

# Honors Seminars: Fall, 2011

## **"Sports as a Microcosm of the World"- Andy Eklund & John D'Angelo**

In this course, we will examine political, economic, cultural, and psychological issues through the medium of sports, both from a historical and current events perspective, using a plethora of resources ranging from books (such as Franklin Foer's "How Soccer Explains the World") to movies (such as "Invictus" and "Alive" ) and documentaries such as Ken Burns' "Baseball" to current events in the news. We will look at heroes vs. villains and draw parallels between sports and society as a whole. We will also examine issues within sports such as the economic disparity between large market and small market teams, the advent of free agency, the Negro Leagues, and draw parallels to society. We will also look at societal issues such as racism, immigration, etc....using sports as a medium.

## **Drinking Up: The History and Science of Alcohol – Chris Romanchock & Garrett McGowan**

Medicinally, as a source of nutrients, in worship and religion, and as a social lubricant, alcohol (ethanol) has been used by people from the earliest times to present. It was likely a fortuitous accident tens of thousands of years ago that it came into human culture, and while abused by a minority of drinkers, most derive pleasure from its consumption. In this course, the history and science of ethanol will be examined. A combination of laboratory exercises and lectures will comprise this course; and may include but not be limited to “crafting a homebrew,” analysis of beer/wine/spirits, field trips to vineyards and invited speaker visits.

## **Text and Image – Elizabeth Blomster**

Become self published! Learn to make simple format books that combine your text and images. The content of your books can be created during class or can be older material that's just been waiting for the opportunity to be arranged as a book. The word book will be loosely interpreted to encompass everything from pamphlets made on a photocopier to electronic books like a blog. You will be guided through the step by step process of book making and will also have the chance to explore which structure best fits your subject before your project is brought to fruition.

## **Tightwaddery, or the good life on a dollar a day – Emrys Westacott**

The basic idea underlying much of contemporary life and culture is: spend money and you'll be happy. This is a lie perpetrated by capitalists in order to sell their products. The recent recession, while undoubtedly causing hardship for many, also offers an opportunity for us to critically examine the assumptions and values of our consumer society. This seminar will do this both in theory and in practice. On a theoretical level, consider how living frugally benefits your mind, your body, your relationships, your community, and the environment. On a practical level, we will examine personal spending habits, sharpen bargain-hunting, rip-off-detecting, and haggling skills, and make field trips to yard sales and thrift shops. At bottom, though, the course is less concerned with cutting coupons than with the question Socrates asked long ago: What is the good life for a human being?

### **Wiseguys, Whackos, and Whiners - Jeff Sluyter-Beltrão**

This course is based on the assumption that some of those who are generally considered lunatics, ranters or doomsayers by our society's mainstream actually have quite interesting things to say about the way society works. Drawing from an assortment of controversial short essays, indy films, and internet websites, we'll explore a wide variety of impassioned riffs – from third-wave feminism, queer theory, and radical environmentalism to race nationalism, revolutionary anarchism and religious fundamentalism. Each week we'll be asking the same basic question: are these people hopeless nutcases, quirky visionaries, or what?! No prior experience with fanaticism required; weirdos welcome; open mindedness a must.

### **T'ai Chi: A Way of Life T'ai Chi - Steve Crosby**

T'ai Chi is a way of life that has been practiced by the Chinese for many centuries. This meditative, peaceful “martial art”, is known and regularly practiced daily by millions of people throughout the world. This course intends to have dual emphases. Academically, students will be introduced to T'ai Chi's early history and its evolution into the contemporary era. To this end, we will explore T'ai Chi's philosophical background as it links with Chinese culture, with occasional comparisons and contrasts to Western thought. Readings will provide additional stimuli for class discussions, which will include what is meant by the energy “Chi” and the internal power of “Jing”. Students will also learn approximately half of the 64 movements of the form and the physical/mental/meditative preparation required for proper learning. Proper practice will provide the student with a balanced mind, spirit, and body!