Course descriptions for our seminars, special topics courses, and other non-regular catalog offerings for Fall 2014 are listed below.

Students looking for course descriptions for our regular catalog courses should consult the course listings in the PSU Bulletin

HST 405A/505A: Readings in Early Modern Chinese History: Ming and Qing Dynasties
M 1400-1700
Prof. Cheung
Imperial China of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties is the subject of this reading colloquium. It was in this era that many key institutions, cultural traditions, and social practices evolved to the forms that came to define ‘traditional China’ – and continue to inform understandings of China today. The course will examine some of the major themes through which historians have interpreted China in the early modern era, during which China attained its greatest territorial extent and a population of over 400 million, and also became a center of the emerging global economy. These include the theory and practice of the Chinese imperial system, the forging of the ruling class through the civil examination system, the problems of maintaining order over the diverse peoples of a vast empire, economic transformations, and environmental challenges. We will engage with these (and other) themes through weekly discussion of primary sources in translation and important scholarship. Students will thereby acquire a broad yet detailed understanding of the most significant issues in the field. They will also be able to develop a more in-depth knowledge of topics of particular interest to them through the research assignments.

Prerequisite: HST 300 or consent of the instructor. Students who have not completed HST 300 will be unable to register for this course via web registration.

HST 405D/505D: Readings in U.S. History: Violence in the 19th and 20th Centuries
R 1730-2110
Prof. Johnson
Course description pending from instructor.

Prerequisite: HST 300 or consent of the instructor. Students who have not completed HST 300 will be unable to register for this course via web registration.
HST 405I/505I: Readings in Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

T 1400-1700

Prof. Tappan

Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade linked Africa and the New World in ways that fundamentally altered the course of history in both regions. Spanning from the earliest slave trading voyages in the fifteenth century through abolition and the nineteenth century end of the slave trade, over 12 million enslaved peoples were forced to migrate across the Atlantic Ocean to labor in a rapidly expanding plantation economy in an increasingly interconnected world.

The historical scholarship surrounding slavery and the slave trade in Africa and the Americas is vast and this course will examine many of the key historical debates including the conduct and impact of the trade, transformations in slavery and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world. Narratives privileging African perspectives, experiences and contributions will be analyzed as critical to the histories of all Atlantic world regions. Students will have an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the African past and its bearing on this dark chapter of human history, even as they may choose research topics grounded in Europe and the Americas.

Prerequisite: HST 300 or consent of the instructor. Students who have not completed HST 300 will be unable to register for this course via web registration.

HST 405N/505N: Readings in Roman History: The Roman Republic

T 0900-1150

Prof. Turner

This reading colloquium will examine the history of the Roman Republic, with a particular focus on the institutions and policies of the so-called Late Republic (roughly the first and second centuries BCE). We will examine some (though by no means all) of the main events, institutions and themes of the period. Topics of study include the theory and practice of Roman republican politics, the nature of Roman imperialism, and the problems associated with maintaining and governing an expanding empire. A significant portion of the course is devoted to the study of the seemingly irrevocable changes to the republican system of government that began in about the mid-second century and resulted in Augustus’ restored republic at the end of the first century.

Although the course stands alone as an advanced introduction into the nature of the Romans and the development of their empire during the republican period, broad reading of primary sources (in translation) and modern scholarship will help students develop their own prospective research project to be concluded in the HST 407/507 course.

Prerequisite: HST 300 or consent of the instructor. Students who have not completed HST 300 will be unable to register for this course via web registration.
HST 415/515: Topics in Greek History: Cities and Sanctuaries of Ancient Greece
TR 1400-1550
Prof. Armantrout
This class will be a general examination of the physical remains of ancient Greece. We will concentrate on the buildings and topography of Greek cities and religious sanctuaries and try to discover how the forms of these structures came to be the way they were. This will require an examination of the political, religious and economic institutions housed in them, and of the historical background and development of the various forms of buildings in ancient Greece. Most of the class will be spent looking at Athens, since this is the best known of all Greek cities, but we will also consider sanctuaries such as Olympia and Delphi. We will also be looking at some less well known sites, such as Megara Hyblaeia, Olynthos and Miletos.

Recommended prerequisite: upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.

HST 454/554: Topics in Medieval History
TR 1400-1550
Prof. Ott
This course examines the spectrum of medieval belief in the relationship between the natural and supernatural worlds by focusing on two of their extreme, though commonly occurring, points of conjuncture: the bodies and persons of “saints” and “deviants.” Proceeding from the assumption that a society’s deeply held beliefs, aspirations, values and anxieties may be revealed in those individuals and groups it seeks to celebrate or demonize, we will strive to understand the necessary place and roles of sanctity and deviance within the medieval world, and the inter-relation of the two. Topics to be examined: the construction of sanctity and the historical evolution of its models; gender and the construction of authority; the body (of women, Jews, homosexuals) as source of anxiety; the formation of Europe as a “persecuting society”; differing and overlapping discourses about deviance and deviants (heretics, Jews, prostitutes, lepers), and more.

Recommended prerequisite: upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.

HST 457: Topics in Early Modern European History: The Witch Hunt
Fully online course
Prof. Selwyn
Why did Europe experience traumatic witch hunts in the late medieval and early modern periods (ca. 1400-1700)? Who were the main targets or victims of the witch hunts and where did they take place? Was witch hunting primarily the product of a set of religious ideas about good and evil, or was it driven by popular hysteria? What happened during actual witch trials and did these differ across different locations within Europe and outside of it? What made the New England witch trials in late 17th-century colonial North America distinct from their European counterparts And, finally, what can we learn from more recent, modern-day “witch hunts” about the cultural anxieties and crises that produce these episodes of violence and scapegoating? Using a wide range of primary and secondary sources (as well as visual imagery and film), this course will explore these question, while sketching the historical context within which European witch hunts occurred, the time line of the hunts, and the debates that scholars have and continue to engage in about how to interpret this fascinating and troubling historical phenomenon.

Recommended prerequisite: upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.
HST 461/561: Topics in Jewish History: American Politics, American Jews
T 0900-1150
Prof. Weingrad
Course description pending from instructor.

Recommended prerequisite: upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.

HST 495/595: Comparative World History: The Early Twentieth Century
W 1730-2110
Prof. Schuler
In response to the first globalization around 1900, utopias of political ideology, individualism/gender and ethnic nationalism were increasingly cherished. After World War I their feverish following only intensified. Students will learn and compare their content in a comparative fashion with a focus on Latin America, Asia and Europe. Secondly, the time between 1900 and 1930 saw the development of remarkable technology that only complicated one’s engagement with the utopias mentioned above.

Recommended prerequisite: upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.