The Pluto Saga: How Do You Become a Planet and Stay a Planet?  
KHC AS 101  
Michael Mendillo  
Mon, Wed 9:30-11am  
CAS (Astronomy)  
Classroom: CAS 500

This course will use the controversy over Pluto’s status as a planet to explore the astronomical, cultural, political and religious aspects that become linked to science and societal issues. The central theme of the seminar is how to gather and evaluate evidence through writing and quantitative methods. We will examine the broad scope of how science proceeds in quantitative ways using methods of sampling and observations. Both telescopes and museum visits will help us better understand the role that visualization plays in describing how Nature works. (4 credits)

Climate Change in Massachusetts  
KHC BI 101  
Richard Primack  
Mon, Wed 1:30-3pm  
CAS (Biology)  
Classroom: KHC 107

Henry David Thoreau spent decades observing and recording the natural history of Concord and other sites in Massachusetts. This course will place his work within the context of modern climate change research. Readings will include both Thoreau’s works as well as research papers comparing the observations of Thoreau and other historical data sets with modern observations. In order to gain an appreciation of the process whereby science is communicated to the public, attention will also be given to the way in which these scientific papers have been presented in the magazines and newspapers. During weekend field trips, we will visit sites where Thoreau’s research was carried out; including Walden Pond, the Minute Man National Historical Site, the Great Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Estabrook Woods. Other possible field sites include the Blue Hills Observatory (origin of the oldest continuous weather records in the U.S.), the Concord Free Library and the Thoreau Institute (where Thoreau documents are held), the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain (where old photographs and plant specimens are housed), Manomet Bird Observatory (on a day when birds are being banded), Mt. Auburn Cemetery (where large numbers of bird watchers track bird movements), and the Massachusetts State Laboratory (where mosquito numbers are tracked). (4 credits)

Engineering Light  
KHC EK 101  
Tom Bifano  
Mon, Wed 10-11:30am  
ENG (Mechanical Engineering)  
Classroom: PHO 901

Students in this course will gain an appreciation for light and its use in three optical instruments: the eye, the microscope, and the telescope. They will study landmark discoveries concerning light, the development of various light sources, the scientific advances that led to our current understanding about the properties and characteristics of light waves and photons. The course includes weekly lectures and in-class laboratory exercises, several field trips, and a semester-long project. Students will engage in more than twenty hands-on experiments throughout the semester, to untwinkle the stars with adaptive telescopes, to measure the speed of light using parts hacked from a laser pointer, to make a light bulb like Thomas Edison’s, to discover how engineers ruined – and then fixed – the world’s first astronomical space telescope, and to use a high-resolution ophthalmoscope to see image photoreceptors and capillary blood flow in their own retinas. (4 credits)
Kilachand Honors College  
Fall 2012 Freshmen Seminars & Studios

**The Camera as an Agent for Social Change**  
KHC FT 101  
Sam Kauffmann  
Tue, Thu 11-12:30pm  
COM (Film & Television)  
Classroom: COM ARR

We start with the presumption that students enrolling in this course believe in promoting a just and fair society, and wish to learn to use filmmaking skills to expose and address injustices in our Global Village. We explore the historical and theological foundations that compel people to promote social justice. Individually, students will explore and select a social issue of importance to him or her. Students will then each create a video “Mash-Up” using clips from sources like YouTube and other websites. For the final project each student will research, write and produce a short video about a social issue. The goal of the final project is to change the way people perceive the selected issue and highlight ways in which positive changes can occur. No previous filmmaking skills are necessary; students will be given training as part of the course. (4 credits)

**American Bioethics**  
KHC PH 101  
George Annas  
Tue, Thu 8-9:30am  
SPH (Health Law, Bioethics & Human Rights)  
Classroom: KHC 107

American healthcare reflects four deeply-ingrained American characteristics: it is individualistic, technology-driven, death-denying, and wasteful. These characteristics make “reforming” American healthcare extremely contentious. No medical technology is as emblematic of American healthcare and culture as the artificial heart. An exploration of its 40 year history (including its alternatives: death, organ transplantation, and tissue regeneration) as reflected in American medicine, public health, law, bioethics, human rights, bioengineering, and economics helps explain both how the American “NONsystem” of healthcare works and why it is so difficult to change. (4 credits)

**Revolutions in the Conceptualization of Mind: 1950s to the Present**  
KHC PS 101  
Catherine Caldwell-Harris  
Mon, Wed 3-4:30pm  
CAS (Psychology)  
Classroom: KHC 107

The 1950s was the origin of the Cognitive Revolution, when the mind was first viewed as a computational, symbol-processing machine. Techniques for building and programming computers flourished while information-processing models of mental abilities led to an explosion of research in diverse fields, from linguistics to cognitive behavioral therapy. By the 1990s, computers were omnipresent in daily life and no longer appeared the ideal model of mind; the rise of new technology for studying the brain’s mental activity allowed the brain itself to be the model for understanding the mind. This seminar examines the recent intellectual history of new conceptualizations in understanding the mind, beginning with the first computer metaphor in the 1950s, which was followed by a second computer metaphor in the 1980s (artificial neural networks). We consider the emotion revolution of the 1990s, and the field of cognitive neuroscience which is the dominant paradigm in the current day. Along the way we examine changing perspectives on enduring questions during the 2nd half of the 20th century: How do adult information processing abilities emerge during infancy, childhood and the teen years? Is there an innate basis for language acquisition (and if so, what is it)? Are cognition and emotion separate mental abilities? Students will be able to choose their own question of interest for focused exploration while the class broadly studies this explosive half-century of intellectual evolution. (4 credits)
Moses
Michael Zank
CAS (Religion)

This course traces the remarkable career of the great figure of the biblical Exodus and Sinai traditions from prophet to impostor to figment of literary imagination. Readings include Philo of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, the Qur’an, and Sigmund Freud, and we will ask ourselves why an epistemologically and historically discredited biblical narrative still engenders creative, though contradictory, readings and retellings, ranging from Cecile B. Demilles’ moralistic Ten Commandments to Zora Neal Hurston’s “hoodoo man.” (4 credits)

The Secret Lives of Corporations
Stephanie Watts
SMG (Information Systems)

The purpose of this course is to explore the role that corporations play in the economic, environmental and societal issues of our time. In particular, we focus on Citizen’s United and the impact that corporate financial resources have on the democratic process. We begin by learning about corporate structure, history, and laws. We will investigate the impact that these laws have on a variety of public concerns, such as health, welfare, and environmental stability. We will also investigate potential solutions to these problems, and work to understand their viability and implementation issues. The informational content of the first half of the course does not bear good news. By actively participating in the development of own solutions we will turn this potentially depressing content into the exciting possibility of engendering future change. The final deliverable for this course is a research paper and corresponding presentation that reflects each student’s passion for a solution to a problem identified in the reading. (4 credits)

Global Shakespeares
Margaret Litvin
CAS (Modern Languages and Comparative Literature)

A Kuwaiti playwright, in the aftermath of 9/11, casts Hamlet as a jihadi terrorist and Ophelia as a suicide bomber. Hollywood directors set Othello and Taming of the Shrew adaptations in American high schools. The College Board, as it does almost every year, includes a Shakespeare essay on the AP English Literature exam. What can these diverse events tell us about the cultures that produce them and the plays that inspire them? Why do contemporary writers feel the need to parrot and parody “Shakespeare,” and how much of this activity is about Shakespeare at all? This seminar provides an introduction to reading and writing about Shakespeare’s plays. But it also takes a step back to consider Shakespeare as a phenomenon. Among others we’ll look at feminist Shakespeare, postcolonial and nationalist Shakespeare, and sci-fi Shakespeare. Beyond learning about particular offshoots and adaptations, the deeper point is to make sure you never read a “Great Book” the same way again. (4 credits)
Universities are dedicated both to the transmission of existing bodies of knowledge and to the creation of new ideas, art, and inventions. Your first year in the Kilachand Honors College introduces you to the modern university and intellectual life of metropolitan Boston, emphasizing the creative and multifaceted intellectual community of Boston University and its surrounding environment. The first-year writing and communication Studios focus on selected writing by Boston-based writers from a variety of fields, including literature, politics, ethics, medicine, and journalism. As you read across these fields in the Studios, exploring various themes and ethical perspectives, you will study the rhetorical strategies of the authors you read, discuss their research methods and ethics, and analyze the characteristics of expressive genres and writing styles. (Required. 2 credits)