

# UC DAVIS

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## HUMANITIES PROGRAM

# Expanded Course Descriptions

## Winter Quarter 2011

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**HUM 1: Humanities Forum (2 Units)**

**HUM 1D: Issues and Concepts on Humanities (2 Units)**

**Topic:** *In the Mirror of Mystery: California, Border, and Mexico through Detective Stories*

HUM 1 (Lecture): CRN 28202 – TR 1:10-2:00, 179 Chemistry

HUM 1D (Discussion): CRN 28203 – Sec. 1, F 10:00-11:50, 25 Wellman  
CRN 28204 – Sec. 2, F 12:10-2:00, 25 Wellman

**Instructor:** Linda Egan, Associate Professor of Spanish  
([@ucdavis.edu](mailto:legan@ucdavis.edu))

**Teaching Assistant:** Erik Larson ([@ucdavis.edu](mailto:elars@ucdavis.edu))

***HUM 1 may be taken by itself as a two-unit course. Enrollment in a section of HUM 1D for an additional two units requires concurrent enrollment in HUM 1.***

**Description**

This course is intended to give students a *Whodunit* that challenges them to eagerly undergo the quest for an answer and that it is likely they will read for pleasure –while discovering in the end that the reading has been for knowledge, as well. The courses title indicates that our quest will be for understanding of the sociopolitical and cultural context in which the scenes of the crimes are analyzed: in California, Mexico and the Borderlands.

Fans of the mystery novel, the police procedural, the psychological thriller or the courtroom drama have long known that the good ones of those who author these subgenres figure among the most professional and proficient writers practicing the craft in the United States. Their care for language, structure, characterization and metaphor is as compelling as the evildoers who drive the narrative. Fans of Michael Connelly, for example, read him to see what's up with Detective Harry Bosch and the Los Angeles that clings to a thread of civilized life around him.

With this course, I intend to hook students new to the mystery genre, introduce confirmed addicts to new thrills, and place the detectives they read about at a transglobal and transcultural scene of the crime. The primary focus of this course is on reading and analysis of four novels and some short stories (the latter to broaden and deepen the liminal perspective). Three novels are by men and women writing in and/or about California and the Chicano reality; one is by a Mexican writing in Mexico about a border situation (in English translation). The short stories are by men and women from Mexico and California.

### Grading

Short Papers, quizzes, midterm exam, and final exam

### Prerequisite

None

### GE Credit

Arts & Humanities **and** Writing (*ONLY if HUM 1 and 1D are taken at the same time*)

### Texts

- Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep* (Vintage, 1939)
- Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Frontera Dreams* (Cinco Puntos, 2002)
- Lucha Corpi, *Eulogy for a Brown Angel* (Arte Pu'blico, 1992)
- Michael Connelly, *The Black Ice* (Vision, 2003)

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

### **Topic: *Motherhood in Western Culture and History***

CRN 43840 – MWF 1:10-2:00, 106 Wellman Hall

**Instructor:** Jenny Kaminer, Assistant Professor of Russian  
([jekaminer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jekaminer@ucdavis.edu))

### **Description**

How has the “good” or “bad” mother been defined in Western cultures? How has this definition evolved as a result of historical, philosophical, and cultural shifts? Is a bond between mother and child biologically predetermined or culturally dictated? Is the maternal instinct myth or reality? This course will explore the answers to these questions in works of fiction and nonfiction by scholars, philosophers, novelists, poets, and artists. We will chart the development of Western maternal mythology and discuss how it continues to inform our perceptions of motherhood in the contemporary era.

During the first half of the course, readings will center on the history of motherhood in the West, from the era B.C. to the twenty-first century. In the second half of the term, our attention will turn to the contemporary experience of motherhood, as relayed in works of fiction, nonfiction, and film. In particular, we will focus on potential conflicts between maternity and sexuality and maternity and creativity, and how these conflicts are explored in the writings of mothers themselves. Then, using Russia as an example, we will consider the relationship between motherhood and the state. We will analyze how the maternal figure — which occupied a unique and hallowed position in Russian culture — was co-opted by the Soviet government. Next, we will examine one of the most enduring maternal myths, that of Medea (the paradigmatic ‘bad’ mother). How does contemporary society continue to imagine the malevolent mother? Finally, we will briefly consider how technological advances may impact the future of maternity. During our reading during the second half of the course, we will continue to reflect upon how centuries-old maternal myths still influence cultural representations of motherhood.

### **Grading**

Midterm exam, final paper, and final exam

### **Prerequisite**

None

## **GE Credit**

Arts & Humanities

## **Texts**

- Shari Thurer, *The Myths of Motherhood* (Penguin)
- A Course Reader

## **HUM 13: Witches – Myth and Historical Reality (4 Units)**

CRN 28208 – TR 10:30-11:50, 1002 Giedt

**Instructor:** Elisabeth Krimmer, Professor of German  
([emkrimmer@ucdavis.edu](mailto:emkrimmer@ucdavis.edu))

### **Description**

This course examines the historical construction of the witch in the context of the social realities of the women and men labeled as witches. The four areas covered are: European pagan religions and the spread of Christianity; the “Burning Times” in early modern Europe; 17th century New England and the Salem witch trials; and fairy tales. Readings are drawn from documentary records of the witch persecutions and witch trials, literary representations, scholarly analyses of witch-related phenomena, and essays examining witches, witchcraft, and the witch persecutions from a contemporary feminist perspective. The lectures will be supplemented by visual material (videos, slides) drawn from art history, early modern witch literature, popular culture, and documentary sources.

### **Grading**

Attendance/Participation (10%), Essay (30%), Midterm (30%), and Final (30%)

### **Prerequisite**

None

### **GE Credit**

Arts & Humanities, Diversity, and Writing

### **Texts**

- Course Readings will be available through SmartSite
- Arthur Miller, *The Crucible* (Penguin, 1976)

## **HUM 144: Marx, Nietzsche, Freud (4 Units)**

CRN 43841 – TR 10:30-11:50, 223 Olson Hall *New Room*

**Instructor:** Gerhard Richter, Professor of German  
([griechter@ucdavis.edu](mailto:griechter@ucdavis.edu))

### **Description**

This course will introduce students to some of the fundamental insights of Karl Marx (1818-1883), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), and Sigmund Freud (1855-1939), who revolutionized the way we understand ourselves and the modern world. We will examine such timely topics as capitalism and the ideology of the "market"; forms of religious fundamentalism and claims of truth; and the notion that, as a human being, I am fundamentally at odds with myself in elusive ways that nevertheless make me who I am. The course is intended for intellectually curious students from a wide variety of fields who do not wish to leave the university without first having seriously grappled with the deeply unsettling ideas of these three major thinkers and writers.

### **Prerequisite**

None

### **Grading**

(Information not available)

### **GE Credit**

Arts & Humanities and Writing

### **Texts**

- Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton, 1978)
- Peter Gay (ed.), *The Freud Reader* (Norton, 1995)
- Walter Kaufmann (ed.), *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (Modern Library, 2000)