

Proposal to the University Curriculum Committee/Freshman Inquiry Course Forbidden Knowledge

I. Cover Sheet

Course Title: Forbidden Knowledge: the Sacred and the Profane

Date First Offered: Fall 2003

Sections per Year: 3

Statement of theme: We seek to explore the nature, form, and implications of forbidding knowledge in the shaping of human and "natural" relationships.

Signatures of Participating Faculty

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name Signature Date

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II. Course Narrative

A. Statement of Theme/topical area(s)

A long time ago, Eve wanted an apple. Recently, scientists in Texas wanted to clone a cat. So far, everybody has succeeded. This Inquiry explodes the differences among mythologies/religions and sciences/technologies by embracing what they share: the desire

for forbidden knowledge. Knowledge might be forbidden because it is inaccessible or unobtainable. It might be prohibited by divine, religious, moral, military, or corporate authority. Authority might sanction it as dangerous, destructive, or unwelcome. But information wants to be free. Can you handle forbidden knowledge? Should you want to? Should you fear to? This course asks you to decide. Topics covered include the dimensions of self and technosis, the proliferation of technology, bioengineering, cutting edge theories of physics, colonization and the eradication of indigenous cultures, illiteracy as a means of forbidding and literacy as a means of achieving knowledge, sacred versus communal spaces, the paradigm of slavery, the status of sacred texts, mythology, science fiction as contemporary prophesy, the status of poetry as a kind of technology, spirituality and angelology, and revelation/vision as a mode of human experience. Co requisite: Mentored Inquiry.

B. Learning Objectives specific to this theme:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Define forbidden knowledge as it relates to multiple social, political, cultural, and religious conceptions of Authority.
- Differentiate and describe the philosophic, scientific, political and religious underpinnings of the production and prohibition of knowledge.
- Demonstrate oral, written, visual, quantitative, graphic, and computer literacies.
- Demonstrate ability to understand basic descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode), the meaning of statistical significance, and appropriate use of graphs and charts.
- Illustrate key examples of “forbidden knowledge” in the domains of science, politics, society, religion, and philosophy.
- Connect this comprehension of literacy(s) to the role that literacy plays in producing and prohibiting knowledge.
- Compare contrasting perspectives on the dimensions of self, society, and authority – and how each relate to forbidden knowledge.
- Analyze sacred, communal, public, and private spaces – recognizing basic patterns and hidden meanings within each through comparison.
- Apply understandings of forbidden knowledge, as described above, to contemporary public discourses in politics, religion, culture, and society.
- Internalize and synthesize these understandings, integrating their own understandings of the learning objectives above (e.g. public vs. private spaces) with the multiple discourses available on each topic covered.
- Present the results of independent and group research to peers.

C. Assessment of student learning (specific to theme):

Assessment of student learning in this theme will be based on main and mentor session journal submissions; graded research projects and essays; graded quantitative literacy projects; observed development of skills in articulating and mediating a diversity of viewpoints; observed development of skills in articulating an understanding of the role of diversity in understanding how, when and why

knowledge is forbidden; observed development in how the production and prohibition of knowledge directly relates to ethical issues and social responsibilities; criteria-based evaluation of theme-specific knowledge, (e.g. literacies; the role of physical, metaphoric and virtual borders/boundaries in constructing and forbidding knowledge), assignments requiring the integration of critical thinking with visual, graphic and other materials to illustrate or analyze the subject matter. Throughout the year, students' grades will be apportioned as follows: group projects 25%; term papers 25%; journals and portfolios 25%; class participation 25%.

D. Description of methods to ensure coherence of theme across participating faculty.

The "Forbidden Knowledge" team will meet weekly during the year, sharing ideas, experiences, projects, materials, to enrich and support the ongoing class experience and deepen faculty/team interactions. Team meetings may include peer mentors, depending on topic of meeting. Relevant information from team meetings will be shared with each peer mentor, as each faculty member will also meet weekly with her/his respective peer mentor. Minutes will be taken. A listserv will also serve as a forum for both faculty and mentors to exchange ideas and support curricular development further. Mentor meetings ensure coherence by connecting team discussions with main and mentor session observations by mentor and faculty. The team will utilize a common core of readings and assignments. Each team member will visit the others' classes regularly. "Regularly" is defined here as once per term. A longer meeting will be scheduled at the end of each term to share and revisit experiences, review goals and learning objectives, assess student needs and progress, and plan for the following term. Coherence of theme across participating faculty will also be accomplished through *collegiality* and *respect*. We could do all of the above, but without continual respect and collegiality, team coherence would dissipate significantly.

E. Interdisciplinarity of theme:

The "Forbidden Knowledge" theme consists of a political scientist and poet who specializes in the role of technology, science, and ideology in global and local politics – and in experimental poetry (Jenks), a highly interdisciplinary historian, renowned scholar of Japanese anime, who is also skilled in the literature and construction of rubrics (Levi), and an English scholar whose skills range from Spencer to contemporary popular culture, science fiction and well beyond (Dillon). Each originate from different cultural living experiences, contributing further to the interdisciplinarity of the team.

F. Relation of course to other University Studies offerings (cohesion, ties to future learning):

Sign clusters that currently exist that would empower students with extending their learning based on this course include the following (at a minimum): Morality Studies, Women's Studies, Popular Culture, Sexualities, African Studies, Latin American Studies, Middle East Studies, American Studies, Asian Studies, European Studies,

Community Studies, Freedom, Privacy, and Technology, Media Studies, Framing the Two Cultures.

G. How this theme will address the University Studies Goals:

University Studies Goal	Representative Assignments	Assessment Plan Type
Communication: Writing	Each term: weekly reflective journals; One creative writing piece; One analytic essay; One analytic essay and one research essay in second term (10-15 pp.) and reflective portfolio writing.	UNST writing assessment; Peer review. Use of additional theme-based writing rubrics, where applicable.
Graphics	Graphic comparisons of data on environmental quality in Portland and in counties across the United States. Creative graphic projects and projects to show the limits of graphic representation of information.	Assess organization and clarity of data and written interpretation. Peer review.
Oral Communication	All terms, presentations to class of team work results; class discussions; class email or WebCT discussions; mentor discussions	Ability to connect to and respect others, organization, eye contact, articulation of key concepts
Communication: Quantitative Literacy	All terms include at least one quantitative literacy assignment; integration of quantitative literacy into the research essay; examination of the benefits and shortcomings of media use of statistics; basic statistics and introduction to relativity and current trends in mathematical theory.	Application of UNST rubric, evaluate critical thinking skills in relation to quantitative literacy, incorporate intro to relativity and current trends in mathematical theory in additional writing piece; reflective journal; portfolio analysis.
Group Process	3 rd term set up a team-based analysis of environmental quality of Portland compared to other metro areas, team work on researching air, water, land, lead pollution; each team determines focus of research (e.g. environmental justice or limits of greenhouse effect research) and the point of dissemination; class presentations by teams at end of	Professor can assess presentations with rubric; team members evaluate each other as well; analysis/assessment of written research provided as well.

	term.	
Computer Literacy	Each term: progressing over the year from basic emailing and web searches to excel, powerpoint, and web pages; class presentations and portfolio assignment requires mastery of these programs	Class presentations, peer mentor observations, evidence of skills in projects where relevant
Inquiry and Critical Thinking	Texts directed at critical thinking; discussions on expanding critical thinking and exercise of critical thinking skills through discussion and debates. Specific units for debate and discussion: borders and boundaries, physical, political, personal; coercion in reproduction; status of sacred texts; illiteracy as a means of forbidding and literacy as a means of achieving knowledge.	Assess student growth in ability to
Diversity of Human Experience	Sexualities (sexual orientations/assignments by culture, assigned gender(s), sexual identity and ambiguities/borders), race(s) (the construction of race and its cultural variants) and race vs. ethnicities, class (e.g. What is “middle class” and by whose standard?) and economic power, “Major” and “minority” religious practices– Native American(s) religious practices, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Gnosticism, Cabbala (and more, depending on student input), the multiplicity of cultural and aesthetic contributions to society on a local, national, and global scale – all will be researched by students and examined in class.	Assess ability to engage in and convey to others the depth and richness of diverse experiences, appreciate the interaction of resistances within the class dynamic and learn from them, readiness to recognize the value of others’ values and internalization/synthesis of these recognitions into personal life through reflective journaling and portfolio. The multiplicity of cultural contributions will also be explored through creative writing and observation journals.
Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility	Role playing to enact and reenact real life scenarios (e.g. cases around censorship; “Mock” Supreme Court trials), exploration of ethical issues through science fiction and poetries of oppressed, community based	Class presentations, group projects, and research essays along with reflective journal and portfolio – assessment will focus

	learning assignments focusing on application of critical thinking to understanding the role of self in community.	on ability to not only identify ethical and social issues, but to integrate the self within those issues, reason through choices, recognize and make visible stages in reason making, along with flexible strategies for problem resolution.
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III. Course Schedule and Topics

Term	Topical Outline	Faculty
Fall Term	<p>Theme for fall: Understanding Forbidden Knowledge and the Moral production and prohibition of knowledge.</p> <p>Historical Background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of modes of forbidden knowledge in culture, society, science, religion, and politics. • Overview of method, style, and nature of contemporary science fiction. • Focus on understanding a genealogy or history of morals in and out of the “west.” • Primary historical documents on relationship between authority and oppression – including <i>Korematsu v United States</i>, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>, Women’s Suffrage, Equal Rights Amendment. • Secondary historical and critical theory texts on the construction of the “other” as “immoral.” • A brief history of sexualities. <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Studies Intro • Engaged Pedagogies • Myths as ways of knowing (e.g. Plato’s Cave, Pandora’s Box) • Emergence of the mythic as a source of creative and physical freedom. • Exploration of our own personal mythologies: what do they mean? • Emergence of the mythic as ideology, as a source of oppression. • Understanding the role, nature, structure and function of Power and Authority • The relationships between power and authority • Relevance of <i>Neuromancer</i> to contemporary understandings of diversity and ethics. • cyberpunk • Sexualities, ethnicities, and “race” – 	All

	<p><i>Neuromancer</i> revisited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary political, social, and cultural trends in the “forbidding” of knowledge • Assigned gender – the myth of two genders. • Assigned sexual orientations: multiple sexualities within and between cultures and heteronormativity. • Technology as a means of providing and inhibiting knowledge • multiple modes of literacy (written, science, computer, visual, quantitative, oral) • Are we oppressed, oppressors or both? The both/and theory of Patricia Hill Collins, aka “the matrix of domination” • Knowledge itself as a means of participating in the matrix of domination. 	
<p>Winter Term</p>	<p>Theme for Winter: Corporate and Military production and prohibition of knowledge.</p> <p>Historical Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Censorship in America • An History of Imperialism • The Origins of Totalitarianism • Japanese-American Concentration Camps • Japan as victim (Nagasaki and Hiroshima) and victimizer (The Rape of Nanking) • Histories of colonized cultures <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperialisms and Empire • Stealth Imperialism • Borders – DMZ (“demilitarized zone”), Palestinian/Israeli, Mexico/America, Ireland/England, Appalachia/ “America”, ghetto/urban/suburb, gated communities. • multiple modes of literacy (written, science, computer, visual, quantitative, 	<p>All</p>

	<p>oral)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • panopticism and surveillance technologies • urban morphogenesis • Platforms beyond Microsoft • techgnosis and possibilities • Imagined and Imaginary Communities • DNA-sequencing • Fuzzy Logic • New Reproductive Technologies • bioengineering • colonization and eradication of indigenous cultures 	
Spring Term	<p>Theme for Spring: religious, spiritual, and mytho-poetics ways of knowing.</p> <p>Historical Background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major religious histories • Gnosticism(s) • Modes of musical expression excluded from canon • Environmental histories <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sacred and communal spaces • the environment and public spaces • spirituality and angelology • revelation/vision as a mode of human experience • film theory • Cabbalism • Hermeticism • multiple modes of literacy (written, science, visual, computer, quantitative, oral) • ethnomusicology • Art and censorship • 19th century avant-garde poetries • Poetries for the Millenium 	

IV. **Preliminary Reading list (selections from the following may be assigned)**

Adorno, Theodor. 1997. *Minima Moralia*. London: Verso.

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*.
- Balasubrahmanyam, Vimal. 1984. "Women as Targets in India's Family Planning Policy." In *Test-Tube Women: What Future for Motherhood?* ed. Rita Arditti, Renate Duelli Klein, and Shelley Minden. Boston: Pandora Press. Pp. 153-164.
- Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1993.
- Bordo, Susan. *The Male Body*. 1999.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Cadbury, Deborah. 1995. *The Human Laboratory*, Film. Mississauga, ON: International Telefilm. (Supplementary Information: Narrator, Charlotte Cornwell; Assistant Producer, Jan Klimkowski. Part of BBC's Horizon Series, Editor: John Lynch. BBC MCMXCV. Distributed in Canada by International Telefilm, 5090 Explorer Drive, STE 301, Mississauga ON L4W 4T9. Tel: 905-629-3133. Fax: 905-629-1211. Toll free: 800-561-4300.).
- Coventry, Martha. "Making the Cut: It's a Girl!....Or is it? When there's Doubt, why are Surgeons Calling the Shots?" *Ms.* Oct/Nov 2000. 52-60
- Crary, Jonathan and Sanford Kwinter, ed. *Incorporations*, Zone Books 1992
- Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species*.
- Davis, Mike and Roman De La Campa. *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Remake the US Big City*. Verso 2001.
- Davis, Mike. *dead cities and other tales*. New Press, 2003.
- Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. Zone 1995 reprint.
- Dick, Philip K., *Ubik*, Vintage 1991 reprint
- Environment, 04-05*, Annual Editions, McGraw-Hill.
- Estava, Gustavo and Madhu Suri Prakash, *Grassroots Postmodernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures* Palgrave MacMillan 1998
- Feher, Michel. *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*. Zone Books. 1989.

- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage. 1979.
- Foucault, Michel, ed. *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century French Hermaphrodite*. 1980 version.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books. 1990 version.
- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum 2000
- Gibson, William, *Neuromancer*, Ace/Dimensions 2001 reissue
- Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays*, Dover 1970
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1993 reprint.
- Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*, Fifth Edition, Bedford 2003
- Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2000.
- Hooks, bell *Teaching To Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom*, Routledge 1994
- Huff, Irving et al, *How to Lie with Statistics*, W.W. Norton and Co. 1953 (1993 ed)
- Intersex Society of America (www.isna.org) Handout: "Phallo-meter," a measurement on when/how gender is assigned by the inch.
- Jacobus, M., Keller, E.F., Shuttleworth, Sally. ed. 1990. *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*. New York: Routledge.
- Jensen, Carl et al, *20 Years of Censored News*, Seven Stories 1997
- Johnson, Chalmers, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*
- Klawiter, Maren. 1990. "Using Arendt and Heidegger to Consider Feminist Thinking on Women and Reproductive Technologies." *Hypatia*. 5:3 (Fall): 65-89.
- Krust, Lin and Asetoyer, Charon. 1993. *A Study of the Use of Depo-Provera and Norplant by the Indian Health Services*. Lake Andes: Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center.

- Kuhn, Thomas. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Laslett, Barbara, Kohlstedt, Sally G., Longino, Helen and Hammonds, Evelyn. ed. 1996. *Gender and Scientific Authority*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lewontin, Richard. *It ain't necessarily so: The Dream of the Human Genome and Other Illusions*.
- Lublin, Nancy. 1998. *Pandora's Box: Feminism Confronts Reproductive Technology*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Marcus, Greil. *Lipstick Traces: A secret history of the 20th century*. Harvard 1990.
- Marx, Karl. (1833-1834) 1992. *Early Writings*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton. New York: Penguin Books USA Inc.
- MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Fifth Edition.
- Norris, Christopher. 1990. *What's Wrong With Postmodernism: Critical Theory and the Ends of Philosophy*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels*. Vintage 1989.
- Preminger, Alex and T.V.F. Brogan et al, *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Princeton U. Press 1993
- Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon Books. 1997.
- Roberts, Dorothy. "The Future of Reproductive Choice for Poor Women and Poor Children" 1990. *Women's Rights Law Reporter*.
- Rothenberg, Jerome and Pierre Joris, *Poems for the Millennium: The University of California Book of Modern and Postmodern Poetry: From Postwar to Millennium (From Postwar to Millennium, Volumes 1 and 2)*, U Cal Press 1998
- Rothenberg, Paula, *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*
- Sandoval, Chela and Angela Davis, *Methodology of the Oppressed* 2001
- Schneider, Elizabeth. "The Violence of Privacy" In *The Public Nature of Private Violence: The Discovery of Domestic Abuse*, ed. Martha Albertson Fineman and Roxanne Mykitiuk. New York: Routledge. Pp. 36-59. 1994
- Stayton, William R. "A Theology of Sexual Pleasure" *SIECUS Report*. April/May 1992.

Utts, Jessica, *Seeing through Statistics*

Vale, V. *Modern Primatives*. Re/Search. 1989.

Waite, Geoff. *Nietzsche's Corps/e: Aesthetics, Politics, Prophecy, or the Spectacular Technoculture of Everyday Life*. Durham: Duke University Press. 1996

Wink, Richard. *The Museum-Goers Guide to the Museum*. McGraw-Hill 1999

Zizek, Slavoj. 1999. *The Ticklish Subject: the absent centre of political ontology*. London: Verso.