History Courses for 2015-2016

B-2015 - HI 3334 CARS AND AMERICAN CAR CULTURE (C. Clark)

Cars! It’s hard to exaggerate their importance in American life: they structure the way we live in many ways: they influence where we live and how we spend our time, they are central to our national economy, they have altered our environment and the way we perceive it, and they influence our political relationships with the rest of the world. And their cultural ramifications are profound. Individually, we love our cars. But cars have long been, and continue to be, at the center of persistent and important controversies. It is important to be able to think critically, clearly, and historically about these controversies and about the influences of automobiles, the automobile industry, the automobile-centered economy, and the car culture on our lives.

Philosophy Courses for 2015-2016

D-2016 PY 3711, TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY: CAPITALISM, POWER, AND THE WORLD SYSTEM (J. Sanbonmatsu)

What is capitalism? Does capitalism promote democracy, social progress, and efficiency? Or does it instead promote suffering, global inequality, violence, war, and ecocide? At a time when social inequality between rich and poor has reached an all-time high, when global warming is destabilizing the earth’s climate, and when the reverberations of the 2009 financial crisis still echo throughout the world economy, we ignore such questions at our collective peril. This course examines capitalism as a world system and as a mode of civilizational development, exploring its relation to the political, social, ethical, and ecological dimensions of our life on earth. We will examine the ideal theory of capitalism (via the Chicago School of economic theory), then examine Marx’s view of capitalism as a system prone to crisis and internal contradiction. Topics will include: capitalism and the environment, the commodification of women’s sexuality, imperialism and war, the racial division of labor, and possible alternatives to capitalism as a mode of production. Students will come out of the course with a vivid understanding of some of the profound forces shaping human consciousness and culture in the 21st century.