SHUM 4601 - Gender, Islamized Armenians, and the Collective Memory of the Armenian Genocide | Elyse Semerdjian | M: 2:30-4:25
This course addresses the specific experiences of trafficked women and children who were subjected to forced Islamization. These practices of violent erasure will be examined within the context of the late Ottoman understanding of gender and slavery, and emerging Turkish nationalism which targeted Armenians for extermination through mass murder, enslavement, and forced assimilation. Assigned course materials include an interdisciplinary mix of scholarly readings, oral histories, novels, memoirs alongside print and visual media.

SHUM 4602 - Queer Origins | Kevin Ohi | T: 2:30-4:25
“For Man to tell how human Life began / Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?”—this is Adam, in Book 8 of Paradise Lost, articulating the curious exorbitance of inception in relation to the cognition that would know itself. Poets and writers must nevertheless confront the origin; our finitude means our knowledge is fractured—and constituted—by the impurity of inception, and, from a certain angle, there is perhaps no question more central to literary creation. This course will explore that literary problem alongside a complementary one: the problem of sexual etiology, or the origins of desire. Writers and theorists might include: Homer, Ovid, Shakespeare, Milton, Defoe, Sterne, Dickens, James, Freud, Artaud, Witty, Baldwin, Capote, Blanchot, Foucault, de Man, and Agamben.

This course explores the representation of the skin in the visual arts from the Renaissance up until the mid-19th century. Drawing upon analytical resources from multiple disciplines, it will consider art theoretical discussions around flesh tones; the significance of different ways to depict skin; technical aspects of the rendering of skin in painting and sculpture; the intersection of anatomy and depictions of the body surface; and relevant material from the history of medicine and anthropology. The course will focus on European art from 1500-1850.

SHUM 4604 - Original Skin: Reading Skin in Philosophy and Theology | Karmen MacKendrick | R: 12:20-2:15
This seminar focuses on the question of skin as legible sign or narrative, a reading that resonates within philosophy, theology, and the arts. Philosophers often disembody meaning, but feminist and queer theory have intersected with philosophy to insist on the importance of what is (as Jeannette Winterson writes) “written on the body”—inscribed on and as the skin. In theology, some readings of the Hebrew Bible see skin as a barrier between human and divine; others read skin color as a sign of divine disfavor; still others worry about wounds and other stigmata. We will look at ways that skin is “marked” as readable, and at modes in which this is valued or disvalued, how it stigmatizes or registers as blank.

SHUM 4605 - Bio-Politics and Poetics of Nakedness | Naminata Diabate | T: 12:20-2:15
In this course, you will explore nakedness as a form of protest by various social movements and in compelling fictional texts. As you analyze nakedness from ancient Greece to 21st century Africa, Asia, and Latin America, you will also be attentive to the variables of race, gender, and bodily abilities and how they complicate this mode of speaking. Primary texts include Devi’s “Draupadi,” Ngugi’s Wizard of the Crow, Anderson’s The Emperor’s New Clothes, Tennyson’s “Godiva,” Auden’s “Cave of Nakedness,” videos of Femen, gay parades, and Occupy Wall Street. You will read these visual and literary texts in conjunction with theoretical reflections on shame/injury, exposure, and humanity by Freud, Foucault, Derrida, Levinas, Nancy, and Berger.

SHUM 4606 - The Powers of Skin in Africa | Stacey Langwick | R: 2:30-4:25
This class considers the capacities and powers of skin in Africa. Students will read classic historical and ethnographic texts about practices involving skin together with range of theoretical approaches to the body. We will consider topics from beatification, scarification, witchcraft, magic, and traditional medicine to the hygiene campaigns of colonialism, the development of the dermatology as a defined specialty, the rise of global health and medical humanitarianism. Descriptive ethnographic and historical texts will be read as primary evidence along side of a range of theoretical approaches to the lived body with the intention of provoking innovative readings of these primary texts and a greater understanding of the theoretical arguments.