

Spring 2021 Seminar Informal Curriculum



Hughes



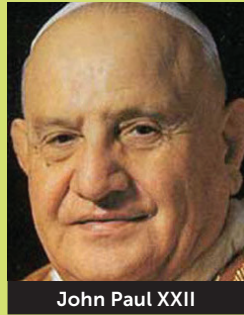
Wollstonecraft



Maus



Waschke



John Paul XXII

FEBRUARY 17 & 25

From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces

Risking Difficult Dialogues

Learn how community agreements promote authentic discussion and critical dialogue about challenging texts and difficult topics, even and especially in times of crisis. Exploring the notion of “brave spaces,” the presenters offer tools for creating classrooms in which students and teachers grow together in the context of diversity-focused, social justice education.

With **Luz Casquejo Johnston, Rashaan Meneses, & Amissa Miller**

Co-sponsors: Roy E. and Patricia Disney Forum Speaker Series & Communication

Wednesday, 1/17 1:00–2:15 pm

Thursday, 1/25 1:15–2:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24,

Facing Race in Seminar Texts

Part presentation and part discussion, this student-to student event explores the difficult topics of race, power, and representation in Seminar texts. Participants are invited to consider the depictions of racial identities in Seminar readings, and offer strategies for reframing those narratives and decentering the Western Tradition.

With **Rashaan Meneses, Megan Flynn ('21), & Kulia Osborne ('21)**

1:00–2:15 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3

Performing *Macbeth* on Diverse Stages

Who owns Shakespeare? And what allows his work to remain relevant even as times change? Join theatre director Victor Malana Maog, actor Amy Kim Waschke, and Shakespeare scholar Hilda Ma for a conversation on the ways theatrical practice, history, gender, and race interrelate when bringing the Bard's words to life.

With **Victor Malana Maog, Amy Kim Waschke, & Hilda Ma**

1:30–2:30 pm

All events online via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3ivC1qu>

Check online Event Calendar for updates at www.stmarys-ca.edu/collegiate-seminar-calendar

Saint Mary's College of California occupies the ancestral, traditional lands of the Saclan (Sacalanes) Tribe, whose descendants are now organizing into the Muwekma Ohlone tribe.

MARCH 3 & APRIL 28

How to Read a Graphic Novel

Graphic novels use the formal conventions of comics to tell sophisticated stories, as words and images work together to create layers of meaning. Drawing from *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud, two visual artists will help readers discover the craft and artistry of works like *Maus*.

With **Deanna Zibello & Jason Jakaitis**

Wednesday, 3/3 2:45–4:00 pm

Wednesday, 4/28 2:45–4:00 pm

TUESDAY, MARCH 9

Descartes' Doubts

Descartes was a thinker of many talents: mathematician, natural scientist, revolutionary philosopher. In his *Discourse*, he claims that a single method holds all scientific thinking together. But is that really true, or is it just part of his self-fashioning as the replacement for Aristotle? A scholar of Descartes' life and philosophy leads a conversation on the central goals of the Cartesian project.

With **Joseph Zepeda**

1:15–2:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10

Achebe on Questions of Cultural Difference

In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe dramatizes the contacts and conflicts between his Igbo people and the first British colonists in what is now Nigeria. The story raises questions about how to understand and deal with differences within and between cultures. Followed by brief remarks on the novel's historical context, participants will move into breakout discussions. In dialogue with Achebe we will ask: What do we do when cultures collide? How do we negotiate deep cultural differences?

With **Claude-Rhéal Malary**

2:00–3:15 pm

TUESDAY, MARCH 16

How to Read Empirical Data

In his controversial experiment, Stanley Milgram explored how much pain college students would cause others on orders from an authority figure. Amid mandated mask-wearing and prohibited social gatherings, Milgram's research question has fresh relevance: Why do some obey authority while others do not? Our discussion will center on the study's design, results, and conclusions, providing tools for understanding and interpreting quantitative data in a Seminar text, and for using empirical research to illuminate political issues.

With **Ani Moughamian & Karen Ruff**

1:15–2:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

Sor Juana Replies

Sor Juana was a star in Baroque Mexico, a poet-playwright-scholar and nun with friends in high places. When the Church pressured her to renounce the writing life, Sor Juana answered her critics in *La Respuesta*, an unapologetic defense of women's freedom of intellect and conscience.

With **María Luisa Ruiz**

Co-sponsor: Institute for Latino and Latin American Studies (ILaLs)

1:00–2:15 pm

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

War Poets: *Celan & Yevtushenko*

Two unimaginable Holocaust events inspired a pair of poems, read by millions. These poems, in turn, inspired other artists. Holocaust scholar Joan Peterson explores these connections, placing Celan's "Death Fugue" alongside works by German painter Anselm Kiefer, and considering Shostakovich's 13th Symphony in tandem with Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar."

With **Joan Peterson**

1:15–2:30 pm

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

Truth, Lies (& More Lies) in *The Odyssey*

Readers of Homer know that Odysseus spins tall tales, but it's not always clear when he is lying and when he is telling the truth. Join us for a discussion led by a scholar of the Ancient Mediterranean World, to explore the role of truth and deception in *The Odyssey*. Together we'll ask: Can we believe Odysseus?

With **Elizabeth Hamm**

2:00–3:15 pm

MONDAY, MARCH 22

Goodall on the Human Animal

In her pioneering study of chimpanzees, Jane Goodall revised our understanding of humanity's closest living relatives and laid bare fundamental philosophical questions about what it means to be human. Along the way, she overcame a variety of challenges. Join us as we consider Goodall's work and its enduring influence.

With **Rebecca Jabbour**

4:00–5:15 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24

Activism & Advocacy *Past, Present, & Future*

This event explores the divergent paths of activism pursued by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. In conversation, co-facilitators will consider the extent to which their quest for human dignity and social justice has progressed since the Jim Crow era. They'll also ask what needs to happen now: to sustain that progress, alter the political landscape, and realize lasting systemic change.

With **Robin Dunn &**

BSU President Shilei Bell-Lipsey ('22)

Co-sponsor: 44 Days Honoring Black History

1:00–2:15 pm

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24

Wollstonecraft *On Gender & Education*

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* reinterpreted liberal ideas of individualism to claim equal opportunities for women and men. At the same time, it reinforced patriarchal values and gendered ways of knowing. A short panel talk on Wollstonecraft will be followed by discussions with students and faculty.

With **Sheila Hughes & Ellen Rigsby**

3:00–4:15 pm

FRIDAY, MARCH 26

Experiencing God *An Exploration of Vatican II*

Vatican II changed the way many Catholics and religious orders practiced their faith. Through ethnographic interviews with Franciscan Women Religious and Carmelite nuns, we will hear how Vatican II reshaped their experiences of prayer and the divine. Then we will consider how the values of Vatican II manifest in our own lives.

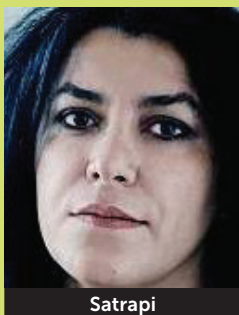
With **Anna Corwin**

1:00–2:15 pm

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Korematsu



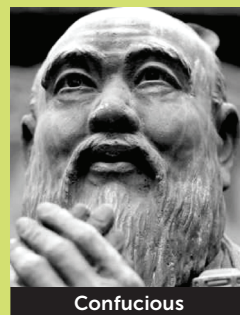
Satrapi



Morrison



Marx



Confucius

TUESDAY, APRIL 6

How to Read a Court Decision

Supreme Court decisions provide the final word on legal issues and often impact national policy. In *Korematsu v. United States (1944)*, the justices navigate tensions between wartime powers and the rights of citizens. Using Korematsu as a template, participants will learn to identify legal questions, track facts presented, and wade through the differing opinions in Court decisions.

With Tony Panlilio

1:15–2:30 pm

APRIL 7, 9, 27, & 29

Close Listening

Apply the close reading skills of Seminar in a critical way of listening to music. Working in groups, students will explore various pieces of music with the goal of discovering how close listening has a grammar, logic, and rhetoric, in parallel with close reading of written texts.

With Lewis Jordan & Joe Zeccardi

Wednesday, 4/7 1:00–2:30 pm
Friday, 4/9 3:00–4:30 pm
Tuesday, 4/27 3:00–4:30 pm
Thursday, 4/29 1:15–2:45 pm

APRIL 9 & MAY 12

Quotable Confucius

Confucius famously looked to the past for wisdom; Yet his teachings shaped societies of the future, not only in China, but throughout East Asia and beyond. Although we may not realize it, Confucius has touched our lives. To understand how and why, join two scholars of Chinese culture for a look at his historical significance and impact on contemporary culture.

With Elena Songster & Jennifer Heung

Friday, 4/9 1:00–2:15 pm
Wednesday, 5/12 3:00–4:15 pm

MONDAY, APRIL 12

How to Read a Poem *Sappho in Translation*

From the intention of its author and the context of its publication to the terms of its topic and the message of its meter, poetry makes meaning in many ways. Using some short selections from Sappho, we'll explore different interpretive strategies for unpacking poetry in Seminar.

With Julia Gardner ('21) & Joe Zeccardi

1:00–2:15 pm

TUESDAY, APRIL 13

Reading Toni Morrison

Morrison's Nobel Prize lecture reflects her unorthodox approach to storytelling and language, and engages themes from her fiction: ethics, power, human suffering, and human connection. In this interactive discussion, participants will practice close reading to explore Morrison's influences and strategies – including unconventional narrative structures, the oral tradition, and the past in the present.

With Jeannine King

1:15–2:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14

Arendt on Violence

What is political power? How is it generated, and how is it undermined? What is the relation of power to violence? We will think through these questions in dialogue with "On Violence," by the 20th-century political theorist Hannah Arendt. A short introduction by an Arendt scholar will be followed by round-table discussions.

With David Arndt

1:00–2:15 pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 15

Thucydides' *History* *On Politics and Plagues*

Following "Pericles' Funeral Oration" in Thucydides' *History* comes his account of the "Plague of Athens." Readers today wonder how the plague affected Athenian society and its civic virtues. This presentation focuses on Thucydides' concerns about the plague's political impacts and explores connections to the current pandemic.

With Brother Charles Hilken

1:15–2:30 pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21

Factory Hands *Dickens, Marx, & Victorian Workers*

Join us for an interactive discussion of essential workers in Victorian England: their lives, the factories, and developing labour laws. The presenter will offer context on Dickens, Marx, and Victorian labor practices, then invite participants to consider how the authors view the Hands of *Hard Times* within the frames of Victorian England and Capitalism.

With Sunayani Bhattacharya

3:00–4:15 pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 22

On Euclid's Uncommon Notions

As institutions of learning divide numbers and letters into separate subjects, so do students tend to identify (or be identified) as either mathematically or linguistically inclined. Few works of literature give the lie to this false but persistent dichotomy more plainly than Euclid's *Elements*. Join us for an exploration of the intersection of math, language, & logic.

With Joseph Petermann ('22) & Joe Zeccardi

4:15–5:30 pm

MONDAY, MAY 3

Aquinas & Just War

Join us as we consider the structure of Aquinas' arguments and principles for "just wars." After remarks by a theologian, participants will work in small groups as they consider specific conflict scenarios, asking how Aquinas' "just war" theory might apply and what action Aquinas would recommend.

With Zach Flagin

1:00–2:15 pm

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5

Symbiogenesis & the Struggle for Existence

As Charles Darwin is to evolution, Lynn Margulis is to symbiogenesis – the theory that fundamentally reframes the origin and diversity of life on Earth. Join us for a discussion of high-tech evidence supporting this theory and spotlighting the question: Are humans really individuals, or are we more like lichens?

With Jessica Coyle

1:00–2:15 pm

MONDAY, MAY 10

Galileo's Starry Revolution

Galileo's revolutionary discoveries were arrived at through application of the scientific process. Join our resident astronomer for a discussion of what constitutes a scientific revolution. Weather permitting, participants will repeat some of Galileo's observations to better appreciate the new era of astronomy and astrophysics he initiated.

With Aaron Lee

4:30–5:45 pm

TUESDAY, MAY 11

gather 'round: an original musical created with + for SMC

Nationally recognized theatre artists guided a cast of student actors, singers, and dancers through the musical creation process. The results are a filmed original musical production about the power of storytelling and the need for community.

Free tickets available to SEM 001 students. Reservations required.*

Co-sponsor: Performing Arts

Premiere: Tuesday, 5/11, 8:00 pm
On Demand: Wednesday-Friday, 5/12-14; Sunday 5/16; and Thursday-Sunday, 5/20-23.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12

Marjane Satrapi *In Conversation*

In the graphic novel *Persepolis*, profound political, economic, and cultural differences divide a nation, as a young girl struggles to regain her freedom, family, and faith. World renowned author, artist, illustrator and filmmaker Marjane Satrapi joins us from her home in Paris, for a conversation on her life and work.

With Marjane Satrapi & Anahita Ghazi Bayat

Co-sponsors: Roy E. and Patricia Disney Forum Speaker Series & Communication
1:00–2:00 pm

*SEM 001 use QR code to reserve free tix for the musical *gather 'round*.



All events online via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3ivC1qu>

Check online Event Calendar for updates at www.stmarys-ca.edu/collegiate-seminar-calendar

Saint Mary's College of California occupies the ancestral, traditional lands of the Saclan (Sacalanes) Tribe, whose descendants are now organizing into the Muwekma Ohlone tribe.