Shady Characters: Historical Subversives

Fall 2015 ♦ Thursdays 7:00-9:05 pm ♦ September 24 - December 3

There are the Famous and the Infamous; the Noteworthy and the Notorious. This course focuses the spotlight on some of the shadiest characters in history - a regular Rogues’ Gallery of individuals who made a practice of pushing the boundaries of the permissible. Lectures will be augmented by extensive visuals.

Shady Characters sessions:

1 – Dionysus on Mt. Olympus (Immortal) God of Wine, Ecstasy & Madness
   Black Sheep of the Classical Pantheon – Nietzsche’s pairing with Apollo

2 – Cleopatra, Legendary Temptress (69-30 BC) First Female Pharaoh of Egypt
   Wedded to her Two Brothers – Mistress to Two Roman Emperors

3 – Caravaggio in Baroque Rome (1571-1610) Painter, Swordsman, Sensualist
   Grand Master of Shadow and Light – Most Influential Baroque Painter

4 – Casanova, Spirit of Venice (1725-1798) Adventurer, Diplomat, Womanizer
   Author of History’s most notorious and widely-read Memoirs

5 – John Wilkes, the First Radical (1725-1797) Political Gadfly, Libertine
   Instigated Parliamentary Reform - Luminary of the Hellfire Club

6 – George Sand, Gender Pioneer (1804-1876) Prolific Novelist, Lover, Muse
   Most famous, and most scandalous, Woman of the 19th Century

7 – Oscar Wilde, the Talk of London (1854-1900) Playwright, Sensualist, Wit
   Prime Challenger of Victorian Respectability – Martyr to Gay Rights

8 – May West, from Vaudeville to Hollywood (1893-1980) Performer, Crusader
   Brought Burlesque Attitude to Hollywood – Provoked Moral Code for Movies

9 – Carl Jung – Recapitulation Workshop (1875-1961) Jung’s theory of the Shadow
   Shady Characters as Societal Subversives – Shadow as seat of Creativity

Instructor – Dr. Bruce Elliott
Shady Characters
Recommendations for Reading

1 – Dionysus – Bacchus: A Biography
Andrew Dalby

The Birth of Tragedy
Friedrich Nietzsche

2 – Cleopatra – Cleopatra: A Life
Stacy Schiff

Cleopatra and Antony:
Power, Love, and Politics in the Ancient World
Diana Preston

3 – Caravaggio – Caravaggio: A Life Sacred & Profane
Andrew Graham-Dixon

The Lost Painting:
The Quest for a Caravaggio Masterpiece
Jonathan Herr

4 – Casanova – The Story of My Life
Giacomo Casanova

Casanova: Actor • Lover • Priest • Spy
Ian Kelly

5 – John Wilkes – John Wilkes: Scandalous Father of Civil Liberty
Arthur Cash

John Wilkes: A Friend to Liberty
Peter Thomas

6 – George Sand – George Sand: A Woman’s Life Writ Large
Belinda Jack

George Sand
Elizabeth Harlan

7 – Oscar Wilde – Oscar Wilde
Richard Ellman

The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde
Neil McKenna

8 – Mae West – Mae West: It Ain’t No Sin
Simon Louvish

When I’m Bad, I’m Better
Mary Beth Hamilton

9 – Carl Jung – A Little Book on the Human Shadow
Robert Bly