**Ars Eligendi: The Art of Choosing**

By now, many of us have started to make big life decisions. Others have had to contemplate about decisive moments often enough, like which SEP courses to take. Given the pervasiveness of decision-making on matters large and small in our busy lives, we need to think about the question “what does it mean to make a decision?” This course offers an exploration of the art and science of choosing, analyzing how we make choices whether they are trivial (“What's for dinner?”) or profound (“What career do I want to pursue?”). It also imagines a life stripped of the power to make decisions, and seeks to understand the consequences of inaction (deciding not to choose) as well as reaction—like dealing with life when it gives us lemons. Don’t be afraid to make the choice to take this class.

**Decoding Ecology**

Have you ever wondered how ecologists actually use all of the data they collect on plants and animals to inform environmental management? In this course, we will utilize a statistical programming language called R used by professional ecologists every day all over the world. R is a free, open source language and environment for statistical computing and graphics. In this course, you will master the basics of this robust yet intuitive statistical programming language, including but not limited to, importing and exporting data, constructing and manipulating lists, creating graphics, and performing simple as well as advanced statistical analyses. You will also be able to develop your own code to execute statistical processes in the context of real world ecological issues as well as your own scientific research questions. Additional topics to be explored include current ecological issues, developing good experimental design, and manipulating data all within the R workspace.

**Energy Choices: The Chemistry and Economics of Clean Energy**

Ever wonder where the electricity that runs your cell phone or television comes from? Where will the energy that fuels our society come from next year and for the next 50 years if your life? How will we reduce emissions that are generated in the production and use of energy? Modern society is based on the ready availability of cheap and plentiful energy; however, few understand where their energy comes from and the economic implications of changes to our energy infrastructure. In this course, we will explore major sources of energy like oil, gas, coal, nuclear, biomass, wind, hydro, and solar options and will be able to discuss the economic and social impacts of changes in the proportion of each of these energy sources in the future energy mix. The course will provide students with a deeper understanding of each of these energy sources including the basic chemistry and the resources that are required to enable each of these sources. With this knowledge, students will be better prepared to understand the future costs, timing and trade-offs associated with the development of new and potentially more sustainable energy systems.
Humor, Comedy, and Laughter in Literature and Film

Why do we laugh? Why is it such an important part of cultures the world over? What does it mean to laugh? This course engages with the oft taken for granted art of comedy. It will encourage students to not just be consumers of comedy, but to think critically about how comedy and humor is crafted to produce specific effects. We will look at a range of different "genres" of comedy, from dry, biting humor, slapstick, stand-up, sitcoms, and more. We will engage with written texts as well as view television and film. This course is intended to also be cross-cultural and students will read (in translation) and view comedy from different parts of the world in order to promote cultural sensitivity and to draw on cultural comparisons in their critical thinking. It may be a given, but the comedic elements selected will always be age-appropriate and abide by SEP values and maintain respect for others.

Las Hijas de Eva: Understanding Feminism and Machismo in the Hispanic World

What does it mean to be a woman in Cuba, Ecuador, and/or Mexico? How does the country in which someone is born affect their experience of gender? In this course, we will engage with current events in Latin and South America to develop a multicultural understanding of gender. We will examine machismo—the cultural phenomena in which men are considered superior to women—and its history, popularity, and current effects on modern women in the Hispanic world. In a culture traditionally dominated by men, what is the role of women? How has this role changed in the 20th and 21st century, if at all? Using YouTube, zines, vlogs, and comic books, we will study popular culture and its expressions of feminism in Latin and South America and contrast them with traditional portrayals of machismo in literature, language, and the media. How are women in Latin America and South America changing their futures for the better? Potential topics include Peru and the 2016 gender equality protests Ni Uno Menos; the female body in reggaeton rap music popular in the Caribbean; gendered insults and language in Mexico; and the cult of María worship in Latin America. This course will be taught in English; however, Spanish speakers of any language level are welcome!

Music as a Technology of the Social Self

Music is a force that has shaped the world we live in since the beginning of time. While much scholarship has sought to understand its psychological effects, the study of music as a social technology has recently emerged as an exciting new field of research in the United States. Drawing from diverse fields like sociology/social theory, musicology, cultural/media studies, performance studies, and material/technology studies, this course will engage students in interactive projects and discussions that examine music as a technology of the social self. How does music shape who we are, how we relate to social groups, and how we form identities? What can a deeper understanding of the rise of music cultures like punk, hip hop, and indie/alternative music teach us about community formation and collective creativity? In this course students will engage these questions by discussing social and music culture, creating their own music life histories, and working through interactive projects designed to provide a context for how music stimulates social action. Additionally, students will act as cultural critics, using music and material culture to develop their own theories of social action. No formal music training is necessary for the course—students need only to bring their passion for music, knowledge and creativity.