

Fall 2023 Scholars Classes

1. **Leah Umansky: Making Poems (Poetry Workshop)**

Artists steal from those who came before them. In this poetry workshop, students will steal from famous poems to create their own masterful poetry. This workshop is open to poets of ALL levels. This workshop will break the stigma often applied to poetry and will open students up to new ways of approaching and entering poems. Emphasis will be on weekly writing prompts and weekly reading assignments on contemporary poetry. Each week's reading will center on a specific poetic form, or specific topic. Students will workshop their own poems each week and give constructive criticism to their peers on their poems.

NOTE: students will have to attend at least two poetry readings either in person or on zoom to satisfy course requirements and there will be a final project to be decided. [If you have taken Ms. Umansky's workshop before, it is okay to take it again as prompts will be new!]

2. **Michael Roper and Sam Gordon: Privacy in the Constitution**

Is There an Intrinsic, Innate and Inherent 'Right to Privacy' in the U.S. Constitution? Sessions will focus on Supreme Court 'landmark' cases that address this question. Reading and discussion of these cases will be paramount to the class.

3. **Gary Schwartz: Coney Island: The History of America's Playground**

This course will offer a comprehensive history of Coney Island, courtesy of our resident expert, Mr. Schwartz. Topics will include:

1. **Coney Island history is more than amusement parks! - The Town of Gravesend:** Coney Island was part of the first colony founded and led by a woman: Lady Deborah Moody, 1645.
2. **Science and technology:** Incubators, escalators, a perpetual motion machine, transatlantic cable, the first hydraulic beach, electric lights, building the yellow submarine.
3. **Politics:** John McKane's corruption; Robert Moses and Urban Renewal; Mayor Giuliani and the Thunderbolt; Fred Trump's demolition of Steeplechase Park.
4. **Amusement Manufacturing and immigrant craftsmanship:** Coney Island was the manufacturing center and the testing ground for the amusement industry. William Mangels, Pinto Brothers, Marcus Illions, Dan Casola, La Marcus Thompson.

5. **The Natural World:** Thousands of acres of salt marsh and sand dunes were the first attractions at Coney Island.
6. **Archeological:** Native American shell mounds on Coney Island Creek.
7. **Psychological:** Steeplechase founder George C. Tilyou breaks down Victorian inhibitions.
8. **Business and real estate:** Coney Island was once considered, inch for inch, the most valuable land in the world.
9. **Urban Renewal:** A failed experiment that destroyed lives and a community.
Transportation: Ferries, monorails, steam trains, and the largest subway terminal.
10. **Art and literature:** Coney Island as the subject of great writers and artists.
11. **A blue-collar resort:** Summer bungalow colonies for the working class.
12. **Healing:** Children's Aid hospitals and retreats at Coney Island. "The Fresh Air Cure."
13. **Crime:** Abe Reles goes out the window of the Half Moon Hotel; Al Capone runs a bar on the Bowery; the modern Mafia is founded after the assassination of Joe "The Boss" Masseria at a Coney Island restaurant in 1931.

Students will take a guided tour of Coney Island and complete a creative project.

4. **Andrew Marzoni: Journalism**

This course will introduce students to the theory and practice of journalism across print, broadcast, and electronic media. As we follow the life cycle of a story from pitch to publication, we will consider such topics and concepts as news, truth, freedom and independence of the press, verification, objectivity, assertion, public trust, reporting, bias, accuracy, transparency, monitoring power, investigation, relevance, sensationalism, storytelling, and data. Students will embrace the role of citizen journalist, reflecting on how they may have already served in this function in their everyday lives, and reporting their own original submissions to York Prep's student media, *The Paw* and WYRK. Guest speakers will be invited from newspapers, magazines, television, radio, podcasts, and other new media to demystify the shifting landscape of journalism in the twenty-first century: from social media and corporate consolidation to the collapse of the advertising model and the rise of "fake news."

5. **Brendan Buckley: Political Philosophy**

This class will serve as an introduction to some of the major strains of Modern Political Philosophy, and will ask students to consider what the role of government should be, and what sort of society the students would like to live in. We will begin with Machiavelli's *The Prince* before studying Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and *The Communist Manifesto*, by Marx and Engels. Students will be expected to describe the central tenets of each philosopher's beliefs, and, ultimately, to evaluate the philosophers' ideas and use the ideas as a starting point to develop an understanding of the students' own

philosophies. The skills that students will practice will include: strategies for reading difficult texts, including pre-reading; making text-to-world connections; and evaluating ideas. The course will instill and cultivate a sense of intellectual curiosity in students by “pulling back the curtain” on the ideas that underlie and animate our society, and by exposing students to alternatives to American liberal democracy. It will also build a sense of intellectual accomplishment by showing students their ability to read, understand, and discuss difficult, higher-level texts. Students will be assessed based on in-class discussions and one writing assignment in which they will evaluate the philosophies discussed during the course and determine which one they find to be most appropriate for modern life, and why.

6. Lazaro Mancilla: Native Americans in Contemporary Media

This course will highlight representation of indigenous Americans in contemporary culture through film, books, online media, and television. While students may have had some exposure to reservation systems, residential schools, or cultural genocide, this course is focused on highlighting themes of resistance and celebration of thriving cultures. Students will watch clips and read synopsis of various television shows and films, such as *Reservation Dogs*, *1923*, and *Prey*. Students will also spend time discussing and researching various issues and individuals from contemporary news and media outlets such as ICT, developing their literacy on current issues. Students will learn about indigenous folklore (and its contemporary interpretation) through horror reading excerpts from *Grim Native* and *A Howl*. Students will also read excerpts from fiction such as *Killers of the Flower Moon* and *Calling for a Blanket Dance*. Students will also interact with STEAM content through graphic novels and video games such as *Never Alone* and *Thunderbird Strike*. Students will be assessed by presenting an original piece of writing that draws from various themes of the course and reflects research about specific topics, historical events, or elements of Native American culture. Alternatively, students can also present a research project that highlights a Native American author and how their writing reflects themes discussed in class.

7. Coty Cockrell: Craftivism: Helping the World One Stitch at a Time

This course focuses on the topic of “craftivism”: the combination of crafting and activism. Crafting in all forms has long been a part of activism, from [The Suffragette Handkerchief](#) to the recent [Pussyhat Project](#). Taking inspiration from [The Craftivist Collective](#), we will begin our journey focusing on the issue of climate change and what we can do to raise public awareness, as well as get the attention of our elected officials and local media.

8. Christina Cox: America in the 1990's

Bookended by the end of the Cold War and the attacks of 9/11, the 1990s is often remembered as a time of relative peace and prosperity. Students will be asked to examine and challenge this notion through a survey of American history and culture. We will discuss historical events from the L.A. Riots to the Clinton Administration, technology from the rise of the World Wide Web to Y2K, and culture from Lisa Frank to Nirvana. At the end of the course, students should expect to

be able to answer our essential question: How do Americans remember the 90s and how can we challenge the dominant historiography? At the end of the course, students will be able to identify and narrate historical and cultural change and continuity, evaluate, and analyze evidence from a variety of historical sources and identify the importance of gender, sexuality, race, class, and other lenses in understanding the recent American past.

Fall 2023 Scholars Meeting Schedule and Locations

	AM Jumpstart	Lunch
Monday	Davis, Senior Scholars Room 405	1. Buckley, Political Philosophy Room 518 2. Cockrell- Craftivism Room 316
Tuesday	Umansky, Poetry Workshop Room 405	1.Schwartz, Coney Island Room 515L 2.Cox, 1990's Room 309
Wednesday		1. Roper and Gordon, Privacy in the Constitution Room 309
Thursday	Mancilla, Native Americans in Contemporary Media Room 405	Marzoni, Journalism Room 309