Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

Ellen Henderson, Professor of Biology, Emerita

Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m.; Feb. 26, March 5 and 12.

Most of us thought that slavery was stopped by the Civil War. However, slavery and the trafficking of humans occur more often now than at any time in history. Human trafficking is now the second largest money-maker among illicit international criminal activities (up there with arms trafficking and drug trafficking). Internationally it is estimated that there are about 27 million slaves. They are in bonded labor, agricultural servitude, domestic servitude and sex slavery. This short course will look first at the international situation and the role of the U.S. government in efforts to prevent global trafficking, then at U.S. domestic trafficking/slavery, and finally at the Washington D.C. regional situation as D.C. is a hotspot for many forms of trafficking, especially in domestic minor sex trafficking. We will examine the role of NGOs in efforts to prevent trafficking and to rescue and rehabilitate freed slaves.

F. Scott Fitzgerald: More Than Ever

Paul Lilly, Professor of English, Emeritus, SUNY Binghamton

Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 a.m.; March 13, 20, 27

For the first class we will read (again!) The Great Gatsby (1925), followed by his story, “The Rich Boy” (1926). For the second class we will discuss the story, “Babylon Revisited” (1931) and Book I of Tender Is the Night (1934). The last class will focus on Books II and III. Much biographical information about Fitzgerald's life, as well as the two short stories, are available online.

The Social Impact of the Internet Now and in the Future

Lee Rainie, Director, Pew Research Center's Project on The Internet and American Life and Former Managing Editor, U.S. News & World Report

Tues., 2:00-3:30 p.m.; Mar. 18, 25, Apr. 1

The lectures for this course will explore the rise and impact of the internet (the spread of broadband connectivity and the creation of social media, such as blogging, Facebook, and Twitter); the development of “mobile life” (the rise of mobile connections, such as smart phones and tablets, and how that has changed social interaction and expectations); and the future of the internet (studies from the Pew Research Center about the social impact of digital technology in the coming age).

‘Golden Bastards’ and ‘Learned Ladies:’

Power, Politics, and Imagination in the Italian Renaissance Court

Deborah Ross Warin, Director of the Renaissance Company and former Director of Continuing Education of Georgetown University

Thursdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m.; March 27, April 3 and 10

In the middle of the quattrocento, Milan, Mantua, Ferrara, Urbino, Rimini and Pesaro were ruled by "golden bastards" and "learned ladies" who, through the sophistication of their patronage and their keen political instincts, were responsible for much of the great art and literature we identify with the Italian Renaissance. These golden bastards were illegitimate princes, classically-educated colorful condottieri, who spouted Plato and Homer while they ruthlessly battled and plotted against one another. The women were equally educated in the new humanistic learning and used their intellectual and rhetorical sophistication for cultural and political ends – ruling, negotiating treaties, resolving disputes while patronizing the artists and scholars who would shape the public image of their rule and our own ideas about the age.
An Ecological Perspective on the Chesapeake Bay

Philip Sze, Associate Professor of Biology, Emeritus.

Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m.; April 2, 9, 16

The Chesapeake Bay is polluted by an excess of plant nutrients from urban discharges and farm runoff. After a general introduction to eutrophication in aquatic environments, we will consider conditions in the Chesapeake Bay estuary, emphasizing the importance of seagrasses and oysters, indicators of Bay health, and challenges for the Bay’s recovery.

Learning from Galileo and Darwin about the Science/Theology Interface

Charles L. Currie, S.J., Director, Jesuit Commons and former President of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30 p.m.; April 15, 22, and 29

The relationship between science and theology/religion has been developed quietly in individual lives, dramatically in historic moments, sweepingly by historians, shrilly by protagonists of each persuasion, and reflectively by both scientists and theologians. The Galileo Case is often presented as the prime example of an irrevocable conflict between science and theology, with black and white interpretations of what in fact was a complex mix of philosophical, theological, historical, cultural, political and personal issues. We will briefly examine what we can learn today from each perspective.

Darwin’s background and life story exemplify a more complex interaction between science and theology, or better between scientists and their particular understanding of theology/religion. Georgetown’s own John Haught has led the way in moving beyond the conflict seen by Darwin and many of his supporters to a constructive dialogue between evolution and theology.

Thus the stories of both Galileo and Darwin offer two fascinating chapters in intellectual history and help us reflect on the relationship between science and theology/religion today.