

Course Descriptions

University Honors Program

Spring 2024

Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought	2
Scientific Reasoning and Discovery	6
Introductory and Special	8
Self & Society.....	9
Arts & Humanities	14
Contract Courses	17
Senior Capstone and Thesis.....	18

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

Revolution

Professor Joseph Trullinger
HONR 1016:MV1 – 3 Credits
CRN: 93901
MW 11:30AM – 12:45PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- CCAS: Philosophy major/minor course PHIL 2112

Course Description: Modernity is often understood as an era of innovation and upheaval, of new ideas and ways of life. Modernity seems new by virtue of its idea that what is new is permissible, if not preferable, over against adhering to time-honored order. This section of Origins will attempt to understand modernity as an era of revolution, of radical breaks with all sorts of established order: political, familial, economic, moral, cultural, and everything in between. In addition to those who argue for a sweeping overhaul of society, we will engage important critics of revolution, who make the case that the complaints of revolutionaries are ill-founded, or else can be resolved through gradual reform rather than sudden revolution. Reform versus revolution: the opposition between these views will form the basic framework for our exploration of a wide array of texts, criticizing and calling for bourgeois revolution, anti-colonial revolution, feminist revolution, slave revolts, communist revolution, fascist revolution, moral repentance, spiritual renewal, and revolutions in social values as fundamental as democracy and individualism.

Liberty

Professor Theodore Christov
HONR 1016:MV2 – 3 Credits
CRN: 94513
MW 8:30AM - 9:45AM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- CCAS: Philosophy major/minor course PHIL 2112

Course Description: How is the individual liberty of the moderns distinct from the collective liberty of the ancients? While among the ancients the individual, regarded as sovereign in public affairs, had no notion of individual rights and was a slave in one's private affairs, for the moderns the individual was sovereign because of one's freedom. Why do we, moderns, continually clamor for the advantages of rights and liberties, while the ancients never felt the need for individual liberty? This Liberty seminar examines the various sources of our modern condition by showing why liberty is the unique discovery of the moderns. First, liberty as a political question; second, liberty as a social question; third, liberty as an emancipatory question. We will grapple with fundamental political concepts, such as state sovereignty, natural law, and social contract; moral ideas, such as autonomy, equality, and reasoning; and social forces, such as labor, class struggle, and human emancipation. By asking whether modernity's resources are by nature or by convention, we will question and critique our own understanding and experience of liberty. The course will help you develop your ability

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

to make and evaluate arguments, both in writing and in conversation, and thereby help you think clearly and critically about how politics and society shape and reshape our experience of liberty.

Freedom in the Modern Age

Professor William Winstead
HONR 1016:MV3 – 3 Credits
CRN: 94753
MW 2:30PM - 3:45PM

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HONR 1016:MV4 - 3 Credits
CRN: 94754
MW 4:10PM - 5:25PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- CCAS: Philosophy major/minor course PHIL 2112

Course Description: The modern age has often been characterized as the epoch of absolute freedom. Its insistence on individual liberty and the right to live one's life as one wishes, free of interference from tradition, church, or state, are symptomatic of modernity's radical commitment to freedom. The scope of its emancipatory impulse may be measured not only by the radical politics of the age—the American, French, and Russian revolutions, among others—but also by the defense of unrestrained expression in the aesthetic sphere (artistic freedom, freedom of speech) and toleration of individual conscience in the moral sphere. Our readings this semester will examine the intellectual revolutions that established freedom as the central value of the modern project and institutionalized it in the liberal state, the market economy, and the self-reflective individual. In the final section of the course, we will consider the subtle and profound forms of personal liberation found in modern Buddhist thought. Readings will include Hobbes, Mill, Nietzsche, Freud, Beauvoir, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, The Combahee River Collective, the Dalai Lama, and Zen Buddhism.

The Death of God

Professor Mark Ralkowski
HONR 1015:MV5 – 3 Credits
CRN: 94755
TR 1:00PM - 2:15PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- CCAS: Philosophy major/minor course PHIL 2112

Course Description: Is capitalism always dehumanizing, or can it promote human welfare? How do race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and social class affect our understanding of ourselves and others? Are our cultural values good for us, or do they undermine our mental health and harm the planet? Do experiences of marginalization and oppression give those who experience them unique knowledge about our society and how it operates? What might the earth and nonhuman animals teach us about how we ought to live? As we explore questions like these in this course, we will discover how philosophy can be what Freire calls the “practice of freedom.” We will begin by studying the rise of the

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

modern worldview and the spread of its political values, but most of our time will be spent on a wide range of cultural critics—e.g., Tolstoy, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Frankl, Baldwin, de Beauvoir, Lorde, the Combahee River Collective, Freire, the Dalai Lama, and Robin Wall Kimmerer—who lay the foundations for a less alienating and more humane world. Our discussions will cover some of their most revolutionary ideas, which have transformed the way we think about the human place in nature, the relationship between culture and economics, our conscious and unconscious minds, colonialism and liberation, gender and racial justice, and the aims of an emancipatory education. The main goal of this course is for us to see how these philosophies are more than abstract theories in books that are hard to read. They are provocations to reexamine our beliefs and values, reckon with our place in history, and reimagine the future of our interconnected world.

Theories of Justice

Professor Eyal Aviv
HONR 1016:MV6 – 3 Credits
CRN: 94756
TR 10:00AM - 11:15AM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- CCAS: Philosophy major/minor course PHIL 2112

Course Description: In the second part of the course, we will dive deep into a diverse range of theories that try to define and enact justice. We will shift our attention from the "origins" to the "evolution" of modern notions of justice, ethics, and morality. In the pre-modern world, traditional values served as moral authorities. But if traditions are questioned, who determines what the right thing to do is? How can we distinguish the moral from the immoral? We will read the writings of theologians, philosophers, and writers who challenged their societies by asking questions and providing surprising answers.

Value

Professor Michael McCourt
HONR 1016:MV7 – 3 Credits
CRN: 95486
MW 4:10PM - 5:25PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- CCAS: Philosophy major/minor course PHIL 2112

Course Description: Our central aim in this class is to pursue philosophical questions about value. What makes something valuable? To what extent is it up to you what you value? To what extent are your values determined for you? We'll then turn to related questions in economics, politics, history, and sociology. How should human labor be valued? How should your opinions and preferences be valued in a society with many competing opinions and preferences? How should your freedom to pursue what you value be weighed against considerations about the greater good? Why has there always been such stark inequality in the distribution of valued things? What explains inequality in the way people are valued? To guide our discussions, we'll read (among others) James Baldwin, Simone De Beauvoir, W. E. B. DuBois,

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions



Thomas Hobbes, Dalai Lama, John Locke, Audre Lorde, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

Revolutions in Astronomy

Professor Bethany Cobb Kung

HONR 1034:MV - 4 Credits

CRN: 94757

TR 9:00AM - 10:50AM

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HONR 1034:MV1 - 4 Credits

CRN: 94514

TR 11:00AM - 12:50PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Scientific Reasoning (natural/physical science with lab)
- GPAC Oral Communication

Course Description: This course explores the history and frontiers of modern astronomy. In the 400 years since Galileo first turned his telescope toward the heavens, the science of astronomy has gone through numerous radical shifts in our understanding of the universe. We will examine these great paradigm shifts, starting with the Copernican revolution, through Hubble's discovery of the expanding universe, to topics in astrophysics that remain controversial and perplexing even today such as extrasolar planets, black holes, dark matter and dark energy. Both the concepts behind these astronomy revolutions and the associated physics will be emphasized (there is, however, no mathematics prerequisites and the math level will be confined to algebra). We will consider historical and scientific perspectives on who was behind these radical discoveries, what evidence supports each revolution, and how astronomers and society have responded to each advance. Students in this course will develop an understanding of the types of modern astronomical topics discussed frequently in the popular science press and media and will come to appreciate how the science of astronomy is performed. Students will be expected to take an active role in the classroom, where we will explore topics through a combination of lecture, discussion, student presentations, group projects and mathematical exercises.

Why Do We Get Sick? The Ecology and Evolution of Health and Disease

Professor Thiago Moreira

HONR 1034:MV4 - 4 Credits

CRN: 91381

MW 9:00AM - 10:50 AM

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HONR 1034:MV5 - 4 Credits

CRN: 92035

MW 1:00PM - 2:50PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Scientific Reasoning (natural/physical science with lab)
- GPAC Oral Communication

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Course Description: “Did you ever wonder why we get sick? Or why do we get old? Have you ever considered why some people drink milk with ease while some others get strong reactions to it? Or why is it so hard to lose weight by dieting? Homo sapiens are one of the hundreds of thousands of life forms on this planet. We are subject to the same basic process that molds and shapes all living (and deceased) species: evolution. Millions of years of interacting with other species, adapting to an ever-changing landscape, and surviving the challenges of life have conferred upon us characteristics (adaptations) that help us thrive. The proof of success? Standing the test of time! However, unlike other species, we humans transcend the natural challenges the planet gave to us. In a very short period, we transformed our surroundings into a more amenable, comfortable version. Challenges crucial to our ancestors (such as gathering food, finding shelter, or escaping predators) are not a problem for modern humans. Nevertheless, our old biological background is still with us, and it often does not like this new world... and stirs some trouble. The first we will cover in this course are the very basics of biological evolution. What is evolution? What are the fundamental processes and patterns of life? What are the tenets and major areas of study of modern biology? Once we have a solid basis and are comfortable with the fundamentals, we will explore the topics of health and sickness in our modern lives from a new perspective. By the end of the semester, I hope you will have a broader comprehension of how our biology has evolved for thousands of years and their consequences have a great deal to offer our knowledge of a healthier life. But more than evolution or health, this course is about science. Thus, I expect you to be already familiar with some concepts, such as scientific methods, errors, experimental design, and how to ask (and answer) meaningful scientific questions. So be prepared to use those skills you worked on in your Fall courses!”

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Introductory and Special

Honors Macroeconomics

Professor Michael Bradley
HONR 2044:10 – 3 Credits
CRN: 90155
T 11:10AM - 12:25PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences
- CCAS: Philosophy major/minor elective

Equivalent Courses: HONR 2047; ECON 1012

Course Description: Macroeconomic conditions affect everyone's lives. Many important social and political issues are framed by their macroeconomic consequences. In this course, students will learn how changes in macroeconomic conditions affect them, as well as learning what determines whether a country's economic performance is good or bad. We will also cover the economic consequences of important current issues like inequality, student debt relief, inflation, and the international trade deficit. Course prerequisites: ECON 1011

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Self & Society

Future Crimes

Professor Maria Restrepo
HONR 2047:10 – 3 Credits
CRN: 93902
R 12:45PM - 3:15PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences
- CCAS: Counts as SOC 2189 for Sociology and Criminal Justice programs
- CCAS: Peace Studies Major Group 2 International Peace and Conflict requirement

Course Description: This course seeks to understand the interplay of Internet technology and criminal activity. While offline violent crime is usually linked to cities, and more specifically, to definite spaces in cities, future crimes (cybercrimes and future crimes) in our online space reach all of us everywhere, even if we don't do anything, simply because we are connected (and interconnected) online. Technology is a double-edged sword: as much good as it brings, it can also create unprecedented possibilities for crimes — many of which may be new and un-thought. Given the freshness of this phenomenon, this course will seek to identify the relevant questions rather than give definitive answers. The course will explore and refine these and other questions: Are our current understanding and existing theories of crime and crime prevention approaches appropriate to deal with the new wave of future crimes linked to technology? Will technology increase crime exponentially, mirroring the famous 'Moore's Law' of advances in computing capability? What type of crimes are we, and might we, end up dealing with as a society? Are future crimes and 'offline' crimes correlated? IS THE WORLD PREPARED FOR THE NEW CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE FUTURE CRIMES 'CREATED' BY GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (GAI)?

History of Neuroscience

Professor Leo Chalupa
HONR 2047:11 – 3 Credits
CRN: 94758
TR 2:20PM - 3:35PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences
- CCAS: Counts as Cognitive Neuroscience elective course for Neuroscience major

Course Description: The human brain is the most complex entity in the known universe. This course will examine the antecedents of contemporary brain research from philosophical, medical, cultural and scientific perspectives beginning from ancient Egypt to the 21st century. We will consider how advances in our understanding of the human brain have impacted art, literature, economics, cognitive sciences, the legal profession, as well as recent work in artificial intelligence. Students will be required to make a podcast of their 45 minute oral presentation to the class. The necessary arrangements for the production of the podcast will be a joint projection for the students enrolled in the class.

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Bio: [Dr. Chalupa](#) is a Professor of Pharmacology and Physiology in GW's School of Medicine and Health Sciences whose research focuses on the developmental neurobiology of visual systems. He served for nearly a decade as GW's first Vice President for Research, growing GW's research profile significantly during his tenure.

Leading Authentically

Professor Gelaye Debebe
HONR 2047:12 – 3 Credits
CRN: 94759
M 12:45PM - 3:15PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences
- CCAS: Counts as Organizational Sciences elective course for declared majors and minors

Course Description: Leadership ability is in high demand in all professions and at all levels. This course is a semester-long exploration of leadership within a dynamic and supportive learning community. The course seeks to dispel myths of heroic leadership as well as common beliefs that conflate leadership with having a formal position of authority. Authentic leadership is a dynamic capability that is anchored in values, influenced by the social environment, and learned and honed with practice. Students will learn from seasoned leaders, formulate personal leadership development goals, experiment with new leadership behaviors and gain insights into their leadership strengths and weaknesses. These objectives will be accomplished through a variety of activities including results obtained through lectures, 360-degree feedback, peer leadership coaching, interviews with established leaders, film analysis, and presentations. After taking this course students will develop an understanding of leadership as an art and science. Each student will leave the course with a conceptual grasp of leadership, leadership practice, leadership effectiveness, ethical leadership, and the role of social identity in leadership. Equally important, by the end of the course, each student will understand their leadership strengths and areas for development and will have a clear understanding of what they can do to continue to grow and develop as leaders.

Bio: [Professor Gelaye Debebe](#) is a Associate Professor of Organizational Sciences and director of the graduate program in Organizational Science. She is passionate about teaching and researching leadership—check out her book: *Women's Leadership Development: Caring Environments & Paths to Transformation* (Routledge).

Leadership Workshop

Professor Leslie Trimmer
HONR 2047:13 – 3 Credits
CRN: 98654
TR 11:10AM - 12:25PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Course Description: Students in this course will examine leadership by exploring leadership theories, studying traits of effective leaders, building positive relationships, inspecting effective leadership skills, and enhancing reflective practices. Students will discover their leadership potential and expand on their leadership skills. Students will apply the knowledge gained to leadership concepts that impact current community issues. Students will engage with local leaders to better experience leadership in action. Upon completing the course, students will better appreciate effective leadership skills and roles.

Bio: [Dr. Trimmer](#) is an Assistant Professor of Practice in Educational Administration with GW's Graduate School of Education and Human Development. She is an expert in leadership and curriculum development and spent over thirty years as a teacher, principal, curriculum director, and assistant superintendent in school districts in Pennsylvania.

Applied Health Equity: A Look at the Nation's Capitol

Professor Maranda Ward
HONR 2047:15 – 3 Credits
CRN: 95210
M 6:10PM - 8:40PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences

Course Description: Achieving health equity is among the nation's health goals outlined in Healthy People 2020. The concept of health equity moves public health conversations, interventions, policies, and research beyond the individual unit of analysis to emphasize the social, legal, political, and cultural systems in which people are embedded. Where people live, work, study, play, and age- or the social determinants of health- are at the crux of understanding and assessing health equity. This course is designed around the three recommendations offered by the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (2008) to close the gaps in health outcomes: 1) improve daily living conditions, 2) tackle inequitable distribution of power, money, and resources; and 3) measure and understand problems and assess impact of action. Students will apply their understanding of these recommendations to the work of a local community-based organization that serves Black residents who live in a Washington, DC neighborhood East of the Anacostia River. Localized understanding of global health equity concepts will allow students to practice and/or strengthen public health competencies to address structural inequities that allow health disparities to persist for vulnerable populations.

Bio: [Dr. Ward](#) is an Assistant Professor and Director of Equity in the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership in the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Her research focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and antiracism educational interventions as well as stakeholder-engaged community-focused studies on HIV, Black women's health, and youth identity. She is a recipient of GW's 2021 Morton A. Bender Teaching award.

Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity in the Modern Era

Professor Hadas Aron
HONR 2047:16 – 3 Credits
CRN: 95487
W 11:10AM – 1:00PM

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences

Course Description: This course explores the concepts of identity, ethnicity, race, and nationalism in the modern era and their political implications. We will examine the historical origins and nature of nationalism, the complex intersections of identities, and the role identity plays in a variety of contexts: nation building, democratization, political mobilization, and conflict. The last part of the course will delve into the current notable manifestations of nationalism: populist and far right movements. The course will explore these themes drawing on literature from multiple fields including political science, sociology, anthropology, literature, and history.

Bio: [Dr. Aron](#) is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and the Program Coordinator for the International Politics Cohort in the Women's Leadership Program. She studies nationalism, populism, international security, democratization and de-democratization, and political narratives with a regional focus on Europe and Israel.

Leading Social Change through Social Entrepreneurship

Professor Lori Peters
HONR 2047:18 – 3 Credits
CRN: 97480
W 12:45PM – 3:15PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences

Course Description: Today's world is filled with complex problems. Social change is attainable through the passion and innovation of individuals empowered to creatively implement collective resources. Using academic theory and exploring social change through social entrepreneurship, students will learn to identify, develop, and lead social change initiatives in their area of experience or interest. Students will transform their passion into a working model for social change within the nonprofit sector.

Bio: [Dr. Peters](#) is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Organizational Sciences and has 25 years of experience leading and teaching in the nonprofit sector and has also done extensive international development work in Ghana, West Africa. She is a recipient of GW's 2023 Morton A. Bender Teaching award.

Empires from Rome to Washington

Professor Theodore Christov
HONR 2047:M82 – 3 Credits
CRN:95093
M 10:00AM - 11:50AM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Social Sciences
- CCAS: History Electives: pre-1750 History, European History, United States History, Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America History

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Note that UHP students will only receive Self & Society credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2047 section (CRN: 95093)

Course cross-listed with HIST 2001.M80 (CRN: 96755)

Course Description: What gave rise to, and continues to sustain, a common aspiration to a single humanity and world citizenship, from antiquity to the present? This course traces the various ideologies of empires from ancient Rome through the great colonial powers of early modern Europe to imperial resurrections in our present day, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and US power globally. 'Empire' here should be understood loosely to embody a universal set of beliefs about the legitimacy of certain ways of life and political formations. Clearly the modern democracies of the 'West' are not empires in the widely understood sense of the term, but there are many – particularly in the developing world – who would claim that the objectives they pursue are distinctly 'imperialist'. Yet what modern democracies seem to share in common with ancient empires is a single understanding of what a 'civilization' is, and the conviction that such things as rights, freedom of expression and association, even access to free markets, are the properties of all human beings, and not merely the concerns of one particular hegemonic culture. In examining modes of justification used to theorize 'empire', the course focuses on how Europeans came to think of themselves as possessing a distinctive understanding of the world, which they had a duty (and a right) to export, and often impose on others, and how that understanding has come to shape the modern 'Global Neighborhood'.

Holocaust Memory

Professor Walter Reich
HONR 2047:83 – 3 Credits
CRN: 95489
W 3:30PM - 6:00PM

Fulfills:

- This course has no GPAC designations
- CCAS: Upper-level History European Regional requirement
- ESIA: Comparative, Political, Economic, and Social Systems, Conflict Resolution, Contemporary Cultures and Societies, Europe and Eurasia, International Politics, Security Policy concentrations

Note that UHP students will only receive Self & Society credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2047 section (CRN: 95489)

Course cross-listed with IAFF 3205.80 (CRN: 98346) and JSTD 2002.82 (CRN: 97412)

Course Description: The sources, construction, development, nature, uses and misuses of the memory, or public consciousness, of the Holocaust. How different publics in different countries, cultures and societies know, or think they know, about the Holocaust from diaries, memoirs, testimonies, fiction, documentaries, television, commercial films, memorials, museums, the Internet, educational programs and the statements of world leaders—some of them historically accurate and some of them highly distorted. The challenge of representing the Holocaust with fidelity and memorializing its victims with dignity and authenticity. The impact of Holocaust memory on contemporary responses to other genocides and to crimes against humanity. The increasing efforts to hijack, misuse, minimize, deny or attack the Holocaust for political, strategic, ideological, anti-Semitic or other purposes. The effectiveness—or lack of effectiveness--

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

of Holocaust memory in teaching the Holocaust's contemporary "lessons," especially "Never again!" The roles of Holocaust memory, and of Holocaust denial or minimization, in international affairs, including in the Middle East in general and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular.

Bio: [Dr. Reich](#) is the Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Professor of International Affairs, Ethics and Human Behavior and Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. He formerly served as a Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Identity: Theory & Politics

Professor Ingrid Creppell
HONR 2047W: 81 – 3 Credits
CRN: 95488
W 12:45PM – 3:15PM

Fulfills:

- This course has no GPAC designations
- WID requirement

Note that UHP students will only receive Self & Society credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2047 section (CRN: 95488)

Course cross listed with PSC 3192W.82 (CRN: 95595)

Course Description: What is identity? A simple answer – identity is who we are, who you are, who I am. It is who you or they claim to be. It is who we, they, or you are defined by others to be. The human world has always appeared organized along the lines of what we now (often) call "identity groups." Ancient tribes differentiated themselves through adornments or totems. Today, individuals and groups define themselves in myriad ways. However, identity at the individual and collective levels is anything but straightforward and simple as an experience, issue, or topic of study. In the modern world, identity became a heightened and central question and issue in culture and politics for a variety of reasons. The aim of this course is to explore the identity question in its contemporary incarnation. Through studying works of philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, history, literature, and film, we will develop an understanding of this complex phenomenon and its political and ethical importance.

Bio: [Dr. Creppell](#) is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs. She is currently working on enmity as a conceptual, normative, psychological and historical phenomenon.

Media, Power, and Society

Professor Steven Livingston
HONR 2047:84 – 3 Credits
CRN: 98685
TR 12:45PM - 2:20PM

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Fulfills:

- This course has no GPAC designations
- SMPA: Political Communications major requirement

Note that UHP students will only receive Self & Society credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2047 section (CRN: 98685)

Course cross listed with SMPA 3194.86 (CRN: 98678)

Course Description: This course offers an examination of contemporary media/social media and politics from a sociological and philosophical perspective. We draw on classical and contemporary sociological and philosophical texts to understand the role of media in modern life, especially concerning the creation and maintenance of individual and collective identity and social cohesion.

Bio: [Dr. Livingston](#) is the Founding Director of the Institute for Data, Democracy, and Politics and Professor of Media and Public Affairs. Dr. Livingston is spending the Spring 2023 semester as senior fellow at the Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS) research consortium in Berlin, Germany and completed a Fulbright Scholar in Helsinki in 2021.

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Arts & Humanities

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A History

Professor Christopher Brick
HONR 2053:13 – 3 Credits
CRN: 96320
TR 12:45PM - 2:00PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities

Course Description: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is one of the world’s most recognizable documents, “the foundation of international human rights law,” according to the United Nations, and one of the most widely-reprinted texts in human history. While its framers theorized the UDHR as a “Magna Carta for all,” opponents and detractors have routinely cast it instead as an empty vessel, at best, and at worst a dangerous tool of oppression. Is it either of these things, neither, or something else entirely? This course will invite students to consider these questions anew as it examines the Declaration’s conceptual origins in the ancient past, the historical context that led the UN General Assembly to formalize and promulgate a human rights coda in 1948, and the UDHR’s colorful evolution into a flashpoint of controversy for activists, policymakers, intellectuals, and the international community writ large. Please note that in researching their term projects for this course, students will be required to draw upon resources from the permanent collection of the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, a research center of the GW History Department and archive of UDHR materials that UNESCO has designated “vital to global heritage and personhood.”

Bio: [Dr. Brick](#) is an editor and principle investigator of the [Eleanor Roosevelt Papers project](#) at GW and one of the hosts of the Organization of American Historians’ podcast [Intervals](#).

The Frankfurt School

Professor Joseph Trullinger
HONR 2053:82 – 3 Credits
CRN: 94763
TR 11:30AM - 12:45PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- GPAC Oral Communications

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 94763)

Course cross listed with PHIL 3100.10 (CRN: 98715)

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Course Description: Why do we desire our servitude as if it were our freedom? In a time of runaway capitalist inequality, daring experiments in art and theory, and a political status quo unresponsive to the emerging voice of social minorities and lackadaisical about brewing fascist resentment, a group of Marxist scholars came together to understand why the promise of communist uprising failed when it came so close to succeeding. Their Institute for Social Research was founded in Frankfurt, Germany in 1923. It has generated some of the sharpest critiques of the apparently unstoppable “success story” that is capitalist democracy: that its soulless practicality is whitewashed exploitation and mass destruction of humans and non-humans alike. Nonetheless they found promises of utopian hope amidst this ruinous pseudo-progress—that a radically different world is possible.

To commemorate a full century of “the Frankfurt School,” this seminar will explore some of its most famous affiliated thinkers—Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Ernst Bloch—and those in later generations who took up their torch in other ways (such as Angela Davis and José Esteban Muñoz). We will also examine current conservative backlash against the Frankfurt School as a Trojan horse supposedly undermining “Western values.” We will expose the falseness of this charge of “Cultural Marxism,” rooted as it is in an antisemitic conspiracy theory that Jewish intellectuals have infiltrated institutions of culture and learning to guilt-trip white people out of their power.

By the course’s end, we will see the Frankfurt School represents a simultaneously critical self-examination and continuation of the European philosophical tradition, cancelling what is irrational within it while preserving what is rational. At each turn they were at odds to retrieve a holistic notion of rationality that had come to be conflated with mercenary rationalization of existing power structures. From personal experience and critical analysis, they took liberalism’s degeneration into fascism to be a broken promise of the Enlightenment to liberate rather than subjugate humanity. Likewise, they aimed to recapture the yearning for cosmopolitan soulfulness from their 19th century German idealist and romantic heritage that had since degenerated into philistine nationalism and depoliticizing mystification. We will consider both the limits and the possibilities in their approach to philosophizing outside of this tradition, and in so doing, carry on the project of critical theory to approximate ever more closely the conditions of thinking freely, in order to be free.

Nietzsche & Political Thought

Professor William Winstead
HONR 2053:83 – 3 Credits
CRN: 96902
T 3:30PM - 6:00PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 96902)

Course cross listed with PSC 2991.80 (CRN: 96707)

Course Description: Nietzsche is a fierce critic of modern politics and a relentless advocate of the agonistic politics of the Greek citystate. He argues that modern politics is beset by decay, evident in the slackening of citizen vigor (or will-

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

power) and the timidity of the age's most powerful political movements, above all liberalism and socialism. We will begin our course this semester with Nietzsche's antidote to modern politics, the vigorous politics of the ancient Greek polis, which serves as the normative model for all of his writings. By embracing the Greeks, and particularly the tragic Greeks, Nietzsche turns away from modern rationalism and the systematic political philosophy inaugurated by Plato in favor of an experiment in new modes of political thinking that are at once anti-modern and post-modern. After considering Nietzsche's image of antiquity, we will turn to his interpretation of modernity and its political forms, and examine his critique of the political ideals of the age (liberalism, equality, and rights). Throughout the semester, we will pay close attention to the relationships that Nietzsche draws between art and politics, culture and the state, justice and rights, and freedom and asceticism.

Exhibiting History

Professor Jenna Weissman Joselit
HONR 2053:84 – 3 Credits
CRN: 96496
M 3:30PM – 5:20PM

Fulfills:

- This course has no GPAC designations

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 96496)

Course cross listed with HIST 3001.80 (CRN: 94897)

Course Description: These days, as long standing monuments topple to the ground and troubling questions about the meaning of history and its relationship to the public square continue to loom large on the contemporary landscape in both the United States and Europe, this interdisciplinary seminar explores the variety of ways in which the past visually and materially intrudes on and affects the present.

Focusing on a number of case studies, ranging from the “1619 Project” to “Hamilton,” and from Kehinde Wiley’s anti-monument monument, “Rumors of War,” in Richmond, Virginia, to a recent controversy in Sandomierz, Poland, over an anti-Semitic painting that has hung for centuries in its cathedral, the course looks at the cultural, social and visual practices by which history is constituted, interpreted, circulated, displayed, downplayed, or erased.

Bio: [Dr. Joselit](#) is the Charles E. Smith Professor of Judaic Studies & Professor of History. Among her many areas of academic study, she specializes in the history and culture of America’s Jews and also writes a monthly column on American Jewish culture for [Tablet: The Online Magazine of Jewish Culture](#).

Buddhist Philosophy

Professor Eyal Aviv
HONR 2053:85 – 3 Credits
CRN: 97327
TR 2:20PM – 3:35PM

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 97327)

Course cross listed with REL 3612.80 (CRN: 98020) and PHIL 3100.81 (CRN: 97416)

Course Description: In this course, you will be introduced to the philosophy of Buddhism, its assumptions, questions, and distinct perspectives. You'll learn about the Buddhist intellectual tradition, its ideas, and debates, as well as how its philosophy evolved over time. While the course covers Buddhist Philosophy throughout history, we'll focus especially on the School of Yogic Practice (Yogācāra). Additionally, we will take a comparative philosophy approach to highlight differences and similarities with the Western philosophical and psychological traditions. We will pay particular attention to the relevance of these questions to our daily lives and their transformative impact.

Disability, Access, & the Arts

Professor Bibiana Obler
HONR 2053:88 – 3 Credits
CRN: 96903
W 12:30PM – 3:00PM

Fulfills:

- This course has no GPAC designations

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 96903)

Course cross listed with CAH 4150.82 (CRN: 97843)

Course Description: By no means comprehensive, this seminar will examine theories and histories of various forms and understandings of disability vis-à-vis the arts and visual culture. We will study “disability aesthetics”; inclusive design in architecture, museums, and urban planning; the importance of the gaze; and key debates in the field. We will delve into case studies on early twentieth-century artists’ engagement with schizophrenia; the complexities of National Socialist policies on degenerate art and eugenics; and contemporary artists’ interventions in discourses on disability. We will read articles and chapters by artists and scholars including Joseph Grigely, Aimi Hamraie, Georgina Kleege, Jasbir K. Puar, Tobin Siebers, Vivian Sobchack, Esmé Weijun Wang—and three leading voices in disability studies who teach at GW: David T. Mitchell, Robert McRuer, and Sharon L. Snyder. Drawing on these broad-ranging discussions for foundations and frameworks, students will have the opportunity to pursue substantial research on a topic of their choosing.

Bio: [Dr. Obler](#) is an art historian with a focus on modern and contemporary art and craft. Her publications include [Intimate Collaborations: Kandinsky and Münter, Arp and Taeuber](#) (2014), [Fast Fashion / Slow Art](#) (a catalogue for a co-curated exhibition), and an essay in [Lynda Benglis](#) (2022). She is also the arts editor for [Feminist Studies](#).

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Heidegger's Being and Time

Professor Mark Ralkowski
HONR 2053:89 – 3 Credits
CRN: 95957
TR 3:45PM – 5:00PM

Fulfills:

- GPAC Critical Thinking in the Humanities
- GPAC Oral Communications

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 95957)

Course cross listed with PHIL 3100.80 (CRN: 94773)

Course Description: “When I left the auditorium, I was speechless. For a brief moment I felt as if I had a glimpse into the ground and foundation of the world. In my inner being, something was touched that had been asleep for a long time.” That is how one person described the experience of listening to Heidegger present his philosophy in 1929. Our advanced seminar will be an intensive and focused study of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, one of the most influential philosophical works of the twentieth century. We will begin the course with an overview of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological method, and then trace how Heidegger adopts and adapts this new way of doing philosophy in order to address the problems of existence. Second, we will work our way through *Being and Time* systematically, mastering Heidegger’s arguments and considering their implications for traditional philosophical problems in epistemology and ontology. Finally, we will look at the “turn” in Heidegger’s later thought, and consider the importance of his philosophy for understanding language, art, and poetry, as well as his profound critique of modernity, which has influenced thinkers as diverse as Sartre, Marcuse, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, Cavell, Taylor, Agamben, and Žižek. As Richard Rorty once said, “You cannot read most of the important philosophers of recent times without taking Heidegger’s thought into account.” This course is designed for students who want to know why.

Slow Reading Virginia Woolf

Professor Jennifer Green-Lewis
HONR 2053:90 – 3 Credits
CRN: 98653
MW 11:10AM – 12:25PM

Fulfills:

- This course has no GPAC designations

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 98653)

Course cross listed with ENGL 3820.10 (CRN: 97186)

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Course Description: This course offers a chance to read three of Virginia Woolf's most demanding experimental novels in the context of her reflections on art and life. While our primary emphasis will be on close textual analysis of Woolf's prose, we will also focus particularly on three areas:

- Woolf's emphasis on the visual, and some of its sources, including paintings by her sister, Vanessa Bell, and others;
- Woolf's representation of the passage of time and the workings of memory;
- Woolf's conception of the self in relation to others, and her interest in what it means to represent another human being in words or in paint.

Please note that there will be additional readings, including essays, diary entries, and biographical extracts, and frequent writing assignments of varying lengths.

Bio: [Dr. Green-Lewis](#) is a Professor of English. She specializes in nineteenth and early-twentieth century British literature and considers how literary questions may be illuminated and recast through consideration of the visual arts, especially photography.

Introduction to Critical Theory

Professor Alexa Joubin
HONR 2053W:80 – 3 Credits
CRN: 98203
MW 11:10AM – 12:25PM

Fulfills:

- This course has no GPAC designations

Note that UHP students will only receive Arts & Humanities credit if they are enrolled in the HONR 2053 section (CRN: 98203)

Course cross listed with ENGL 2800W.80 (CRN: 91847)

Course Description: Through the lens of social justice, this course examines critical theory in the context of cinematic representations of embodied identities. In particular, we will focus on theories of racialized bodies, performance of sexuality, trans / feminist interventions, and intersectional identities in pop culture. We focus on theories that are most relevant to our contemporary political and cultural life. Students will gain fluency in the conceptual frameworks associated with feminist, critical race, and queer studies. More importantly, students will learn how to apply theoretical tools to global films in the interest of producing scholarship that instigates changes.

Bio: [Dr. Joubin](#) is a Professor of English, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Theatre, International Affairs, and East Asian Languages and Cultures. Her recent books include *Shakespeare and East Asia* and an open-access interactive textbook entitled [Screening Shakespeare](#), and she was awarded GW's 2022 Trachtenberg Prize for Scholarship.

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Contract Courses

Honors Internship

Professor Chosen by Student

HONR 2182:10 - 0 to 4 Credits

Course Description: Students who secure an internship placement can get academic credit by arranging a faculty-supervised project related to their internship. Students must submit an Honors Contract. Please see a Program Manager for further information.

Honors Undergraduate Research

Professor Chosen by Student

HONR 2184:10 - 0 to 4 Credits

Course Description: Students working on original research or on another research project can get academic credit by working closely with a faculty mentor. Students must submit an Honors Contract. Please see a Program Manager for further information.

Honors Research Assistantship

Professor Chosen by Student

HONR 2185:10 - 0 to 4 Credits

Course Description: Students who secure a research assistantship with a faculty member can receive academic credit by completing their assistantship duties. Students must submit an Honors Contract. Please see a Program Manager for further information.

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

Senior Capstone and Thesis

Honors Senior Thesis

Professor Chosen by Student

HONR 4198 - 3 to 4 credits

Course Description: The Honors Senior Thesis is a one or two-semester independent study to complete a senior thesis. This course is for students who are NOT completing a thesis within their department of major. Any student considering the Honors Senior Thesis option should contact an Honors Program Manager. This course is only open to Seniors and requires a completed Honors Contract to register. Please see a Program Manager for further information.

Personality

Professor Joseph Trullinger

HONR 4199:10 – 1 Credit

CRN: 91531

T 4:00PM - 6:00PM

This course will meet on March 5, 19, 26, and April 2

Course Description: The Enneagram has been gaining popularity on social media in recent years--but what is it? Unlike other personality metrics (such as Myers-Briggs) which portray the self as a settled combination of static traits, the Enneagram maintains that what personality is is a nest of defense mechanisms for the ego. In other words, in order to cope with an imperfect childhood (and broken world), each one of us developed a psychological "style" of interpreting experience and interacting with people. We all begin with unhealthy tendencies characteristic of one of the nine "types," and as we get older we can either persist in these patterns of self-sabotage or make increasingly self-aware choices to change them into their healthier versions. This capstone will focus on the Enneagram's history and current popularity, going through each of the nine types, and our discussions will critically evaluate the accuracy and limitations of this model.

Art of Love

Professor William Winstead

HONR 4199:12 – 1 Credit

CRN:91927

W 7:00PM – 9:00PM

This course will meet on January 24, 31 and February 7, 14

Course Description: Love and work have rightly been described as the great defining activities of our lives. Of the two, love is undoubtedly the more difficult and by far the more fascinating. Love gives meaning to our lives, brings ecstasies and sorrows, and entangles itself in thorny questions of power, possession, knowledge, and truth. If love often seems to liberate, it just as often threatens to enslave. What is love? How is it practiced? What are its historical forms? Is human happiness ultimately dependent upon deep and abiding love? Must love involve submission and possession? These

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

questions and others will inform our capstone seminar this year as we discuss a selection of the most illuminating visions of love through the ages. Readings will include Plato, Freud, de Beauvoir, Ovid, Fromm, and bell hooks.

Is Love Really Such a Good Thing?

Professor Mark Ralkowski
HONR 4199:13 – 1 Credit
CRN: 93429
R 6:00PM - 8:00PM

This course will meet on April 4, 11, 18 and 25

Course Description: “I would never want to belong to any club that would have someone like me for a member. That’s the key joke in my adult life, in terms of my relationships with women” (Woody Allen, Annie Hall). We will begin and end this little seminar by asking whether this joke tells us anything important about love. Our discussions will not be aimed at any final answers about the nature of love. How could they be? Our only goal will be to think freely, with the help of great literature and film, about love’s aspirations and desires, its special kind of knowledge, its profound risks, and its unusual powers. We will read one little novel (a light read, but full of insight rooted in psychoanalysis and philosophy), a book on “the female search for love” by bell hooks, and a short book on the Buddhist art of loving by Thich Nhat Hanh. Our experience will be organized around four serious conversations, and there will be a dinner at the end, which we will enjoy while discussing a beautiful movie. Please come prepared to read carefully and talk a lot!

Politics without Politicians?

Professor Theodore Christov
HONR 4199:14 – 1 Credit
CRN: 93431
M 4:00PM - 6:00PM

This course will meet on January 22, 29 and February 5, 12

Course Description: This capstone is designed as an exercise of political imagination: can you imagine what “politics without politicians” would look like? If power corrupts, what would an alternative system look like? Should “politics without politicians” mean rule by disinterested experts, or rule by caring amateurs? If we want all of us, rather than an elite few, to rule, then how can we empower ordinary citizens without loss of competence?

Building on sources that both the professor and students choose to read, we consider possible ways in which ordinary citizens could be in charge under reconfigured political institutions. We do so not to create an unattainable, but “realistic utopia,” as the philosopher John Rawls called it.

Our point of departure is the idea of “legislature by lot” practiced in Classical Athens. We consider possible objections to the rule of non-elected amateurs. Then ask whether this vision of politics without politicians can travel to the governance of institutions like firms, hospitals, and schools, as well as larger, more diverse, and less wealthy countries than the Western examples that inspire it. Finally, we also explore the potential of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in helping us structure and scale democratic deliberation to the larger public and, possibly, the world.