Forbidden Knowledge

Winter/Spring 2016
CRN 30261
8 Credits

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Class meetings: Wednesdays 6:00-9:30 and five Saturdays: Jan. 16 & 30, Feb. 6 & 20 and Mar. 5, 10:00-5:00
Location: Seminar II B 1105

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Across time and cultures, humankind has struggled with taboos that obstruct the pursuit of knowledge deemed inappropriate or dangerous, but what is “forbidden” intrigues us all. In this humanities program, we will explore the ways that forbidden knowledge inspired artists throughout the ages. We will ask how the forbidden differs in the mythology of one culture to another. We will study some great works of art that have been inspired by forbidden knowledge. While powerful people and institutions have often dictated what is acceptable for us to know, the arts, literature, and mythology have been the chief mechanisms through which we have been able to explain or justify this fundamental human conflict. For example, in the creation stories of Genesis and Milton’s Paradise Lost we encounter one of western culture’s most enduring mythic structures. Faust and Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein speak to a more modern dilemma about acquisition and use of knowledge.

In this two-quarter program we will explore this complex subject through visual art, music, poetry, film, theatre and literature. Roger Shattuck’s Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography will provide one analysis of the stories, but we’ll read other critical approaches as well. During winter quarter we will concentrate on the classical past; our readings will include Genesis, Paradise Lost, Romeo and Juliet, Rossetti’s Goblin Market, and A.S. Byatt’s Angels and Insects. In the Spring we will turn our attention to the modern age. Our readings will include Ta-Nehesi Coates’ Between the World and Me, Tony Kushner’s Angels in America and Alan Ginsberg’s Howl. Students will be expected to read critically and well, take excellent reading notes, and write occasional critical essays on assigned topics. They will participate in seminar, lecture, workshop, and a possible field trip.
This immersion in the humanities is especially suited for those students planning to teach in areas of literature or the arts. It is also for students who are curious about the ways in which artists and writers working in different genres push us to understand the world and our place in it. Credits will be awarded in literature and cultural studies.

Questions that form the basis of our learning goals include:
- What are the origins of forbidden knowledge? How, for example, does it relate to creation stories?
- How does it differ in the mythology of one culture to another?
- In what ways has forbidden knowledge inspired artists throughout the ages?
- What are some of the great works of art that have been inspired by forbidden knowledge?
- Is forbidden knowledge more rooted in the past? In what ways is this a modern construction?
- How does forbidden knowledge figure into your life and culture?

Winter Book List:
Roger Shattuck, Forbidden Knowledge
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus
Christina Rossetti, Goblin Market and Other Poems
A.S. Byatt, Angels and Insects: Two Novellas
Jonathon Howard, Darwin: A Very Short Introduction
Wm. Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet (Arden Shakespeare)

Other readings will be posted on the program website
Every student must have an active Evergreen library account.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND REGULAR ACTIVITIES
Most classes will include some combination of lecture, workshop, or full program work and a seminar on the reading. Lectures are intended to inform you of central concepts, arguments, disciplinary methods and specific content related to the week’s readings. Workshops are designed to facilitate your developing understanding of texts as well as skills of interpretation, analysis and critique. As the work is generative, you will need to collaborate closely with your colleagues. Seminars will deepen your understanding through close attention to the texts, including identification and interpretation of central and problematic concepts and vocabulary, as well as interpretation and critique of arguments and themes.

General Expectations

Excellent attendance and full participation on all program activities. If you cannot make a class meeting, you need to let your seminar faculty know in advance—either by phone or e-mail.

College-level work. Since the program is focused on reading, writing, and critical thinking, you are expected to demonstrate these skills at the college level. Specifically, this means:

- the ability to read, understand, and then summarize texts
- the ability to learn from texts through discussion with others
- the ability to analyze and pursue writing assignments
- the ability to write coherent, focused, correctly punctuated prose
- the ability to develop and defend a thesis
- the ability and commitment to do all of the above reliably
Fifth Week *Warnings*. We will inform you as early as feasible, and no later than the fifth week, whether you are working at the college level, and if not, what you need to do in order to bring skills to the college level. Email: Susan and Mark will use your Evergreen e-mail exclusively, so make sure you’ve accessed and check your account.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**Completed Concept Worksheet** in preparation for each seminar meeting. Each worksheet will be posted on the Moodle.

**Reading Notes.** We expect you to take detailed notes on your reading all quarter. This means that you’ll need to have a notebook, or section of your binder, dedicated to reading notes. If you take notes on your computer, make sure that you print them and put them into your notebook for reference. Each of us has particular practices that are useful to us, but you can think about including quotations from the reading that seem particularly intriguing or puzzling (include page numbers). You can write questions that come up and to which you might want to return. You can record connections you make between the reading at hand and other texts and ideas. You might also have a section to write down vocabulary that is either new, or used in a way that is unfamiliar. You’ll include your reading notes in your portfolio. *Include handouts in notebooks and bring to every class.*

**Essays:** You will write two 500 word essays, one due mid-quarter and one due Week 9. For the first essay, you will write and integrative essay in which you develop your thesis about how and why “forbidden knowledge” is so central to the stories we tell. You will draw on at least two of our seminar texts and may include other critical material that has helped shape your thinking. For the second essay, you will expand and elaborate on the first, drawing on at least two of the seminar texts from the latter part of the program. Again, you may also include other critical material, but for each essay it is *your* analysis that is important. Essays will follow MLA Conventions for citation and documentation.

**Cornell Box.** This is a “handmade” response (your adaptation) of a work of art that we have studied. In addition to revealing your understanding of the source material, the box must incorporate two and three-dimensional images that imaginatively capture the form and content of your chosen work. A one-page paper will accompany your box detailing your analytical and creative process.

**Portfolio:**
You are required to keep an organized portfolio. It will be turned on the final day of class and returned during your evaluation conference. The portfolio must be labeled and organized chronologically in the following order:
1. Syllabus and covenant
2. Class and reading notes
3. Seminar and workshop handouts with notes
4. Completed concept worksheets
5. Completed screening worksheet for each film screened
6. Cornell Box and 1 page accompanying paper
7. First and Second 500 word integrative essays
8. A final self-evaluation and faculty evaluation
9. Make up work
Evaluation

Your evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Successful completion of all program requirements including:
- Adherence to the syllabus and agreements in the covenant
- Excellent attendance, preparation for and participation in class and seminar
- The quality of ideas and the writing in your papers and projects
- Demonstration of acceptable understanding of program content and learning goals
- Late assignments may not be accepted or evaluated for credit

Incomplete status will be granted only for reasons of family crisis, illness, or similar documented emergency. Evaluation conferences will be held at the end of the quarter. Credit is not the same as positive evaluation. Students receive credit for fulfilling minimum requirements and standards. The evaluation is a statement describing the quality of the student’s work. It is possible for a student to receive credit but receive an evaluation that describes poor quality work. It is also possible for a student to attend regularly yet receive no or reduced credit because of unsatisfactory performance.

Access Services. If you are a student with a disability who would benefit from support or services to ensure full access to this course, please contact Access Services in Library 2120 in the Student Advising Center, PH: 360-867-6348. In order for your program faculty to make accommodations, we must be informed no later than the second week of the quarter by the student and in writing from Access Services.
Program Schedule

The schedule is subject to change—changes will be announced in class; check the website frequently.

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Wednesday, Jan. 6</th>
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<td>Welcome Introduction to the program Reading With a Plan</td>
<td>Workshop on the theme of “forbidden knowledge”</td>
<td>Lucille Clifton’s “Brothers” and Vaclav Havel’s “Thriller”</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Wednesday, Jan. 13</th>
<th>Saturday, Jan. 16</th>
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<td>For Wednesday, read: — <em>Forbidden Knowledge</em>, (Intro and chapter 1) — Genesis, King James (1-12 on line pdf and handout)</td>
<td>Lecture: Bible as Literature and Cultural Icon (Susan) Seminar on Genesis 1-12 R Crumb Genesis— Seminar: <em>Forbidden Knowledge</em>, chapter 1</td>
<td>Short talk on Christina Rossetti (Susan) followed by “Goblin Market” Workshop Fairy Tale Workshop Hero’s Journey Screen: <em>Spirited Away</em></td>
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<td>For Saturday, read: — “Goblin Market” — “Things are Not What They Seem” (on line and handout)</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Wednesday, Jan. 20</th>
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<td>For Wednesday, read: <em>Romeo and Juliet</em> and excerpts from introduction</td>
<td>Verse workshop: imagery in Shakespeare Seminar: <em>Romeo and Juliet</em></td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Wednesday, Jan. 27</td>
<td>Saturday, Jan. 30</td>
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| **For Wednesday, read:**  
*Forbidden Knowledge*, Chapter II, “Milton and the Garden of Eden” and review *Romeo and Juliet*  
**For Saturday, read:**  
*Paradise Lost*, Book X (on line and handout) and read your assigned passage from *Paradise Lost* and bring it to class. | Complete work on *Romeo and Juliet*  
Background on *Paradise Lost*, Mark and Susan  
**Seminar:** *Forbidden Knowledge*, Chapter II | Film: *Shakespeare in Love*  
*Paradise Lost*: Music and visual art  
Workshop on *Paradise Lost*, Book X and assigned selections from the poem. |

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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Wednesday, Feb. 3</th>
<th>Saturday, Feb. 6</th>
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| **For Wednesday, read:**  
*Forbidden Knowledge*, Chapter III “Faust and Frankenstein” and Faust handouts  
**For Saturday, read:**  
*Faust* libretto and other materials: handouts with pdfs online | Mark—alchemy and the Faust legend  
**Seminar:** *Forbidden Knowledge*, Chapter III  
**Workshop/discussion** of Faust readings | Seminar on Faust: Gounod & Goethe  
Short meetings with students  
Vauhn on Renaissance math – or zero (?)  
Screen *Mephisto* |

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<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Wednesday, Feb. 10</th>
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| **For Wednesday, read:**  
Selection from *The Way We Never Were*, by Stephanie Coontz.  
Begin reading *Frankenstein* for seminar on Feb 17 | Liberal Arts Forum Longhouse: 6:00-9:00  
Speaker: Stephanie Coontz, author of *The Way We Never Were* |  |

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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Wednesday, Feb. 17</th>
<th>Saturday, Feb. 20</th>
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| **For Wednesday, read:**  
*Frankenstein* to conclusion  
Horror film article TBA  
**For Saturday, read:**  
*Darwin: A Very Short Introduction* | Seminar: *Frankenstein* through conclusion  
Forbidden Knowledge and the horror film genre  
Screen excerpts from original and other versions of *Frankenstein* | Screen *Creation*  
**Seminar:** *Darwin: A Very Short Introduction*  
Screen: *Young Frankenstein* |
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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Wednesday, Feb. 24</th>
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<td>For Wednesday, read:</td>
<td>Lecture: The Heyday of Natural History—Susan</td>
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<td>“Morpho Eugenia” in <em>Angels and Insects</em></td>
<td>Seminar: <em>Morpho Eugenia</em></td>
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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Wednesday, March 2</th>
<th>Saturday, March 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>For Wednesday: Prepare Cornell Box for presentation</td>
<td>Complete work on <em>Morpho Eugenia</em></td>
<td>Program review</td>
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<td>For Saturday: work on portfolio and program review rubric</td>
<td>Cornell Box presentations</td>
<td>Screen: <em>Angels and Insects</em></td>
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<td>DUE: completed portfolio</td>
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<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Wednesday, March 9</th>
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<td>For Wednesday, bring potluck dish to share</td>
<td>Potluck</td>
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<td>Film: TBA</td>
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