

Fall 2016 MLAS Course Roster

[MLAS 6100: *The Meaning of Modern Art*](#)

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MLAS 6100

The Meaning of Modern Art

Instructor: Leonard Folgarait

Days and Time: Mondays from 6:00 to 8:30pm

Dates: August 29th to December 12th

Location: Cohen Hall

Course Description:

This course will present art of the modern period, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and ask of that art what it means, and how and why that meaning was produced. Why is modern art so difficult to understand? Why does it look so unrealistic, and why is its meaning so hidden? Why is it so often thought to be made by unskilled and unbalanced people? This course will approach these questions seriously and attempt to answer them for the general student interested in art and in modern times.

To understand modern art, we must study modern history and society. We have to examine what sort of world the artists lived in that caused their art to look as it does. Examples of art to be studied range from Impressionist paintings of the nineteenth century to computer animation and internet art of today. The style of these images will be studied as a result of the kind of world in which they were made.

Course requirements:

There will be one written assignment, a 10 page formal research paper, on a topic to be assigned. This paper will also be presented as an in-class lecture of 15 minutes.

About this instructor:

Leonard Folgarait is Professor of History of Art at Vanderbilt University, where he has served as Chair of the Department of History of Art. His areas of teaching and research are the modern art of Latin America, with a specialization in the twentieth-century art of Mexico, and modern European and American art and architecture. Special interests are: the relationship of art to politics, early cubism, surrealism, performance art, film, photography, and historiography.

He has published four books on modern Mexican art and his articles have appeared in journals such as Oxford Art Journal, Arts Magazine, Art History, Works and Days, and Quintana.

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MLAS 6100

Intermediate Fiction Writing Workshop

Instructor: Lorraine Lopez

Days and Time: Tuesdays from 6:00 to 8:30pm

Dates: August 30th to December 13th

Location: Furman Hall

Course Description:

This section of creative writing focuses on developing and refining techniques of fiction writing as related to the short story. Fiction writing is a craft, as well as a discipline and a process. This course is designed to help workshop members to hone skills, such as, but not limited to developing effective characterization, using perspective judiciously and consistently, proportioning summary (exposition) appropriately to scene, developing setting and imagery that interacts with characterization or resonates metaphorically, as well as selecting and applying significant detail to enhance scene, characterization, and tone. To better apprehend and build such techniques and others, participants in the workshop will write two original short stories, complete three writing exercises, and analyze published short stories to discuss structural and stylistic components that contribute to these narratives, in addition to reading articles on craft and critiquing work from peers.

About this Instructor:

Lorraine M. López is an associate professor of English teaching in the M.F.A. program in Creative Writing at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of six books of fiction and editor of three essay collections. Her short story collection, *Soy la Avon Lady and Other Stories* won the inaugural Miguel Marmól prize for fiction. Her second book, *Call Me Henri* was awarded the Paterson Prize for Young Adult Literature, and her novels, *The Gifted Gabaldón Sisters* and *The Realm of Hungry Spirits* were Las Comadres National Book Club Selections. López's short story collection, *Homicide Survivors Picnic and Other Stories* was a Finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Prize in Fiction in 2010 and winner of the Texas League of Writers Award for Outstanding Book of Fiction. Her most recent publication is *The Darling*, a novel published last year.

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MLAS 6100

Concepts of God

Instructor: Michael Hodges

Days and Time: Thursdays 6:00 to 8:30pm

Dates: September 1st to December 15th

Location: Furman Hall

Course Description:

This course will involve a careful examination of alternative conceptions of God and the religious life. We often take it for granted that we know what the theist and atheist disagree about but in fact there are many different concepts of God in the religious and philosophical tradition. We will be concerned to ask whether the Jewish and Christian traditions are essentially tied to the view of God as a transcendent supernatural agent and if so what grounds can be offered for and against such a view. Other issues concern the nature of faith and the claim that faith offers us a legitimate way to fix belief. As well as supernaturalism we will examine naturalistic and existential alternatives. We will deal with such questions as the nature, content and ground of religious belief, the limitations of religious knowledge over against science and the relation between religion and values.

About this instructor:

Professor Hodges is professor of philosophy and has taught for many years at Vanderbilt. He has also taught several times in the MLAS program. He has written two books and many articles on a wide variety of subjects in philosophy of religion, constitutional law, philosophy and

technology, American Philosophy and the thought of Wittgenstein and Santayana. The special focus of his work at this time is philosophy of religion and ethics.

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MLAS 6700

Middle East Politics (Core Seminar)

Instructor: Katherine Carroll

Days and Time: Wednesdays 6:00 to 8:30pm

Dates: August 31st to December 14th

Location: Commons

Course Description:

This course will cover the structures, theories, norms and current bewildering realities of politics in the Middle East. The class agenda will be driven in part by student interests and current events. However, we will certainly learn the basics about some formal state structures (the governmental systems of Iran and Saudi Arabia), some elements of culture that influence politics (Islamism, nationalism and tribalism), and some recent political movements (ISIS and the Arab Spring).

For each of these topics and more, we will study facts and then discuss related questions. For example: Why does democracy flounder in the Arab states? Why, after years of political passivity, did the region's citizens revolt in the Arab Spring? What explains ISIS's appeal and success? What effect has heightened Saudi-Iranian rivalry had on local politics? And finally, what is to be done to alleviate the great human suffering now being experienced in much of the region?

Course requirements:

Students will choose one Middle Eastern country and write a 3,000 word 2016 Freedom House report that assesses the state of political and civil liberties there during the year (for examples of Freedom House reports go to <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>). Students will present their findings to the class. About this instructor:

About this instructor:

Katherine Blue Carroll came to Vanderbilt University in 2001 as the Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Science. Since 2006 she has been a full-time non-tenure track assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, where she directs the undergraduate program in public policy studies and teaches courses on Terrorism, Political Islam, Middle East Politics, and The War in Iraq. From January 2008 through April 2009 she worked as a social scientist on a Human Terrain Team in Baghdad, Iraq. Human Terrain Teams were developed to provide expert social and political advice to brigade commanders and soldiers on the ground in war zones. Since returning from Iraq she has worked on various aspects Iraqi culture and politics, as well as on the interaction of the American military with Iraqi society.