

DLM 120 Section Descriptions SPRING 2026

DLM 120a Disney Princesses & Culture (Ja. Shenton)

This course analyzes Disney as a cultural artifact and influencer. Students will critically analyze classic Disney films, a few films that break the classic mold, and Disney theme parks in order to understand the ways in which Disney has the power to contribute to and shape social and cultural norms and values, that is, to create and sell what is normal or aspirational. Using Disney as a case study, students will gain new insight into how anthropologists engage with human societies and their cultural meanings, including those human societies that may produce as well as be produced by our wildest imaginations.

DLM 120b Plato's Republic Through Film (D. Williams)

In this course, students will engage in an exploration of Plato's Republic through the lens of contemporary film. By juxtaposing ancient philosophical themes with a diverse range of cinematic narratives, we will examine justice, the nature of reality, the role of art, and the vision of an ideal society. Pairing textual analysis of Plato with cinema provides a dynamic and immersive medium for understanding and appreciating the profound depth and breadth of his philosophy and its resonance in today's cultural landscape.

DLM 120c & e Fame & Celebrity (H. Chacon)

In his hit song "Fame," David Bowie sings "Is it any wonder I reject you first? Fame fame fame fame." In doing so he captures the tension and weight of being a celebrity--the desire, resentment, apprehension, and at times maniacal questing that can happen in the name of becoming, staying, and surviving being famous. This course focuses on the significance and limitations of celebrity culture and a quest for stardom--both for those who achieve legendary or infamous status, the many fans who enjoy and support icons/celebrities, and the behind-the-scene professionals who labor so that the show goes on.

DLM 120d Superheroes Across Media (K. Anderson)

Look! Up in the sky! It's a super-fan! This class will explore making uncannily effective arguments in speech as well as how to publicly share content in amazing ways. Our access point is the popular cultural construct of the superhero, which is arguably a uniquely American creation that generate broad fan communities. Our adventurous discussions will engage with mainstream superheroes as both reflecting—and making—cultural touchpoints across media. Ultimately, the course will use superheroes and action-packed fan labor to strengthen student skills in oral communication, visual communication, and information literacy.

DLM 120f The End of History (J. Harney)

We will examine the history of the world between 1986 and 2001, a fifteen-year period that saw waves of democratization sweep the planet, the end of the Cold War, prolonged economic success in the West, and the deadliest terrorist attack in human history.

DLM 120g & h Detective Stories (A. Kundu)

"Whodunnit?", "the butler did it", "Elementary, my dear Watson"—the popular cultural recognition of these phrases, all originating in detective fiction, point to the enduring appeal of this genre. In this course, we will examine the origins of the detective figure and its various transformations from its inception in the nineteenth century till the current day. Our class will read detective fiction within its historical and cultural contexts-- the rise of industrial capital, women's rights, the modern city, and colonial fears and fantasies. We will analyze the detective story as a barometer for the preoccupations of the world it belongs to. The course will examine short stories, novels, films, and TV to trace the development of this genre.

DLM 120i & k Hell (H. Emmitt)

This course examines versions of hell from various cultures and time periods, primarily using literature. Students will write and do presentations on canonical and non-canonical versions of an afterlife of punishment.

DLM 120j Chinese Cinema and Hollywood (J. Cai)

Facing worldwide competition, how does Hollywood maintain its dominance of global culture? Does Hollywood cinema dictate its reception across the world? Are there clear-cut boundaries between non-Hollywood cinema's submission and resistance to Hollywood? This course examines such questions by focusing on the nuanced negotiations between

Hollywood films and diverse Chinese-language cultures, including China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Students will gain insight into Chinese-language films, literatures, and cultures as well as their own culture shaped by Hollywood-dominated media. This course seeks to help students situate filmic texts within their social and cultural contexts and learn to respond to films critically. All films screened for the course have English subtitles, so knowledge of Chinese is not required. Students will be evaluated on class attendance, in-class discussion participation, mini-presentations, film terminology presentations, film terminology quizzes, Moodle discussion contributions, and final paper.

DLM 120l The Brain Explained (K. Skogsberg)

The Brain Explained is an introductory course that examines the human brain, its structures, its functions, and how this spongy, three-pound mass of nerves and tissue makes you uniquely you. This course will emphasize neuroscience in pop culture by utilizing recent neuro-literary works, podcasts, films, and trending topics. Lectures will focus on learning, memory, sensory systems, sleep, drugs and addiction, and neuroplasticity. The aim is to produce knowledgeable consumers of neuroscience while fostering interest in the neurosciences. As this is a DLM II course, emphasis will be placed on the oral communication of neuroscience and psychology-related topics.

DLM 120m & p Food Culture Identity Americas (R. Cutright)

"Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you what you are." This course explores food, culture, heritage, and identity in the Americas. We will use cookbooks, recipes, archaeological artifacts, memoirs, and other accounts from Peru, Mexico, and the US to investigate how people came to eat what they do and what it means. Major themes include globalization and cultural appropriation; ethnicity and identity; cultural revitalization, resistance, and food sovereignty movements; and Black and indigenous food traditions

DLM 120n Politics and the Media (M. Castro)

This course examines the impact of different forms of media on American politics from a historical perspective. As such, it seeks to answer a series of questions. Have media institutions ranging from the film industry to talk radio to cable news distorted our politics? Have political actors shaped our media landscape through partisan media and by controlling the messaging on nominally neutral news organizations? How have political and policy priorities led the federal government to seek partnerships with media organizations? Students will engage secondary literature on these subjects and conduct original research geared toward a final project that examines the nature and effectiveness of political communication in American history.

DLM 120o & s Political Speech in Ancient Rome (D. La Londe)

What is the relationship between public speech and political violence? How can studying political speech in ancient Rome help us understand political speech in America today? In this course we explore these questions through analyzing political speeches from the late Roman republic (ca. 80-30 BCE). Rome's leaders were both generals and politicians, educated to lead armies and persuade crowds. As competition for political and military supremacy escalated, so too did the political rhetoric. Public speech and political rhetoric are never just words—they have the power to overthrow governments and incite violence. We examine speeches from Roman politicians and historians to learn what made these speeches powerful and to practice our own ability to persuade through speech.

DLM 120q Early Rock to Cultural Dominance (D. Worley)

An exploration of the musical, technological, historical, and cultural forces that transformed early Rock and Roll into "Rock" the dominant form of Western musical expression by the mid 1970s.

DLM 120r Shakespeare Stage & Screen (J. Goff)

Shakespeare's plays have been around for centuries, and people continue to find new, exciting ways to bring them to life. In this class we will explore Shakespeare's plays by watching and analyzing stage and film productions. As we explore these performances, we will develop tools to read the plays creatively as theatre artists, and unearth our own interpretations of some of the English language's greatest stories. Playing with both comedy and tragedy, we will discuss how directors, actors, and designers arrive at the choices they make in preparing a production for performance. Students will develop their own creative approaches to the plays, culminating in a fully developed concept for a hypothetical production.