

AMHERST COLLEGE



RESEARCH TUTORIALS IN THE HUMANITIES AND “HUMANISTIC” SOCIAL SCIENCES SPRING 2021

Research Tutorials, which are listed in the college catalog as colloquia, offer faculty and students the opportunity to collaborate on shared research projects. The enrollment for each tutorial is limited to six students. Offered for sophomores and juniors, the courses present ongoing research on a series of related questions in the faculty member’s area of expertise. By exploring how different scholars approach a topic, students learn to frame a research question, develop research strategies, and identify and use sources. Students pursue a research topic that dovetails closely with the professor’s scholarly interests.

Students enrolled in these courses are guaranteed funding for six weeks of work during the summer following the academic year in which they take the course.

Continue on to read more about courses being offered this Spring.....

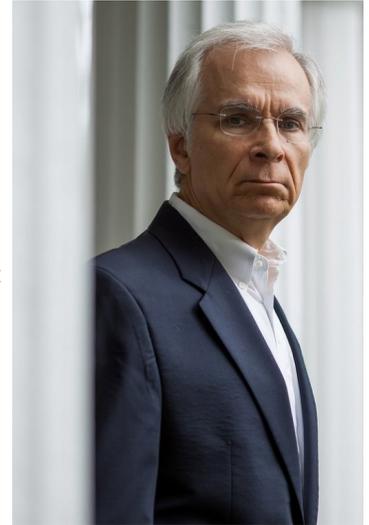
***RESEARCH TUTORIALS in the HUMANITIES and
“HUMANISTIC” SOCIAL SCIENCES***

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 tutorial series that engages Amherst students in substantive research with faculty in the humanities and humanistic social sciences.



Open to Sophomores and Juniors interested in research.

Enrollment will be limited to 6.

Islanders Abroad in the 19th Century

COLQ 350

Professor Melillo

Pacific Islander protagonists are conspicuously absent from nineteenth-century travel writing. Even so, myriad voyagers from Oceania journeyed to the furthest reaches of the planet in the 1800s, generating intercultural encounters and returning to their archipelagic homelands with news of the outside world. This research tutorial focuses on Indigenous Pacific Islander women and men who travelled to the United States, Europe, China, and Japan during the nineteenth century. Over the past decade, new searchable websites containing millions of pages of newspapers and other printed materials from Aotearoa (New Zealand), Fiji, Hawaii, Tahiti, and Tonga have come online. These vast clearinghouses for primary source materials offer possibilities for adding nuance, thick description, and multiple viewpoints to accounts of Pacific Islander journeys. Students in this tutorial will conduct research on these voyages, and we will publish our findings as part of an ongoing Pacific Islander history blog project.



This course is part of a tutorial series that engages Amherst students in substantive research with faculty in the humanities and humanistic social sciences.

Open to Sophomores and Juniors interested in research.

Instructor Approval Required.

Enrollment will be limited to 6 students.

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Singing Together: Sonic & Social Dynamics

COLQ 233

Professor Engelhardt

The sonic and social dynamics of people singing together are, surprisingly, an under-developed and under-theorized field in music studies and voice studies. In the time of COVID-19, managing the significant risks of singing together amplifies these dynamics through the impossibility of physical co-presence and the possibilities of technologically enabled participation at a distance. This is an extraordinary time to think and write about what it means to sing together. Work on the voice tends toward an almost exclusive focus on individual voices, despite the human commonplace of group singing, choric chanting, and joint speech. In this research tutorial, we will take stock of how group singing is treated as *either* a sonic or a social phenomenon—as unisonance (the appearance of ideological coherence in mass singing) or multisonance (the sonic textures of thickness and weight in mass singing); as collective singing (voicing something in common) or collected singing (voices curated according to a sonic ideal). We will then be positioned to move beyond the sonic/social divide in understanding how people sing together, and what its effects and affects are. Our research will be historical, comparative, ethnographic (engaging with choirs and singing communities navigating the limits and possibilities of functioning during COVID-19), and keyed to the physical and sonic particulars of group singing. A major part of our project will be to model a decolonized approach to group singing while leveraging the critical and comparative possibilities that traditions of choir and choral singing afford us. In the six-week summer research period, we will collaborate in writing a scholarly article based on our work to be submitted to a major journal. Although students need not be singers themselves, the Amherst College Choral Society and student-led singing groups will serve as important resources for our work.



This course is part of a tutorial series that engages Amherst students in substantive research with faculty in the humanities and humanistic social sciences.

Open to sophomores and juniors interested in research. Admission with consent of the instructor.

Hyflex format with as much face-to-face learning as possible.

If Overenrolled: priority given to students planning thesis work or music majors.

Enrollment will be limited to 6.

Watch for these courses to appear in the on-line catalogue.

Pre-Registration is strongly recommended.