

**Liberal Arts  
Department**

**Fall 2022  
Course Catalog**



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## Transcendence and Entrapment: 19th Century American Literature (Gatlin)



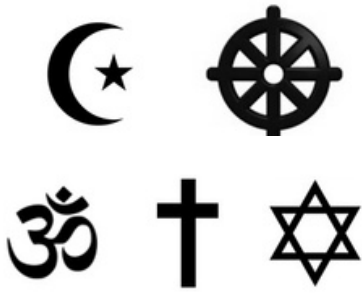
Nineteenth-century American writers repeatedly reflect on themes of transcendence—of literary conventions, of cultural norms and codes, of the individual self, of geographical constraints, or of material culture in a realm of nature or spirit. At the same time, they detail the entrapments of slavery, reservation lands, cities, mass culture, human nature, socially enforced constructions of identity, and the human mind. This introduction to nineteenth-century American literature explores the tensions of transcendence and entrapment, among other themes, in stories, poems, personal narratives, and essays. Students will have the opportunity to explore the places Thoreau, Emerson, Hawthorne, and the Alcotts lived and wrote on a field trip to Concord and Walden Pond.

## Origins and History of Drama (Keppel)



Theater is a part of the developing story of every human culture, an inherent paradox—the attempt to explore psychological depths, spiritual mysteries, and social conflicts in a controlled yet power-releasing scheme. As the innovative Polish director Jerzy Grotowski points out, “Theater is not a condition but a process in which what is dark within us slowly becomes transparent.” The lights go out, and we become something entirely different and yet, at the same time, even more familiar and true. This course examines the origins of European drama and traces its development through key transitional periods from Oedipus to Endgame. Plays are chosen according to what is being produced locally and according to shared thematic content. Students attend at least one play in performance.

## Philosophy of Religion (Vance)



This course will explore how thinkers from the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions have responded to a number of religious and philosophical questions.

These questions will include: How can multiple religions that all claim divine truth reconcile their respective views through philosophy? Is it possible to prove the existence of the divine? What is the nature of God, or of the Gods, and of piety? How do we account for the existence of evil? How do reason and faith relate to each other? Does the idea of divine omniscience conflict with that of human free will? In addressing these and other questions, the course will reflect on methodological issues in the comparative and philosophical study of religions.

## Human Nature (Vance)



This course examines traditional concepts of human nature as expressed in religions, philosophy, literature, and science and contrasts those with the impact of the genome and the claims of sociobiology on modern views.

## **Cultural Capital: London, 1851-1914: Culture, Politics, and Society in the Age of Empire (Klein)**



Cultural Capital: London, 1851-1914 explores London, the greatest city of the 19th Century world. Following the careers of such famous – and infamous – London figures as Queen Victoria, Jack the Ripper, Oscar Wilde, Edward Elgar, and Count Dracula, we will study the rich social, cultural, musical, and political life of the London they inhabited. We will examine the modern innovations that shaped their London; discuss the artists, writers, politicians, and musicians who flocked to this great market for culture; look closely at the lives of the workers who sustained that great enterprise; consider the roles of the men and women who made their lives in – and around – this great city; and inquire into the psychology behind the greatest metropolis that European culture had ever created.

## **Issues and Elections: Electoral Politics in Modern America (Klein)**



This course studies the methods, issues, and goals of the upcoming elections as a way of understanding not only contemporary American elections, but also the larger methods, issues, and goals of national politics. The class will read about partisan leadership, party organization, media politics, and public political perceptions, focusing on contemporary issues shaping the changing American society and political campaigns.

## Physical Geography (Duveneck)



Physical geography is the study of forces that influence earth's surface. This class will explore these forces and explain why they generate specific responses. We'll separate climate factors from geomorphological factors from biological factors. Climate factors vary in scale from understanding global circulation patterns to understanding localized effects of terrain on temperature. Geomorphology factors drive earth's landforms and are both internal, and others are surficial (e.g., stream flow). Biological factors describe the variation in the spatial distribution of organisms. We'll also explore the interactions between climate, biological, and landforms, which constantly influence each other. While not a human geography class, this class will introduce students to a field where real-world applications are affecting us every day.

## Sustainable Societies (Duveneck)



How do the various relationships between humans and environments mediate or exacerbate environmental problems? How have we found ourselves in a quandary regarding overpopulation, pollution, and poverty? This course introduces students to the science and mathematics behind a wide variety of sustainability topics, such as geographical layout, water, food, transportation, infrastructure, energy, politics and law, society, economy, trade, and technology. Guest speakers and field trips will introduce students to several current local sustainable initiatives. Through group projects, students will explore the rational and practical treatment of sustainable development issues, learning how quantitative analyses can help aid in the understanding of, and ultimately the solving of, environmental problems.



## Contemporary Drama (Keppel)



In this course we will explore the role of Contemporary Drama by viewing and discussing a variety of works currently being staged in Boston, including plays at major performance venues like the American Repertory Theatre and the Huntington Theater, pre-professional student productions at Boston University's black box theater space, and experimental works at the Boston Experimental Theater and by the Arlekin Players. We will begin by examining the purpose of drama in the contemporary period, citing central theoretical works that defined the changing approaches to theater throughout the 20th century, but most specifically since 1950. Then we will define the specific choices playwrights and directors make to tell their stories through scene, lighting, and sound design. We will try to see a variety of styles from naturalistic drama to multimedia plays to wildly experimental theatrical experiences. Students will also have the opportunity to create their own short theatrical presentations.

## Poetry Workshop (Jones)



In this course, students will read and write poetry, and discuss the poetry of classmates both in the workshop itself and in small groups outside class. As poet Robert Creeley points out, "Form is never more than an extension of content, and content is never more than an extension of form." To that end, we will concentrate on the techniques of poetry, such as rhythm, repetition of many kinds, line breaks, pace, point of view, figurative language, imagery, juxtaposition, fixed forms & organic form. Students will also listen to poets reading their work online. We will read & talk about various sorts of contemporary poems. At the end of the term the class will give a poetry reading and produce a class booklet.

## Fundamentals of Graphic Design (Popova)



"A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away." — Antoine de Saint-Exupéry Students will study the basic elements of graphic form: line, shape, image, color, typography, and composition. We will learn how to clearly express a message by creating work in different design genres, such as logotype, posters, book/brochure, and websites. Slide lectures, classroom critiques, informative reading, collaborative work would be essential part of the process. This course is designed to help both beginners and more experienced students to learn the elements of self-promotion, from print ads to social media and websites.



**Matthew Duveneck** received a B.S. in Resource Conservation from the University of Montana, an M.S. in Forest Resources from the University of Massachusetts, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from Portland State University. Previously, he worked on the ground as a firefighter and taught fire science at the Southern Maine Community College. Matthew continues research with collaborators throughout North America including Harvard University/Harvard Forest where they study the interactions of climate change and land use on New England Forests. In addition, Matthew has vast experience and passion for social dance. In the classroom, Matthew aims to engage students to think critically and become active participants in understanding scientific methods and how components of our natural world connect with the ecosystem services they provide.

**Jill Gatlin** holds a B.A.M. in Music and B.A. English from the University of Colorado, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington, where she taught in the English Department and the Program on the Environment. She enjoys interdisciplinary study of literature, art, and music, with particular interests in cultural studies of nature, race, gender, and sexuality; American literature, minority literature, and environmental justice; romanticism, modernism and postmodernism; and visual and literary landscapes. In the classroom, she aims to help students become confident critical thinkers, readers, writers, and speakers and to facilitate their discovery of the problems and possibilities of language, literary and visual texts, and cultural contexts.

**Patrick Keppel**'s fiction has appeared in a number of literary journals; his story "A Vectorial History of Leroy Pippin" was read by Eli Wallach at Symphony Space in New York as part of NPR's Selected Shorts program. Patrick's plays have been presented at various venues in Boston and New York. His multimedia play about the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire, Triangle , was performed at the Center for Performance Research in Brooklyn in March 2011, at the Sandglass Theater in Putney VT in June 2013, and at NEC in Brown Hall in January 2014 as part of the Music: Truth to Power festival.

# Faculty

**James A. Klein** (BA, Kenyon College; BA and MA, Oxford University; AM and PhD. Harvard University) received Harvard University's Delancey Jay Award for outstanding work in Constitutional History and New England Conservatory's Louis and Adrienne Krasner Teaching Excellence Award.

**Katya Popova**, multidisciplinary artist, graphic designer and educator. She holds a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and MA from Boston University. Popova works at the intersection of physical texture, shadow, and sound. Her works explore what could have been by tracing the physical gestures and material qualities of everyday things via performance, sonic art or immersive installation. She often collaborates with sound artists. As a graphic designer, Katya has twenty years of professional experience, working in major publishing houses (Random House, Houghton Mifflin), colleges (MIT, Columbia University) and small design firms (Tank Design). Katya taught design and visual art classes at major universities: RISD, Mass Art and others. Presently she teaches courses on visual art and design at NEC. To learn more about her projects please see:

<https://popova.space>

<https://www.popovadesign.com/>

**Jacob Vance** holds a Ph.D. in Romance Languages and Literatures from The Johns Hopkins University, a D.E.A (equiv. M.A.) in Early Modern European Culture & Civilization from the University of Geneva, an M.A. in Comparative Literature from the University of Washington (Seattle), a B.A. in English Literature and Western Society and Culture from Concordia University (Montreal), and a DEC (Diplôme d'Études Collégiales) in Social Sciences from Marianopolis College (Montreal).