

# Course Descriptions

University Honors Program

Spring 2018

Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought .....	1
Scientific Reasoning and Discovery .....	5
Self and Society .....	7
Arts and Humanities .....	12
Contract Courses .....	15
Senior Capstone and Thesis .....	16

## Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

### Power and Resistance

Professor Craig French  
HONR 1016:10 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 38104  
MW: 12:45-2:00 PM  
Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities

What is power? Under what circumstances can one human being come to have legitimate power over another? When individuals are subject to illegitimate power, what strategies of resistance are open to them, and do these strategies include violence? We will grapple with these questions through a reading of texts in social and political theory drawn from the modern and contemporary periods. Authors are likely to include Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, WEB DuBois, Simone de Beauvoir, Martin Luther King and Ghandi.

### The Rise of the Individual

Professor Ronald Dworkin  
HONR 1016:11 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 33344  
M 3:30-6:00 PM  
Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities

This course traces the development of the “individual” from antiquity to the present day. Students will learn about the “individual” in the same way that the world did: first as a revolutionary concept in philosophy; then as a political and economic reality in the U.S. and Europe. The reaction against the “individual” will then be studied—again, first in philosophy, then in the form of twentieth century mass political movements such as fascism and communism. Thus, the course is not a pure philosophy course, but, instead, is designed to show how ideas have consequences for everyday life. Saint Augustine, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Nietzsche, Marx, and Tocqueville are among the writers to be studied. The various facets of the “individual” will also be examined—for example, the difference between individualism and individuality, and how the concept of the individual stands in relation to other concepts in modernity, such as democracy, equality, and liberty. The course examines post-war trends in American individualism, including the intense conformism of the 1950s, followed by the aggressive individualism of the 1960s and 70s. More recent trends in American individualism, including the quest for community and the rise of expressive individualism, will also be examined. Finally, non-Western perspectives on the individual will be discussed.

### Revolution

Professor Joseph Trullinger  
HONR 1016:12 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 33346  
TR 12:45-2:00 PM  
CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

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.

### Freedom and the Modern Age

Professor William Winstead

HONR 1016:13 - 3 Credits

CRN: 34739

MW 2:20-3:35 PM

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities

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 1016:14 - 3 Credits

CRN: 34822

M 3:30-6:00 PM

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities

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 all his private affairs, for the moderns choosing one's religion is no longer a sacrilege and one is free to enjoy the benefits of representative government. Why do moderns continually clamor for the advantages of rights and liberties, while the ancients never felt the need for individual liberty? This Origins seminar examines the political, moral, modern, and social sources of modern man by showing that liberty is the unique discovery of the moderns. First, liberty as a political question (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke); second, liberty as a moral question (Kant and J.S. Mill); third, liberty as a modern question (Nietzsche and Freud); and fourth, liberty as a social question (Marx, Arendt, and Rawls). 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 part of nature or only convenient conventions, we will question and critique our own understanding and experience of liberty.

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

### Modern Theories of Justice

Professor Eyal Aviv

HONR 1016:15 - 3 Credits

CRN: 33347

TR 3:34-5:00 PM

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities

In the second part of the course we will shift our attention from the "origins" to the "evolution" of modern thought. A special attention will be given to the rise of novel theories of justice in the modern period, which appeared in conjunction with the decline of "tradition" (whether political or religious). Traditional values served in the pre - modern world as moral authorities. But if traditions themselves are questioned, then who determines what is the right thing to do? How can we distinguish the moral from the immoral? We will read writings of religious thinkers, philosophers and novelists who followed the command of Immanuel Kant: Sapere Aude! Dare to know, challenged their societies by asking the question "what is the right thing to do?" And "How do we know that it is right?" Finally, we will continue to raise critical questions, discuss and debate them in class and further develop the academic skills that we began exploring in the first semester.

### Body Politics

Professor Summer Renault-Steele

HONR 1016:16- 3 Credits

CRN: 33348

TR 9:35-10:50 AM

HONR 1016:17- 3 Credits

CRN: 34821

MW 11:10-12:25 PM

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities

Until recently, modern Western social and political thought has been broadly characterized by a dismissal of the human body. Curiously, some of our most revered thinkers and texts have bequeathed a theorization of the body politic, without sufficient attention to the politics of our bodies. In contrast, this proseminar takes the human body as its point of departure. Beginning with seminal texts in social and political thought we first ask: how did the body become evacuated from this tradition? Next, we turn to contemporary Western and non-Western thinkers who reverse this orientation, asking us to consider how human labor, sex, race, and disability are instrumental in theorizing how power works in our body politic.

### The Death of God

Professor Mark Ralkowski

HONR 1016:MV- 3 Credits

CRN: 33343

TR 2:30-3:45 PM

This course will be an in-depth study of the concepts that shaped the modern worldview. We will begin by considering the Christian origins of modern individualism, the scientific revolution and the "disenchantment of the world," and the new politics that gave a central place to human rights and individual liberties. But the bulk of this course will be focused on several *critics of modernity*—e.g., Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Beauvoir, Fanon, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela—who hoped to lay the foundations for a new and better beginning. Our discussions will cover a wide range of "cultural re-evaluations" that have enabled us to think in

## Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

revolutionary ways about the human place in nature, the relationship between high culture and economics, our conscious and unconscious minds, race and gender, colonialism and liberation, and anger and forgiveness. One of the aims of this course is to see how these re-evaluations were made possible by an event that Nietzsche famously called "the death of God." We will conclude with a book by one of the greatest spiritual figures of our own time, the Dalai Lama's *Ethics for the New Millennium*.

## Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

### Revolutions in Astronomy

Professor Bethany Kung  
HONR 1034:10 - 4 Credits  
CRN: 32010  
MW 9:00-10:50 AM

HONR 1034:11 - 4 Credits  
CRN: 33349  
MW 11:00-12:50 PM

Fulfills CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab, Oral Communication; ESIA: Science; GWSB: Science

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.

### Concepts in Genetics - Are We Our Genes?

Professor Jelena Patrnogic  
HONR 1034:MV - 4 Credits  
CRN: 33885  
TR 11:00-12:50 PM

HONR 1034:MV1 - 4 Credits  
CRN: 33884  
TR 8:30-10:20 AM

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab, Oral Communication; ESIA: Science; GWSB: Science

We are now in the "post-genomic" era and the ability to read our genome is allowing us to answer questions about identity, race, and behavior, to name a few. Throughout this course we will explore genetics through the subject's history – from the basic concepts of inheritance, to modern day genetics and the technological advances that are opening new avenues for research. These technological advances are important from the standpoint of biomedical applications such as gene therapy and precision medicine. We will explore the impact of these discoveries and examine the social and ethical implications they have brought on. With the advent of these social and ethical implications, science has become ever-present in the media. Discussions will cover how to evaluate research in order to effectively communicate scientific ideas. Lectures will be accompanied by lab exercises as a way of

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

introducing techniques used in biological research. Students are expected to actively participate in class through debate and discussion, written and oral presentations, and group projects while exploring these topics.

### Human Reproduction

Professor Carly Jordan

HONR 1034:MV3 - 4 Credits

CRN: 35497

MW 1:00-2:50 PM

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab, Oral Communication; ESIA: Science; GWSB: Science

In this course, we will explore the biology of human reproduction, with views at many levels. At the cellular level (How are sperm and egg made? How do chromosomes get sorted?), the organ level (What's happening in the reproductive organs, throughout a month and throughout a lifetime?), the organismal level (How does an embryo become a tiny person? How do changing hormones affect the whole body?), and at the societal level (What misconceptions do we hold about sex and reproduction?). The content of the course is reproduction, but the main focus is skill building- you will develop science literacy and critical thinking skills to make sense of the information you encounter. You will practice communication, in many different forms. And you will conduct a research project to investigate a claim and judge its validity. You will determine the legitimacy of its makers, learn where to find primary sources to support or refute the claim, and create a public information piece to share your understanding with your peers. At the end of the semester, you will be armed with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about your body and your health.

### Basic Biology of Blood

Professor Yolanda Fortenberry

HONR 1034:MVC - 4 Credits

CRN: 35946

MW 9:00-10:50 AM

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab, Oral Communication; ESIA: Science; GWSB: Science

This course will investigate the normal flow of traffic in the body, as well as some of the biological diseases that hinder this flow. We will focus on understanding the basic and fundamental principles of the scientific method as it relates to biological and disease processes of blood. You will apply scientific reasoning and critical thinking in investigating these processes. You will also acquire a basic understanding of how scientific research in the area of hematology is conducted, and how we apply laboratory discoveries towards treating blood-related diseases. Our focus will center upon examining the molecular mechanisms associated with bone marrow and several blood diseases. Specifically, we will study cancer (leukemia and lymphoma), anemia (sickle cell disease), blood coagulation disorders (hemophilia and thrombosis), atherosclerosis, and cholesterol metabolism. Upon the completion of this course you will have gained the knowledge to apply basic biological concepts to larger, complex pathological diseases.

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Self and Society

### Self and Society

#### Honors Macroeconomics

Professor Michael Bradley  
HONR 2044:10 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 30205  
TR 11:10-12:25 PM  
Fulfills: CCAS: Social Sciences; ESIA: ECON 1012 Requirement; SEAS: Social Sciences  
Equivalent Courses: HONR 2048, ECON 1012

Understanding macroeconomic conditions is important for making many political, social, business, and personal decisions. This course provides an introduction to the way the economy works, how it is measured, and how it performs in the short and long terms. Successful completion of a college-level Principles of Microeconomics is a necessary prerequisite for this course

#### The Future of Journalism

Professor Nicole Usher Layser  
HONR 2047:10 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 35876  
M 7:10-9:40 PM  
Fulfills: CCAS: Social Science; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Science

The future of journalism is rich with questions - and this course aims to tackle whether and in what form the news media will exist in the near future. Key questions about news business models, declining trust in journalism and audience fragmentation, pressures on the professional practice, and technological and computational storytelling innovations will be discussed. This is not a skills class, but a class that thinks deeply about the role of journalism in society and how it is evolving to meet the digital reality and the digital future to come. .

#### Nations and Nationalism

Professor Theodore Christov  
HONR 2047:81 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 34851  
M 11:10-1:00 PM  
Fulfills: CCAS: Social Science; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Science  
Equivalent Courses: HIST 2001

"America First," the political slogan of the current US administration, has brought into focus the relationship between the national and the global, the particular and the universal. This seminar explores the sources of our most basic and powerful feelings of political loyalty- our ideas about who we are, who has the right to rule over us, who we are willing to kill and for whom we are willing to die. For much of the past two centuries, such fundamental political loyalties have been shaped by nationalism in much of the world and nationalism has- for good or bad- been implicated in various political phenomena, including violent insurgency, resistance to occupation, the collapse of empires, civil wars, and international conflict.

By asking, what gives rise to continual changes in our conception of 'humankind' and 'nationhood', this seminar examines the history and practice of the idea of 'world citizenship' and its relation to the particular, as expressed in our affinities and loyalties to



# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Self and Society

oneself, groups of belonging, and the 'nation' itself. Particular attention will be given to the historical construction of nationalism and identity formation through human rights, self-determination, statehood, humanitarian intervention, borders, and migration. The ultimate goal is to bring conceptual and historical questions to bear on contemporary debates about our understanding of the increasingly cosmopolitan world we live in.

### Value Conflict in Politics

Professor Ingrid Creppell  
HONR 2047W:80 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 37439  
R 12:45-3:15 PM  
Fulfills: WID; CCAS: Social Science, upper-level Philosophy elective (counts as PHIL 2132); GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Science  
Equivalent Course: PSC 3192W

This course will introduce students to the problem of "value conflict," delve into a number of central political-moral dilemmas, and consider ways to respond to issues of (apparently) irreconcilable values. Isaiah Berlin observed: "The world that we encounter in ordinary experience is one in which we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others." Because politics consists in struggles over needs, power and order, people's conflicting ideas about what is good and right are primary drivers of political existence. The most basic features of living together depend on values and how we manage confrontations over them. The clashing ideas we study will include conceptions of freedom, equality, justice, racial reparations, protecting the environment, human rights, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and immigration. We will read theoretical and polemical texts that argue for contrasting points of view. This is a reading and discussion-based course. A familiarity with political theory is preferred..

### Europe and the World

Professor Michael Sodaro  
HONR 2047:10 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 37440  
R 12:45-3:15 PM  
Fulfills: ESIA: Europe Regional Foundations; Europe/Eurasia (Group A) and international politics concentrations; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Sciences

This course examines the EU's foreign affairs institutions and the relations of the EU and its Member States with the U.S., Russia, Turkey, China, the developing world and other areas. Issues covered include security, immigration, trade, terrorism, climate change and others.

### Improve the World

Professors Fran Buntman  
HONR 2048:12 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 37441  
M 3:30-6:00 PM  
Fulfills: CCAS: Upper-level political science elective; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Sciences

Improve the World: From Knowledge to Impact. This class introduces students to social change from theoretical and disciplinary perspectives in Sociology, Political Science, and Law and Society scholarship. We consider an array of case studies that emphasize

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Self and Society

the role of research and knowledge regarding how social change is achieved and what changes to pursue in our complex societies. Case studies would be micro and macro, liberal and conservative, domestic and international, and in a range of substantive areas. The methods and arenas of change will reflect the lived ways social change occurs, from social media to social movements, from policy change to public protests, from electoral politics to entertainment and the arts, to name some iconic arenas. This course aims to reinforce for students that knowledge can indeed improve the world, both in what to change and how to achieve those changes, and that, as students, as citizens, and as future professionals, class members can be change agents.

### Holocaust Memory

Professor Walter Reich

HONR 2048:80 - 3 Credits

CRN: 37442

W 3:30-6:00 PM

Fulfills: 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; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Sciences

Course Equivalents: JSTD 2002, IAFF 3190

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—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.

### Émigré Intellectuals and the Making of Post-WII Politics

Professor Arie Dubnov

HONR 2048:81 - 3 Credits

CRN: 38151

MW 3:45-5:00 PM

Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Sciences

Course Equivalents: JSTD 2002, HIST 2001

The rise of National Socialism to power prompted an unprecedented large-scale exodus of Central European scholars who have had an enormous impact on American cultural life in particular, and the post-World War II world of politics in general. The primary aim of the course is to introduce students to the key ideas and classical writings of these figures, and to examine their responses to and analysis of the age of extremes. We will begin our journey with the writings of Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm – the founders of the Frankfurt School – and will continue with the analyses of totalitarianism and “political Messianism” offered by Hannah Arendt, Gershom Scholem, Jacob L. Talmon, and Karl Popper, which we will then compare and contrast with the evaluation of liberalism one finds in the writings of Leo Strauss, Isaiah Berlin, and Arthur Koestler.

We shall examine these thinkers’ analyses of enlightenment, nationalism, socialism, and totalitarianism, their life stories, and their direct and indirect role in creating a transatlantic political discourse in postwar years. We will try to ask ourselves to what extend

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Self and Society

were their political and philosophical writings designed as a response to the maladies of the twentieth century, and to what extent did their Jewishness notify their writings, if at all. By doing so we shall be able to contextualize historically the fundamental features of Jewish intellectual activity after 1945.

### Global Governance, Complex Emergencies, and Public Health

Professor Michael Barnett

HONR 2048:82 - 3 Credits

CRN: 36014

T 3:30-6:00 PM

Fulfills: ESIA: global public health, international politics, and Africa (Group A) concentrations; GWSB: Non-Business

Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Sciences

Course Equivalent: PUBH 3199

This course examines the international community's attempt to save the lives of those caught by conflict. Since the 1990s, a growing number of global actors have become involved in what are called complex humanitarian emergencies – situations in which there is a rapid breakdown of security and safety that causes immediate danger to populations and displaced peoples. In order to cope with the growing demands, an increasingly number of states, international organizations, and international non-governmental organizations have intervened. This growth is especially visible in public health, where a variety of services, including emergency, primary, and mental health care.

Yet the growing responsibilities have also raised a variety of questions regarding the relationship between the deliverers and the recipients in complex emergencies. This course focuses on several integrated themes. One is power. Those who intervene have considerable power over the vulnerable. Questions of inequalities between the deliverers and patients have been a source of considerable concern in the area of medical ethics, and these concerns are amplified in complex emergencies where there exist considerable disparities of power and the absence of effective domestic law. Another is the relationship between the global and the local. If there was not a local demand for foreign assistance, then aid agencies would not be rushing to the scene. But one of the pressing concerns is whether and how local health networks participate in these interventions. What, if any role, do they have? Does the external intervention help build or weaken local capacity? Third, what are the mechanisms of accountability? Are interveners constrained by more than conscious or professional regulations from their home country? What happens when the external interveners do more harm than good? Are there any ways for the local population to hold external actors responsible? Fourth, these and other issues related to the power of health interventions are not new. Indeed, they are quite familiar, have been the source of considerable discussion, and have led to proposed reforms. But, most of the time, these reforms make it no further than the outcome reports and executive summaries. Why? What can be done?

We examine these issues both thematically and substantively in several emergencies. At this point we have identified the following possible cases: Ebola in West Africa in 2014; the response to the Haitian earthquake in 2010, including the introduction of cholera by peacekeepers; gender health concerns, and especially trauma caused gender-based violence; the immediate response by the allied forces to the concentration camp survivors after World War Two; and the issue of forced vaccination in refugee camps in various parts of Africa. ?

### Epidemics in American History

Professor Vanessa Gamble

HONR 2048W:80 – 3 Credits

CRN: 37658

MW 12:45-2:00 PM

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Self and Society

Fulfills: WID; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Social Sciences  
Course Equivalents: AMST 4701W, HIST 3301W

This course surveys the history of infectious disease epidemics in the United States from the late nineteenth century to today. It examines the development of the medical and public health responses to epidemics and the social, political, cultural and economic impact of epidemics on American history and culture. We will use primary documents, historical accounts, memoirs, and films to understand the history of epidemic disease.

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Arts and Humanities

### Arts and Humanities

#### Literature & Culture of WWI

Professor Jennifer Green-Lewis

HONR 2053:MV - 3 Credits

CRN: 34740

T 1:00-3:30 PM

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities English literature course after the 19th century; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities

This course examines the difficulty of representing violent and unimagined experience. We will ask: what becomes of poetry, painting, and music, when they seem inadequate to convey modern human experience? Our work will focus on how the culture of the First World War, and the years immediately following it, tried to give new shape to new knowledge. To understand what the concept of “new” might entail, we will begin by studying the sound and rhythms of poetic language that to a pre-war reader seemed appropriate for the representation of war, and that initially provided the primary interpretive reference for many young people entering the war.

#### Children’s Literature

Professor Supriya Goswami

HONR 2054:10 - 3 Credits

CRN: 37443

R 12:45-3:15 AM

Fulfills: CCAS: English literature course between the 18th and 19th centuries *or* after the 19th century; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities

The primary objective of this course is to become familiar with the kinds of literature available for children and young adults. We will focus on nineteenth- and early twentieth century classics central to the development of children’s literature as well as more contemporary works as a means to explore themes and narrative patterns that are particular to children’s texts. We will also explore the ways in which children’s literature may (or may not) have changed or adapted over time to reflect the diverse experiences of its audience. In addition, we will watch cinematic adaptations of popular children’s texts to facilitate a discussion on trends that are currently (re)shaping the focus and objectives of children’s literature. We will read representative works by Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, Rudyard Kipling, Beatrix Potter, J.K. Rowling, Lois Lowry, Maurice Sendak, Louis Sachar, and others.

#### Nietzsche & Political Thought

Professor William Winstead

HONR 2054:82 - 3 Credits

CRN: 34792

T 3:30-6:00 PM

Fulfills: ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Courses: PSC 2991

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

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Arts and Humanities

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.

### Buddhist Meditation Practices

Professor Eyal Aviv

HONR 2054:83 - 3 Credits

CRN: 37660

TR 12:45-2:00 PM

Fulfills: ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Courses: REL 3990

In recent decades meditation had gone from an esoteric practice to a mainstream technique of self--transformation. Bill Clinton, Sting, Katy Perry, Helen Mirren, Jerry Seinfeld and many more sing its praises (sometimes literally). But what is meditation and how does it work? Why would people subject themselves to a strict regiment of "doing nothing" in times where there is so much to do? In this course we will focus on Buddhist meditation. We will begin the course by discussing the meditation movement in the West and the recent boom in scientific studies of meditation. Meditation is often described as a value--free exercise, one that is as secular as Tai--chi or Yoga poses but what is lost when we secularize the practice? To answer this question, we will examine some of the critiques of modern meditation practice. We will then explore together different styles of Buddhist meditation, learn about the religious world from which they emerged and what purpose they serve in their traditional context and highlight the radical demand they put on us. Finally, for fun, we will also practice some of these methods in class.

### Utopianism

Professor Joseph Trullinger

HONR 2054:85 - 3 Credits

CRN: 37662

R 3:30-6:00 PM

Fulfills: ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Courses: PHIL 4198

As students rose up throughout Paris in 1968, a utopian slogan appeared on walls: "Be realistic: demand the impossible!" This seminar on the philosophy of utopianism will go deep into the heart of what informs this paradoxical statement. What if our sense of what counts as realistic is itself unrealistic, that is to say, it ignores what is truly possible? The popular definition of politics as "the art of the possible" begins to edge on metaphysical dimensions when we engage in utopian thinking: what counts as real? What is the status of the ideal that transcends the real? How can idealism be realized, and what does that say about us as "realizers" of the ideal? Whereas some courses treat all utopian visions as dystopian visions in disguise, this course is an experiment in taking utopianism seriously, and exploring the breadth of social possibilities that fit under this approach. From Plato's famous Republic to Thomas More's classic Utopia, from the rejection of utopianism by Freud and Marx to its rehabilitation by Ernst Bloch and Herbert Marcuse of "the Frankfurt School," from queer theory to liberation theology, this course will explore the way that utopia is a world in which many worlds fit.

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Arts and Humanities

### Humor

Professor Mark Ralkowski  
HONR 2054:MV - 3 Credits

CRN: 37661

TR 4:10-5:25 PM

Fulfills: ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Courses: PHIL 3100

This course will focus on philosophical theories of humor, laughter, and comedic amusement. We will draw on ideas from antiquity and modernity, and discuss a broad range of authors—including Hobbes, Kant, Bergson, Beckett, Nietzsche, and Freud—in an effort to develop a philosophical appreciation of what we find funny. There are many different kinds of humor and the essence of humor has been described in various ways. But in the end, we will see how some of the most cherished humor helps us laugh at ourselves, by showing us that we are ridiculous and reminding us that we are not the people we would like to be. If Simon Critchley is right that jokes are like “small anthropological essays,” the point of this course is to learn something about ourselves and our culture by enjoying a lot of great humor, and hopefully laughing a lot along the way. You will also learn about the surprisingly interesting philosophy of humor that dates back to the Greeks and continues to make us think about issues in ethics, aesthetics, logic, existentialism, and more.

### African-American Art History

Professor Bibiana Obler  
HONR 2054W:80 - 3 Credits  
CRN: 37444

W 4:00-6:30 PM

Fulfills: ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities

Equivalents: AH 4158W

This seminar’s full title is “Problems in African-American Art History” because the category of black art in the United States is vexed. To paraphrase Stuart Hall, what is this “African-American” in “African-American art”? Why bracket “African-American” artists from other “American” artists—and from modern and contemporary artists across the globe? Artists have both embraced and rejected the category of “black art.” We will reach back to investigate the origins of this history and forward to its future—or demise. We will draw heavily on local resources including the Howard University Art Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, and National Museum of African American History and Culture.

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Contract Courses

### Contract Courses

#### Honors Internship

Chosen by student  
HONR 2182:10 – 0 to 4 credits  
CRN: 37449

Please see an Honors Advisor for further information.

#### Honors Undergraduate Research

Chosen by student  
HONR 2184:10 – 0 to 4 credits  
CRN: 37450

The Honors Program gives credit for independent study work completed in cooperation with a professor. Each student needs a faculty member to oversee his or her project and assign a grade. The student and the professor must meet at least ten times during the semester.

#### Honors Research Assistantship

Chosen by student  
HONR 2185:10 – 0 to 4 credits  
CRN: 31540

Students pursuing a directed research project in collaboration with a faculty advisor may receive credit for the project with Honors Program approval. Students participating will be actively engaged in the scholarly research of the supervising faculty member.



# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Senior Capstone and Thesis

### Senior Capstone and Thesis

#### Honors Senior Thesis

Chosen by Student  
HONR 4198:10 – 3 to 4 credits  
CRN: 30891

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 doing departmental honors. The students and professor should meet at least ten times during the semester. Any student considering the Honors Senior Thesis option should contact an Honors Advisor. This course is only open to Seniors, and requires a completed Honors Contract to register.

#### Brief History of Humankind

Professor Eyal Aviv  
HONR 4199:10 - 1 Credit  
CRN: 32288  
T 5:00-7:00 PM

This course will meet on February 6, 13, 20, and 27. This capstone experience will focus on mankind as “Homo-Sapiens.” We are accustomed to think of ourselves as “humans,” a category separate from all other living things. But what would we learn if we viewed ourselves as a scholar from another planet would? What if we studied our history as just one species out of many rather than the center of creation? In the four meetings we will read one book by Yuval Noah Harari titled Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind. The book explores challenging yet fascinating questions: One hundred thousand years ago, at least six different species of humans shared the Earth with us. None of them was more important than gorillas, wolves or fireflies. Yet, today Homo Sapiens control the whole planet. What turned us from insignificant animals to the rulers of the planet? Where did all other humans go? Why did we invent gods or money? What makes the modern period so different from the pre-modern one? Does history have a clear trajectory and is there justice in our world? These are some of the central questions we will address together. Sapiens will offer answers that are surprising and tantalizing and will serve as a fertile ground for thought provoking conversations.

#### America and the World

Professor Theo Christov  
HONR 4199:11 - 1 Credit  
CRN: 32749  
T 5:00-7:00 PM

This course will meet on April 3, 10, 17, and 24. Now that you have spent the last four years in the nation's capital, how do you understand the changing role of the United States in the world, and, in particular, your own role as a citizen of this country? "America First," the political slogan of the current US administration, has brought into focus the need to evaluate what role the United States should play in the world today and the urgency to reexamine what our role as citizens should be. Our readings will be drawn from various sources, including speeches, articles, screenings, all of which have been designed to help us understand current events by studying historical arguments, democratic ideals, and the psychological underpinnings of American political behavior. When can a good citizen criticize the government? What types of arguments are "good" ones to have in the public square? How attentive should citizens be to politics? Should America be a cultural mosaic or a melting pot? Should leaders consider citizens of

# Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

## Senior Capstone and Thesis

other countries when making foreign policy? Is it right for the government to "nudge" citizens in the "right" direction when making personal decisions?

### Time

Professor Bethany Kung  
HONR 4199:12 - 1 Credit  
CRN: 33091  
F 1:30-3:30 PM

This course will meet on February 2, 9, 16, and 23. Augustine famously said: "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know." "What then is time?" During our four meetings we will approach this weighty question from a multi-disciplinary perspective. We will ask questions like is it inside our head? Is it real or an illusion? If it is real, is it real only now in the present or do past and future exist as well? Also - what does time mean for our lives when time is seen as commodity that can be treasured or wasted?

### Is Love Really Such a Good Thing?

Professor Mark Ralkowski  
HONR 4199:13 - 1 Credit  
CRN: 37453  
R 7:00-9:00 PM

This course will meet on January 18 and 25 and February 1 and 8. "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 Woody Allen's 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) and a small handful of good shorter pieces, and we will watch one movie. Our experience will be organized around four serious conversations, and there will be a dinner at the end. Please come prepared to read carefully and talk a lot!

### The Art of Love

Professor William Winstead  
HONR 4199:14 - 1 Credit  
CRN: 37453  
W 6:00-8:00 PM

This course will meet on January 24 and 31 and February 7 and 14. "Love" and "work" have rightly been called 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 finds itself entangled in thorny questions of power, possession, knowledge, and truth. If love often seems to liberate, it just as often works to enslave. What is love? And how is it practiced? What are its historic forms? Is happiness ultimately dependent upon deep and abiding love? Must love involve submission and possession? These questions among others will inform our capstone seminar as we discuss several of the most illuminating visions of love through the ages with an eye towards acquiring abiding insight into the difficult, essential, and lifelong "art of love." Our readings will include selections from Plato's Symposium, Ovid's The Art of Love, Fromm's The Art of Loving, and Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex.