

FALL 2009 Research Training Course Offerings (xx-198)

<i>Course# Section, Professor</i>	<i>Abbreviated Topic(s) Descriptions</i>
79-198, Section A, Prof. Paul Eiss	The Mestizo Theatre: The Cultural Politics of Memory in Yucatan's Teatro Regional
79-198, Section B, Prof. Joseph Devine	On the Road: A Selective History of Pre-World War II America
79-198, Section E, Prof. Joseph Devine	"Key" Figures in Pittsburgh's Past: The Impact of Phi Beta Kappa on Pittsburgh and Southwestern PA
82-198, Section D, Prof. Kenya Dworkin	Implausible Neighbors: Sephardic Jews and Puerto Ricans in New York City
85-198, Section I, Prof. Lori Holt	Research Training in Psychology
85-198, Section K, Prof. Erik Thiessen	The Role of Learning in Infants' Language Acquisition
85-198, Section M, Prof. Brooke Feeney	Research Training in Social Psychology
88-198, Section G, Prof. George Loewenstein	Behavioral Economics

FALL 2009

79-198, Research Training: History, 9 units

Section A, Professor Paul Eiss

Contact by e-mail: pke@andrew.cmu.edu ; and include information concerning interest in this project.

The Mestizo Theatre: The Cultural Politics of Memory in Yucatan's Teatro Regional

This project involves working with a large collection of Spanish language theatre scripts from Yucatan's regional theatre, a popular and working class genre which dates from the late nineteenth century to the present. The theatre is distinguished by the occasional inclusion of Maya language and traditional Yucatec song and dance, by the appropriation of a wide variety of styles (from Spanish zarzuelas to contemporary telenovelas), and by incisive political critique, typically in the form of satire. A student who took part in this project, might contribute in various ways: research in Yucatecan newspapers to find information regarding regional theatre performances; development of a data base with information on the plays, as well as playwrights, actors, etc.; the reading and cataloguing of the plays themselves; etc. As all of these materials are in Spanish, fluency or at least advanced reading proficiency in Spanish is required.

This course is available to either one or two students.

FALL 2009

79-198, Research Training: History, 9 units

Section B, Professor Joseph E. Devine

Contact by e-mail: jd0x@andrew.cmu.edu ; and include information concerning interest in this project. Recommended: strong background and interest in 20th century American social history and cultural studies.

On the Road: A Selective History of Pre-World War II America

Early one morning in late May of 1937, four young men – close friends, barely one year out of high school – set out from their home in Bayonne, New Jersey, in an old Ford that leaked oil, with a specific task: drive to South Bend, Indiana and pick up and bring home another friend who was finishing his freshman year at the University of Notre Dame. But the trip became much more. It became their first great adventure as young adults, outside of the rather narrow world they'd known as boys, with no idea of what lay in their futures, but with a vague sense that life might start to pull them apart.

They called themselves “The Rover Boys.” They packed an old manual typewriter, and kept a daily journal that gives a travelogue of their trip, which they stretched into a route that took them west to South Bend, south to New Orleans, east to the Atlantic, and north again to new Jersey and home, over a stretch of several weeks.

What they did was, certainly for them then, and maybe also for us now, remarkable. They transformed this simple task into a collective odyssey that, no matter where or in how many directions their future would take them, would bind them together as close friends forever.

For us, this journal now holds promise as a set of first-hand observations by four young men from a different time and place in America, seeing and reacting to parts of the country they'd never seen (and probably never expected to see). What this journal says about them, and the America they observed, is the focus of this research project. Their journal will be the project's central “text.” Students will be challenged to identify and critique works of history, literature, economics, cultural studies, and other relevant fields that expand and illuminate the contexts of the regions through which these boys passed, and that also shed light on them and their world (and world view) at home. Possible long-term end-results of this project include a course of study built around this journal, and a monograph of what it represents as a “social/cultural history” of a slice of pre-World War II American life.

Open to more than one student.

FALL 2009

79-198, Research Training: History, 9 units

Section E, Professor Joseph E. Devine

Contact by e-mail: jd0x@andrew.cmu.edu ; and include information concerning interest in this project.

“Key” Figures in Pittsburgh’s Past: The Impact of Phi Beta Kappa on Pittsburgh and Southwestern PA

Founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va., the Phi Beta Kappa Society is the nation's oldest honorary society, with chapters at 270 of the foremost institutions of higher education across the country. Almost all members are elected by the chapters from among candidates for degrees in liberal arts and sciences, usually from the top 10-15% of the graduating class. The Phi Beta Kappa key has become a universally recognized mark of academic achievement in the liberal arts and sciences.

Many notable figures in American History have earned the coveted Phi Beta Kappa key, including leaders of the American Revolution, delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1788, and members of the Continental Congress and the U.S. Congress. Six United States presidents earned the honor as undergraduates and another 10 presidents were elected as alumni or honorary members.

This course seeks to identify, research, and tell the stories of selected members of Phi Beta Kappa who chose to live and work in southwestern PA, and who have had a significant influence on the history and evolution of this city and region. This project will involve collaboration with the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, and the national office of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. Looking ahead, profiles developed through this course may result in an exhibit at the Heinz History Center, and perhaps a published work (for which student participants would be listed as contributors).

FALL 2009

82-198, Section D, Freshman-Sophomore Research Training: Modern Languages, 9 units

Section D, Professor Kenya Dworkin

Contact by e-mail: kdworkin@andrew.cmu.edu and include information about interest in and linguistic competence for this project.

Implausible Neighbors: Sephardic Jews and Puerto Ricans in New York City

Part A=Sephardic Jewish Immigrants in New York City

(Requirement: Advanced reading ability in Hebrew and/or Spanish)

Part B=Puerto Ricans Migrants in New York City

(Requirement: Advanced reading ability in Spanish)

This project is divided in two parts, each of which involves semester-long work, worth 9 units. **Part A** involves the study of two microfilmed newspapers, “La Amerika” and “La Vara,” both published in New York City, between 1910 and 1948, by Sephardic Jewish immigrants from Turkey and the Balkan countries.¹ **Part B** involves the study of two microfilmed newspapers, “Gráfico” and “Pueblos Hispanos,” both published in Spanish, in New York City, by and for Puerto Rican migrants, in the early twentieth century.

These immigrants, a minority within the Jewish immigrant experience, have never been studied as a Hispanic immigrant group, which is the purpose of my larger study. My intention is to compare their experience with that of another immigrant group with which they share many similarities—Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans and Sephardic Jews coexisted in two areas of NYC, the Lower East Side and Harlem, and in the garment industry.

Approximately 40,000 Sephardic Jews came to NYC, fleeing the Turkish and Balkan wars of the early twentieth century, wars and revolts that changed their way of life after centuries of a relatively peaceful existence in the Ottoman Empire. About 40,000 Puerto Ricans came to NYC as new, American citizens as a result of the Jones Acts of 1917. Puerto Rican immigrants were part of a larger group of Spanish-speaking immigrants from countries like Cuba, Colombia, and Guatemala. Despite their citizenship, they were discriminated, nonetheless, by New York’s mainstream Anglo society, due to perceived racial difference and because of their language. Early in the early migration period of both Sephardim and Puerto Ricans, they inhabited certain areas of NYC, particularly the Lower East Side and Harlem, and were involved establishing coffee houses, restaurants, retail businesses and in the garment industry.

Student researchers will assist me in identifying and analyzing articles, columns and letters to the editor(s) that address the immigrant experience, attitudes about the ‘old country’ vs. the United States, interethnic relations and assimilation, and cultural preservation.

Open to more than one student, due to the two-part nature of the study and the language requirements for both Parts A and B.

¹ The newspapers of the Sephardic Jews were published in Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish, written in Rashi Hebrew characters. Ladino is a dialect of Spanish based upon a medieval variety of Spanish spoken by Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and other languages with which they came in contact, e.g., Hebrew, Turkish, French, and Italian.

FALL 2009

85-198, Research Training: Psychology, 9 units

Section I, Prof. Lori Holt

Contact by email: and include information about your interest in this project.

Research Training in Psychology

Students will acquire hands-on experience working in a cognitive psychology lab studying questions of auditory cognition and speech processing.

FALL 2009

85-198, Research Training: Psychology, 9 units

Section K, Professor Erik D. Thiessen

Contact: thiessen@andrew.cmu.edu, and include information about your interests in this project.

The Role of Learning in Infants' Language Acquisition

In order to master their language, infants need to learn an extraordinary amount. They must discover what sounds occur in their language, how those sounds relate to meaning, the identity and meaning of words in their language, and how to string those words together into sentences. Infants are exposed to a rich linguistic environment, but little is known about how infants are able to take advantage of the richness of this environment.

In the Infant Language and Learning Lab (<http://www.psy.cmu.edu/~thiessen/labpage.html>), we try to understand how infants are able to learn from their environment. In particular, we explore how infants respond to the distribution of probabilistic information across levels of linguistic organization like sound and meaning. To do so, we use a variety of experimental methods, such as habituation, in studies with infants between the ages of 6 and 24 months.

Our experiments present infants with novel languages, and examine what infants are able to learn from them. Specifically, upcoming projects will examine how infants learn that different sounds (like /d/ and /t/) indicate different meanings, how infants discover the rules governing word order in phrases, and how infants learn about the rhythmic structure of their native language.

Open to more than one student.

FALL 2009

85-198, Research Training: Psychology, 9 units

Section M, Professor Brooke Feeney

Contact by email: bfeeney@andrew.cmu.edu, and include information about your interest in this project.

Research Training in Social Psychology

This course provides students with research experience in the area of social psychology. Students will assist with research projects in the Relationships Laboratory, thereby obtaining actual, hands-on experience with various aspects of large research projects on the topic of interpersonal relations. As a member of the Relationships Lab, students will gain experience in study design, participant recruitment & scheduling, working as an experimenter, data collection, and data management/analysis. For example, students may work with newlyweds and dating couples in an experimenter role, code videos of couple interactions, assist with data entry and data analysis, assist with preparation of research reports, and assist with library work.

Open to more than one student.

FALL 2009

88-198. Research Training: Social and Decision Sciences, 9 units

Section G, Professor George Loewenstein

Contact by e-mail: gl20@andrew.cmu, and include information concerning interest in this project.

Behavioral Economics

Behavioral economics applies insights from psychology to topics of interest to economists. Some of the specific projects that we have been working on address questions such as:

- What types of situational factors stimulate curiosity, and what is the effect of curiosity on decision making?
- What role do emotions play in decision making and economic behavior?
- What are cognitive and motivational factors that prevent negotiators from reaching mutually beneficial agreements?

We use diverse research methods to address these questions, including surveys, laboratory experiments, and field studies. Research assistants will learn how to search scientific articles, generate research materials, recruit human subjects, and enter data. All research assistants will be invited to attend to our weekly lab meetings. Research assistants can also set individual meetings with the professor, postdoc or other researchers in the lab. Finally, most of the projects in our lab are conducted through the collaborative effort of several research assistants. A research assistant will have the opportunity to be actively involved in more than one project.

Open to more than one student.