Spring 2016
Honors Seminar

Swedish Magic—Lydia Anne McCarthy

Why does some of the best design, music, art and film come from this tiny, northern European country? Together we will examine Swedish folklore, history, politics and language in relation to some of this country’s most influential cultural producers, from Ingmar Bergman to Robyn. Through readings, discussion, lectures and videos, you will discover what makes Sweden so unique culturally and, as a final project, harness some of this magic by making your own creative work in response.

Show Me The Money—Mark Lewis

The purpose of this course is to educate the student in the fundamentals of the lifelong financial planning process. This process incorporates six basic areas: investment planning, insurance planning, education planning, tax planning, retirement planning and estate planning.

It's the End of the World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)—Juliana Gray

This class will study the notion of the apocalypse in mythology, literature, film, graphic novels, and science. Why are people drawn to these stories, and why do we continue to tell them? What do the different causes/incarnations of The End say about our culture? And how the heck did the darkest apocalyptic novel in recent memory end up as an Oprah Book Club selection? We will begin by considering early apocalyptic myths, such as the floods in the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Old Testament. We will then move on to such novels as Kurt Vonnegut's Cat's Cradle and Cormac McCarthy's The Road , films such as On the Beach and Children of Men , the graphic novel Y: The Last Man , some popular science books about the apocalypse and what follows, and other eschatological texts. The course will culminate with a "Design Your Own Apocalypse" project, in which students will create and present their own creative or scientific apocalyptic projects.
**The Aliens did it?—John D’Angelo**

There are theories that this planet has been visited by aliens for millennia and that these visitors have influenced the course of human history. Although some theories are somewhat thought-provoking, there have come allegations that some of the proponents of these theories have fabricated evidence and that some have willfully ignored reliable evidence contrary to their theory. In this course, we will discuss select theories and their merit. In particular, we will discuss cases where misconduct has been alleged and use this to initiate a discussion on scientific misconduct/ethics. Students will present one theory of their choosing as an oral presentation and write a paper on another theory of their choosing.

**Maple Syrup--The Real Thing—Laurie McFadden**

Wanted: Someone with a background in meteorology, chemistry, botany, forestry, art, and cookery who is also a nature lover with lots of patience. Must enjoy long hours of hard work in the snow, cold, and mud.” Even though this is an accurate description of a maple syrup producer, don’t let it scare you! The method of producing maple syrup is one of the things in our society that has endured even in today's culture of constant change; fundamentally it’s the same process Native Americans used centuries ago. The study of maple syrup is also a way to investigate a variety of disciplines. This class allows for an introduction and discussion of them as well as cooking with maple syrup. Additionally, field trips to local producers, restaurants, and festivals helps students explore the local community.

**AI: Fiction and Future—David De Graff & Danielle Gagne**

“Hello. Would you like to be friends?” This may seem innocent coming from a new roommate, but what if it came from your computer? From Hebrew golems to Ex Machina, people have been both fascinated and terrified of animating the inanimate. Are we ready for technology to become sentient? Are the fears of Bill Gates and Stephen Hawking justified, or should we look to the hopeful solutions of and Larry Page? This course will explore early fascination with AI and where the future might be headed. Readings will include contemporary science fiction readings like Mindscan and Existence. Students will be expected to lead discussions related to weekly topics and present a project on modern AI.