. The long twentieth century has been dramatically transformed by the participation of women in war, work, protest, and education. We will determine the constraints on women in war and peace, education and paid work, marriage and family, while also exploring women’s dreams and disappointments in romance, sex, home-making, consumerism and fashion. The elaboration of femininity in the glossy media of advertising, women’s magazines, fiction and film is a continuous theme of the course. Together we will look at expectations and outcomes, promise and its containment. Instructor: Vickery

**HPS/H/Pl 157 - The Mathematization of Natural Philosophy in 17th- and 18th-Century Europe** – 9 units (3-0-6) winter term. The mathematization of “natural philosophy” (namely, the discipline whose aim was to explain the causes of natural phenomena) in early-modern Europe is one of the deepest transformations in the history of scientific thought. In the 17th century a group of innovative mathematicians began to apply mathematics to the study of nature with unprecedented success. This innovative approach was often rejected and opposed, However, amongst its defenders it was unclear which mathematical methods could, and should, be deployed. The debate that ensued on the nature and aims of mathematized natural philosophy intersected with many philosophical themes. The course explores these debates by focusing on the positions held by some protagonists of the so-called scientific revolution, such as Galileo, Descartes, Huygens, Hooke, Newton, and Leibniz. Instructor: Guicciardini

**Hum/H 16 - Introduction to North American Environmental History.** 9 units (3-0-6). Third term. This course will introduce students to topics in North American environmental history, explaining how landscapes have changed over time and how the peoples of the continent have interacted with the natural world. Beginning with Native American peoples’ uses for fire, the course will cover a wide range of topics including the introduction of non-native species, pollution, the creation of environmental regulations like the Endangered Species Act, and the origins and development of the environmental movement. Students will be expected to read and analyze both primary and secondary sources in class discussions and in writing. Instructor: Pluymers
**Hum/En 38 - Telling Time in American Modernism.** 9 units (3-0-6). First term. This course will explore modernist literature’s relationship to time. We will identify the methods that modernist narratives use to characterize the experience of lived time, or *temporality*, such as stream of consciousness, non-linear storytelling, and narrative omissions. We will ask: what challenges does temporal experience pose to clock time and, more broadly, historical time? The course will emphasize the influence of new technologies on modernist representations of time and space, including rural and urban space, and modernism’s engagement with changing attitudes regarding race, gender and sexuality. Students will learn about key movements within American modernism, including the Harlem Renaissance, and may opt to analyze modernist literature’s relationships to other genres, including music and visual culture. Authors studied will include: Gertrude Stein, Jean Toomer, Nella Larsen, and William Faulkner. 
Instructor: Sherazi

**Hum 80 - Frontiers in the Humanities.** 1 unit (1-0-0). Third term. Weekly seminar by a member of the Caltech humanities faculty or a visitor to discuss a topic of his or her current research at an introductory level. The course can be used to learn more about different areas of study within the humanities. For those interested in (or who become interested) in pursuing a second option in the humanities, the course will introduce students to the kinds of research carried out by members of the humanities faculty and help them find faculty advisors.