

# UC DAVIS

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## HUMANITIES PROGRAM

# Expanded Course Descriptions

## Fall Quarter 2010

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<http://humanities.ucdavis.edu>

updated 8/10

## **HUM 2A: Global Humanities Forum (4 Units)**

### **Topic: *Adam & Eve***

CRN 83203 – TR 1:40-3:00, 1227 Haring Hall

**Instructor:** Noah Guynn, Associate Professor of French  
([ndguynn@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ndguynn@ucdavis.edu))

### **Description**

How does Scripture shape our identities and beliefs? Are those identities and beliefs stable, or do they change? Does the meaning of Scripture change along with our identities and beliefs? Does Scripture have a single, truthful meaning? Or is it open to interpretation? In what ways have interpretations of Scripture been used to dictate moral conduct, social relationships, and political behavior? How does the way in which we interpret Scripture define our relationships with God and other people? In particular, how do interpretations of Scripture determine our understanding of gender, sexuality, and race?

This course will seek answers to these questions by examining the story of God's creation of the world and of Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian sacred texts and commentaries from the tenth century BCE through today. Specifically, we will investigate the following:

- Basic accounts of Creation in the Old Testament (Gen. 1-3)
- Ways in which different authors from different periods of history have interpreted (or improvised on) those accounts
- Ways in which spiritual insights derived from the interpretation of sacred texts give shape to moral, social, and political issues.

### **Grading**

Midterm exam, 3 short papers, and final exam

### **Prerequisite**

None

### **GE Credit**

Arts & Humanities

### **Texts**

- Several readings on SmartSite
- Kristen E. Kvam (editor), *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Indiana University Press, 1999)
- Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent: Sex and Politics in Early Christianity* (Vintage, 1989)

## **HUM 2B: American Humanities Forum (4 Units)**

### **Topic: *Crisis and Disaster in Contemporary California***

CRN 83202 – TR 12:10-1:30, 126 Wellman Hall

**Instructor:** W. Jack Hicks, Senior Lecturer in English  
([wjhicks@ucdavis.edu](mailto:wjhicks@ucdavis.edu))

### **Description**

Called “an island near to the terrestrial paradise” in a 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish romance, California has long been an icon of boundless love, sunny freedom and instant fortune. But dreams of El Dorado have had darker companion nightmares. The state has a history of crisis and disaster and nervous predictions warn that the future holds more monumental surprises. We examine natural and manmade crisis in California — earthquakes and floods, The Border and immigration and doomsday cults — in literary texts, films and a personal appearance by a leader of The People’s Temple cult, a survivor of a 1978 mass suicide that took 900 lives in the jungles of South America.

### **Grading**

Midterm exam, short papers, and final exam

### **Prerequisite**

None

### **GE Credit**

Arts & Humanities

### **Texts**

- A Course Reader or several readings on SmartSite
- Marc Reisner, *A Dangerous Place: California’s Unsettling Fate* (Penguin, 2003)
- Deborah Layton, *Seductive Poison: A Jonestown Survivor’s Story of Life and Death in the People’s Temple* (Random House, 1998)
- Ruben Martinez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail* (Picador, 2002)
- Sanyika Shakur, *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member* (Grove Press, 2004)