

MLA alumni- Consider taking a virtual MLA seminar this fall 2020!

MLA 262: The Economics of life and Death

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00-8:15pm

Jay Bhattacharya

Professor of Medicine and, by courtesy, of Economics

This course is a survey of economic perspectives on issues of life and death. The central idea of economics is that scarcity and constraints are unavoidable facts of life. While economists traditionally focus on the role of scarcity in decisions that people make about work, saving, and spending (among other topics), the role of scarcity extends to a much broader range of decisions, including to fundamental decisions about health, life, and death. The analytic framework of economics helps to explain many puzzling facts about life and death decisions. In this course, we will apply this framework to a diverse set of topics, including the value of life, behavior under uncertainty, rationing healthcare, COVID-19, errors in medical training, smoking, and obesity. Though the language of the economics literature is often very mathematical, no mathematical sophistication is necessary to do well in the course.

MLA 357: Historic Journeys to Sacred Places

Wednesdays, 7:00-9:00pm

Elaine Treharne

Roberta Bowman Denning Professor of Humanities

In a world of touchscreens and instant knowledge, going on a journey for the good of the soul might seem strange. But pilgrimage—spiritual travel—has witnessed a huge resurgence. Why? We'll investigate the pilgrimage through its long history, studying routes to some of the world's most sacred places to consider this fundamental form of spiritual and personal expression. From Rome and Mecca, to Japan and Tibet, to Wales and California, these often-spectacular routes inspire, test, and reward travelers. Who travels on these routes and how do they travel? Who and what guides travelers on their way? What motivates these journeys and how did travelers access the spaces they desired to see? What objects testify to pilgrimage and the desire for salvation and remembrance? Indeed, what happens once we get to where we're going? Working with personal accounts and with texts on cultural heritage, walking, pilgrimage, spirituality and individual growth, we shall emphasize these questions as we study some of the most well-trodden paths and most famous places in global history.



Details

Classes are \$800 for alumni. We do require that you participate fully in the course--doing the reading and participating in class discussions. The choice to do a paper is up to you. If you wish to take it for a grade, you will need to submit a paper. You will have access to the virtual library, and you will be added to the seminar Canvas site for class details and readings.

A place is based on availability. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to sign up. Current students have priority for enrollment, and I may not be able to confirm your spot until current students have had a chance to enroll.

Michelle Bennett
Associate Director
Stanford University Master of Liberal Arts

Direct phone: 650-725-0061
Fax: 650-725-4248
Email: michelle.bennett@stanford.edu
<http://mla.stanford.edu>