With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Amherst College is able to offer a tutorial project designed to strengthen opportunities for student-faculty research collaboration in the social sciences and humanities. The project seeks to develop and offer approximately six tutorials per year, small-group experiences based on the research of Amherst Faculty. These tutorials are designed to enable students to engage in meaningful, substantive research with faculty before their senior year.

By exploring how different scholars approach a topic, students will learn to frame a research question, develop research strategies, and identify and use sources, be they archival, textual, electronic, human, or artifact. The tutorials facilitate the student’s engagement with a research topic that dovetails closely with the scholarly interests of the faculty mentor. In some cases, the faculty mentor’s project may lend itself to faculty-student collaboration; in others, participating students will explore related questions, with the potential that the work of faculty mentor and student can each enrich the other.

Students who enroll in these courses will be designated Mellon Research Fellows and will be eligible for research support during the summer to continue the research projects they began with their tutorial instructors.

Continue on to read more about courses being offered this Spring............
America’s Death Penalty  COLQ 234  Professor Sarat

The United States, almost alone among constitutional democracies, retains death as a criminal punishment. It does so in the face of growing international pressure for abolition and of evidence that the system for deciding who lives and who dies is fraught with error. This seminar is designed to expose students to America’s death penalty as a researchable subject. It will be organized to help students understand how research is framed in this area, analyze theories and approaches of death penalty researchers, and identify open questions and most promising lines of future research. It will focus on the following dimensions of America’s death penalty: its history, current status, public support/opposition, the processing of capital cases in the criminal justice system, race and capital punishment, and its impact and efficacy. During the seminar, each student will develop a prospectus for a research project on America’s death penalty. This course is part of a new model of tutorials at Amherst designed to enable students to engage in substantive and collaborative research with faculty.

Open to Sophomores and Juniors.  Enrollment will be limited to 6.
This course is focused on developing research skills within a multidisciplinary and international context. We will begin with the question debated by neurologists and others: What constitutes a sense? Aristotle identified the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, but research in many fields identifies a number of additional senses that include nociception (the sense of pain), the sense of time, equilibrioception (the sense of balance), proprioception (the sense of where your body is in space), kinesthesia (the sense of joint and muscle motion and acceleration), thermoception (the sense of temperature differences), and magnetoception (the sense of direction), as well as the interoceptive senses (the internal senses of respiration, heartbeat, hunger, and the need for digestive elimination), among others.

We will investigate the properties and functions of the senses and sensory systems from a variety of disciplinary perspectives including neuroscience, psychology, philosophy of perception, critical theory, literature, performance, architecture, and the visual and electronic arts. We will study moments of aberration, when the senses offer unexpected or unanticipated information, and explore how that often fluid information can contribute to knowledge. Some say the senses offer us information that is only an illusion: we will explore the ways in which illusions are generated and transformed, and the ways in which they can generate further materials to help us develop knowledge about our dynamic experience in the world.

Throughout, we will identify strategies for framing research questions, for gathering and digesting research materials from various sources, and for employing this research in projects of writing and creation according to individual student interest. We will examine how writers, artists, dancers, performers, filmmakers, and architects employ research in the development of their work, and students will articulate the ways in which they can perform their research in writing, performance, design, and the visual and electronic arts according to their own interests and experience. To end the semester, each student will propose a topic and develop a prospectus for an original research project. This course is part of a new model of tutorials at Amherst designed to enable students to engage in substantive and collaborative research with faculty.

Open to Sophomores and Juniors. Enrollment will be limited to 6.

Admission with consent of the instructor. Interested students must attend the first class meeting.
MELLON TUTORIALS

Archival Research in Drama: The Samuel French Collection
COLQ 245    Professor Grobe

Amherst College is home to one of America’s most extraordinary archives of theater history: the Samuel French Collection. In this course, you will work extensively with this collection, using it to enrich your understanding of dramatic literature. Hands-on exercises will teach you basic archival skills. Then, we will collaborate on a large-scale archival project as a class. In frequent seminar-style discussions, we will apply what we learn in the archive to our reading of printed plays.

The theme will vary from year to year. This year’s theme will be “Things Onstage”—that is, the material culture of theater.

This course is part of a new model of tutorials at Amherst designed to enable students to engage in substantive research with faculty.

Open to Sophomores and Juniors Only.    Enrollment will be limited to 6.

https://www.amherst.edu/people/facstaff/cgrobe
https://www.amherst.edu/library/archives/holdings/samfrench

Advanced Topics in Latin America’s Political Economy
COLQ 333    Professor Corrales

This course is part of a new model of tutorials at Amherst designed to enable students to engage in substantive research with faculty. The objective of the tutorial is to expose students to various aspects of academic research: identify a researchable topic, master the relevant literature, develop a viable research design, learn to formulate causal arguments and address rival hypotheses, become comfortable with the academic practice of revising and resubmitting, etc. Each student is free to choose his or her topic of inquiry, after close consultation with me and other participants. Students are expected to work sometimes independently, other times in teams. We will meet frequently to discuss progress. Some assignments will be common to the group as a whole, other assignments will be individualized, based on each student’s interests and skills. At various points during the semester, students should also be prepared to share their work, orally or in writing, with everyone else in the course. I too will share drafts of some of my work for discussion.

Final requirements will vary depending on the selected project and may include: developing a thesis prospectus; writing a literature review; researching a topic in close collaboration with me; collecting, analyzing and presenting data.

Open to Sophomores and Juniors.    Enrollment will be limited to 6.

Preference will be given to students who have taken at least one course with me.

Please contact Prof. Corrales for meeting times.
News of large-scale disasters and impending catastrophes multiply day by day—news that heralds irreparable ecological devastation, the unbounded ravages of infectious disease, the geological and atmospheric precariousness of “nature,” and the mounting toll of civil wars and non-state political violence. Indeed, by many accounts, we are now living in the “Age of Catastrophe.” Not only has the language of catastrophe established itself as a defining idiom of life and survival in the contemporary world, it has also taken hold as both a backdrop to and condition for the intimate terrain of our everyday lives—as schoolchildren are taught to prepare for massacres and natural disasters, local police departments train and equip for terrorist attacks, communities come into existence to share strategies and scenarios to “prep” for the “next disaster,” and new forms of leisure and media consumption grow around wildly varying visions of the world’s destruction. This course sets out to critically engage disaster and catastrophes as conceptual challenges and, through this engagement, introduce students to catastrophe and large-scale disaster as objects of scholarly inquiry. That is, this course will expose students to a range of disciplinary approaches that scholars have developed in examining the effects of disaster on people, communities, and the world. By the end of the semester, students will have gained significant experience in developing original research. They will have a sense of what it means to identify researchable questions, evaluate relevant approaches to a topic, and formulate a viable research design. This course is part of a new model of tutorials at Amherst designed to enable students to engage in substantive research with faculty.

Open to Sophomores and Juniors Only.

Enrollment will be limited to 6.

Continue to find out about the upcoming Information Session.....
RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS:
consider a Mellon research seminar

INFORMATION SESSION (& PIZZA)
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27
7 PM, FROST LIBRARY
PERIODICALS READING ROOM

Faculty and “Mellon Scholar” students will

- share their past experiences
- announce this spring’s courses
- describe summer research
- answer your questions
Watch for these courses to appear in the on-line catalogue.

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