

QUEENS COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
COLLOQUIUM – SPRING 2018

392W (04) 8471 HISTORICAL TRANSITIONS IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

Professor: Ambassador Tsilas Wednesdays 1:40-4:30pm

An intensive and interactive study in a selective field of history. The course will examine three major historical transitions that led to the transformation of European and world history:

- From Apartheid to Integration in South Africa
- From Communism to Liberalism in Eastern Europe
- The Break-up of Yugoslav

392W (01) 8465 THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY

Professor Lawrence Cappello Wednesdays 6:30-9:20pm

The automobile. The machine gun. The elevator. The smartphone. Civilizations are often measured by their technological contributions to the world. Technological development is a powerful historical force – one whose implications ripple out in unforeseen ways, continuously shaping our society and the ways we express ourselves. It does far more than just bring convenience to our lives.

This course examines the history of technological development in the United States from the Early Industrial Revolution to the Internet Age. Particular attention will be given to the way different technologies have shaped the political, social, and cultural experiences of Americans. The ways people work and communicate. The ways people are entertained. The ways people control and are controlled. The ways people save lives and the ways they destroy them. Key questions will include: What are the major ethical dilemmas surrounding technology? Should we associate technology with “progress” – or is that too deterministic? Is it possible to place too much faith in our gadgets? As technology evolves, do we lose something of our former selves in the process?

392W (03) 8470 WEIMAR GERMANY: POLITICS AND CULTURE

Professor J. Sneeringer Tuesdays 1:40-4:30pm

Weimar Germany is known for its cosmopolitanism and vibrant modernity, as well as its disastrous slide into Nazism – how can we reconcile these two images? This seminar will explore the intersections between culture and politics during this turbulent era. As we explore the period from the November 1918 revolution through Hitler's ascent to power in January 1933, we will try to understand the cultural climate in which Weimar politics operated, as well as the charged political climate that produced some of the boldest art of modern times. We will explore a broad range of historical sources – primary documents, a novel, films, political propaganda, and even material objects such as buildings and furniture. Topics will include the legacies of war and hyperinflation, the New Woman, the fascination with America, the Bauhaus, and the rise of Nazism:

T U R N O V E R

392W (02) 8466

WOMEN AND ACTIVISM IN U.S. HISTORY

Professor K. Celello

Mondays 1:40-4:30pm

In this course, we will challenge the perception that for most of American history, politics and activism were the preserve of a small group of elite white men. We will do so by examining the important roles that American women have played in the political sphere, both within and outside of official government channels. Particular attention will be paid to women of varying sides of the political and activist spectrum; thus we will learn not only about women who fought for women's rights, but also those who argued that such a movement was unnecessary. Furthermore, we will explore the ways in which women expanded the very definition of activism, by making the argument that the "personal is political."

392W (05) 35003

SEX, GENDER AND FAMILY AND INDIAN CINEMA

Professor S. Sen

Thursdays 4:30-7:20pm

This course examines the depiction of sex and gender in modern Indian cinema, and the relationship between cinema and wider trends in society, politics and the economy. The Indian film industry is the largest in the world, and cinema is the most vital component of Indian popular culture. It is a mirror of the dramatic transformations in Indian society since the country's independence from British rule. The movies have reflected the changing norms of femininity and masculinity, the emergence of exciting but alarming urban sexualities, tensions within the family as feminist ideals took hold and women took on new economic roles, and the impact of violent social inequalities. In this course we will focus on several broad issues: courtship, marriage, motherhood, prostitution and sexual violence. We will read on gender and sexuality in modern Indian history, watch and discuss some of the seminal Indian films between the 1950s and the present time, and learn how to use cinema as a text of social history. Special attention will be paid to the films of the director Satyajit Ray. Those enrolled in the class will write two short (5 page) essays, and a longer (7-8 page) paper. There may be some additional, very short (1-page) writing assignments.