

# Course Descriptions

University Honors Program

Spring 2021

Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought.....	2
Scientific Reasoning and Discovery.....	5
Introductory and Special.....	8
Self & Society .....	9
Arts & Humanities .....	15
Contract Courses.....	20
Senior Capstone and Thesis .....	21

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

## Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

### Revolution

Professor Joseph Trullinger

HONR 1016:MV1 - 3 Credits

CRN 15418

MW 11:10AM - 12:25PM

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

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.

### Freedom and the Modern Age

Professor William Winstead

HONR 1016:MV3 - 3 Credits

CRN 17385

MW 02:20PM - 03:35PM

HONR 1016:MV4 - 3 Credits

CRN 17386

MW 03:45PM - 05:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB: Humanities, SEAS: Humanities

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 the state and the weight of tradition, are symptomatic expressions of modernity's radical commitment to freedom. The scope of its emancipatory impulse may be measured not only by the revolutionary politics of the age (the American, French, and Russian revolutions), but also by its 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

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

liberal state, the market economy, and the self-reflective individual. Readings will include Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Mill, Nietzsche, Freud, Marcuse, de Beauvoir, James Baldwin, and the Dalai Lama, among others.

## Power

Professor Theodore Christov  
HONR 1016:MV2 - 3 Credits  
CRN 16868  
MW 08:30AM-09:45AM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB: Humanities, SEAS: Humanities

Course Description: If individual liberty is a central aspiration of modernity, what power can the state claim? What kinds of power have shaped and corrupted modernity's ideals? Taking its premise from Foucault's claim that "power is everywhere," this course examines theories and practices of power and oppression and how they challenge our modern idea of liberty. We begin with conceptual foundations, asking what liberty means, why it might be valuable, and how it relates to the concept of power. 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, racial oppression, and human emancipation. By tracing how power—state power (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau), economic power (Marx/Engels, Weber, Baldwin) psychological power (Freud, Nietzsche, Fanon), bodily power (Wollstonecraft, Beauvoir), conceptual power (Arendt, Foucault)—permeates virtually all kinds of human relations, we will question and critique our own understanding and experience of liberty and consider forms of resistance to power and oppression, from the sixteenth century to the present. The course will help you develop your ability to make and evaluate arguments, both in writing and in conversation, and thereby help you think clearly and critically how power and oppression relate to liberty.

## Theories of Justice

Professor Eyal Aviv  
HONR 1016:MV6 - 3 Credits  
CRN 17388  
TR 10:00AM-11:15AM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB: Humanities, SEAS: Humanities

Course Description: 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 thinkers and writers 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 raising critical questions, discuss and debate them in class and further develop the academic skills that we began exploring in the first semester.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

## The Death of God

Professor Mark Ralkowski  
HONR 1016:MV5 - 3 Credits  
CRN 17387  
TR 02:20PM- 03:35PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB: Humanities, SEAS: Humanities

Course Description: This course will begin by studying several features of the modern worldview: 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 most of this course will be focused on several critics of modernity—e.g., Tolstoy, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, James Baldwin, Simone de Beauvoir, Viktor Frankl, Audre Lorde, the Combahee River Collective, Paulo Freire, and the Dalai Lama—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 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 the aims of an emancipatory education. One of the goals of this course is to see how these cultural re-evaluations were made possible by an event that Nietzsche called “the death of God,” which opened up a space for a new kind of free spirit to critique and reimagine life in our globalized world.

## Knowledge is Power

Professor Christopher Utter  
HONR 1016:MV8 - 3 Credits  
CRN 18340  
MW 12:45PM-2:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB: Humanities, SEAS: Humanities

Course Description: What do cellphones, cars, nuclear weapons, concentration camps, and anthropogenic climate change all have in common? One answer is that they are all technological features of the modern world—but why? Why does the modern world seem to be defined by increasing technological influence on nature and society? We will begin to ask this question more precisely by examining the origin and basis of one of the key premises of modern natural and political science, that knowledge is power, in the writings of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Descartes, and Bacon. We will then read the works of several authors who are less sanguine about the modern project to conquer nature: Rousseau, Marx, and Mary Shelley. Finally, we will ask if the technological way of seeing the world that seems to be a feature of modernity is actually a feature of Western thought in general by reading Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Said, Beauvoir, and Strauss.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

## Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

### Revolutions in Astronomy

Professor Bethany Kung  
HONR 1034:MV - 4 Credits  
CRN 17389  
TR 9:00-10:50 AM

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

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.

### Urban Hydrology

Professor Ranbir Kang  
HONR 1034:MV1 - 4 Credits  
CRN 16869  
TR 1:00PM-2:50PM

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

Course Description: Human impact on the earth surface is one of the most defining aspects of the recent geologic time period. With increasing urbanization, streams in urban areas play a critical role as arteries of urban ecology. While receiving complex discharge of pollutants and sediment from various anthropogenic activities, urban streams also accommodate additional water from impervious areas. As a result, the geo-physical characteristics of urban streams are manifestations of interconnected human-environment systems. This course introduces students to basics of river science such as geomorphology, fluvial geomorphology, drainage system, flood plain, riparian system, processes of erosion, processes of deposition, woody debris, dams, and channel unit types etc. These concepts will then be used to analyze selected urban case studies. While learning the theoretical background of rivers, students will also look at the physical characteristics of urban streams. The course material will offer a new lens to look at waterways in our cities and appreciate their resilience in the present-day context of sustainability.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

## Science as a Human Endeavor

Professor Susan Poland  
HONR 1034:MV2 - 4 Credits  
CRN 16870  
MW 5:10PM-7:00PM

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

Course Description: Science helps us unlock the secrets of the universe, but it is ultimately a human endeavor; the theories we've built about the universe are shaped by the perspectives of the people who study it. While peer review helps ensure high-quality scientific studies are conducted, the history of science is full of stories about: errors that led to major breakthroughs, individuals who fought against the scientific conventions of their time and trailblazed, and communities who were forgotten or taken advantage of in the course of scientific progress. In this course, we'll focus on major theories and studies across all disciplines of science, with a specific focus on the humans that built this knowledge or were impacted by it. We'll primarily focus on scientific work over the past century, such as the development of antibiotics and vaccines, studies of the global climate and climate change, and applications of modern computing techniques in science. Along the way, you'll engage in the processes and practices of modern-day science, such as participating in peer review and reading and writing about scientific research. We'll discuss how theories are built, and identify critical elements of strong scientific studies. You will conduct your own scientific studies and reflect on the ways in which your perspective has shaped the questions you are interested in. Through lab activities and discussion, you will build an understanding of modern science and improve your ability to judge the value of modern scientific studies.

## Global Climate Change Biology

Professor LaTisha Hammond  
HONR 1034:MV4 - 4 Credits  
CRN 11704  
TR 08:30AM - 10:20AM

HONR 1034:MV5 - 4 Credits  
CRN 12628  
TR 11:00AM - 12:50PM

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

Course Description: This course explores the impacts and implications of climate change on biological systems. Throughout the history of Earth, the planet has undergone major changes in climate, with significant impacts on biological systems. However, the current climate change event is unique compared to previous events, resulting in distinctive issues and consequences for life on the planet. We will explore global change by delving into the biological processes that are impacted by the changing climate - this will also include reviewing some of the basic chemical principles that underlie the biological processes being impacted. We will review past biological trends, look more in-

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

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depth at present-day scenarios, and discuss future projections and consequences for life on the planet. The course will also include discussion of the scientific basis of global change impacts on humans, society, environmental issues, sustainability, and policy discussions and measures. Lab exercises will introduce biological techniques for studying various aspects of global change biology. This course is designed to increase student scientific literacy. Students will be expected to take an active role in the class, where we will explore these topics through lecture, discussion, debate, experimentation, data analysis, writing, and group projects.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

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## Introductory and Special

### Honors Macroeconomics

Professor Michael Bradley

HONR 2044:10 - 3 Credits

CRN: 10185

TR 11:10-12:25 PM

Fulfills: CCAS: Social Sciences; SEAS: Social Sciences

Equivalent Courses: HONR 2047, ECON 1012

This course investigates important macroeconomic issues like unemployment, inflation, exchange rates, and economic growth. It analyzes the basic forces driving macroeconomic performance and financial markets.

Course prerequisites: ECON 10



# Honors Program

## Self & Society

### Future Crimes

Professor Maria Restrepo  
HONR 2047:10 - 3 Credits  
CRN 15419  
Time: W 12:45PM-03:15PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, CCAS: Counts as SOC 2189 for Sociology and Criminal Justice programs, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

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. Some of the questions that the course will explore and refine include: 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? Has the Internet revolution already created the path for some irreversible crimes?

### Politics and Culture

Professor Harvey Feigenbaum  
HONR 2047W:10 - 3 Credits  
CRN 17941  
Time: T 03:30PM-06:00PM

Fulfills: WID requirement, CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, CCAS: Political Science Group A, upper-level Comparative Politics; or an upper-level Political Science major elective, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

Course Description: This is a course that examines a number of the ways that issues of culture and politics intersect. While the subject is vast, and could hardly be exhausted by a single course, the purpose of this seminar is to give the student an idea as to some of the ways in which culture affects politics and in which politics affects culture. The purpose is also to give the instructor some idea of how students see the interaction of politics and culture. As always in a proseminar, there will be no lectures. Rather, we will discuss the readings assigned each week. Students should have done all the assigned readings for the week before each class begins.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

## Gender, Race, and Science

Professor LaTisha Hammond  
HONR 2047:13 - 3 Credits  
CRN 18164  
Time: MW 02:20PM-03:35PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, Milken: Public Health Major elective, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

Course Description: This course focuses on the intersection of gender, race, and science. What are gender and race, from a scientific perspective? What role has science played, and what role does it continue to play, in the construction of gender and race? Conversely, what roles do race and gender play in science, with regards to scientific research, exploration, and human health? Moving a step further, how does this intersection impact and inform the communication of science in science fiction, media, and popular discourse? We will explore these and other related questions from a variety of perspectives, including scientific primary sources and research studies, science fiction literature, and news and popular media. The goal is to challenge students to critically evaluate the relationships between gender, race, and science to garner a better understanding of current issues related to the intersection of these aspects of society.

## Holocaust Memory

Professor Walter Reich  
HONR 2047:81 - 3 Credits  
CRN 17393  
W 3:30-6:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, CCAS: Upper-level History European Regional requirement, ESIA: Comparative, Political, Economic, Social Systems, Conflict Resolution, Contemporary Cultures and Societies, Europe and Eurasia, International Politics, and Security Policy concentrations, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Sciences

Equivalent Courses: JSTD 2002, IAFF 3190

Course Description: The sources, construction, development, nature, uses and misuses of the memory, or public consciousness, of the Holocaust. How do 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 use, misuse, abuse, minimize, deny or attack the Holocaust for political, diplomatic, strategic, ideological, anti-Semitic or other purposes. The effectiveness—or lack of effectiveness—of Holocaust memory in teaching the Holocaust’s contemporary “lessons,” especially the vow of

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

“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. The psychological, national and diplomatic role of Holocaust memory in Israeli consciousness and behavior. The effects on Holocaust memory of the passage of time since the event. This course uses a cross-disciplinary approach, drawing on the fields of politics, society, ethics, literature, history, cinema, individual testimony, group psychology, social psychology, individual psychology and international affairs.

## Empires from Rome to Washington

Professor Theodore Christov

HONR 2047:82 - 3 Credits

CRN 18324

Time: M 11:00AM-12:50PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, CCAS: Pre-1750 History elective; Europe History elective; United States history elective; Asia, Africa, Middle East, and Latin America History elective, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

Equivalent Course: HIST 2001

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’.

## Epidemics in American History

Professor Vanessa Northington Gamble

HONR 2047W:80 - 3 Credits

CRN 17395

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

MW 12:45PM-02:00PM

Fulfills: WID requirement, CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Sciences

Equivalent Courses: AMST 4107W, HIST 3301W

Course Description: This course surveys the history of 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.

## Humanitarian Governance

Professor Michael Barnett

HONR 2047: 11 - 3 Credits

CRN 17390

Time: W 03:30PM-06:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, CCAS: Political Science Major Group C (international politics, law, international organizations) requirement, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

Course Description: This class is going to give you the opportunity to work with several southern humanitarian NGOs on a project that they see as critical to future reforms of the humanitarianism architecture. This is more of a practicum than the traditional sort of honors seminar.

Humanitarianism concerns the attempt to relieve the suffering of distant strangers. And when those in the West think of humanitarianism, they tend to think of Western-based states, international and nongovernmental organizations, and others from the West attempting to save the lives of vulnerable populations in the global South. But is this image correct, is it changing, should it change? This image is largely correct if we use dollars and power to measure who engages in humanitarianism. For instance, only 1-2% of all humanitarian dollars go directly to global Southern agencies. But if we look at who actually does the work humanitarian relief, these are usually local communities.

There have been various reform efforts to shift the resources and authority from the West to the global South, and the most recent is called localization. Like previous efforts, there has been more rhetorical support than practical effects by the West.

We will be working with Community World Service Asia (in Pakistan) and several other southern NGOs to prepare the following report. It will include a "report card" on whether northern actors have made good on the promises they pledged in 2016 at the World Humanitarian Summit; a survey of select southern NGOs regarding what aspects of localization is most important to them; and, a survey of select Southern NGOs regarding their assessment of the obstacles to shifting resources and authority from the global North to the global South.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

The first part of the course will dive into how this unequal global governance architecture emerged and why it matters for saving lives. We will then dive into the construction of the report card and the surveys. The last part of the course will be preparing the report.

## Patriotism

Professor Harris Mylonas

HONR 2047:12 - 3 Credits

CRN 17391

Time: W 12:45PM-03:15PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, CCAS: Political Science Group E course, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

Course Description: This is a course on the genealogy of the term "Patriotism," based on a close reading of texts ranging from ancient texts such as Sophocles' "Antigone," to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "The Government of Poland," all the way to Hannah Arendt's "The Origins of Totalitarianism". The idea is to discuss the ancient and modern manifestations of "Patriotism," analytically distinguish it from "Nationalism," and engage contemporary debates on the tensions between cosmopolitanism and nationalism.

## Personal Finance for the Greater Good

Professor Annamaria Lusardi

HONR 2047:14 - 3 Credits

CRN 18165

Time: T 12:45PM-3:15PM

HONR 2047:15 - 3 Credits

CRN 18564

Time: W 3:30PM-6:00PM

Fulfills:

CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

Course Description: This course provides the knowledge and tools necessary to evaluate the wide range of financial decisions individuals make throughout their lifetime. Concepts such as interest compounding and the time value of money, the relationship between risk and return, and the benefits of risk diversification will be introduced to provide the context in which individuals make financial decisions. Applications of the personal finance concepts will include, but are not limited to, managing credit cards, student loans, financial apps, achieving and keeping a high credit score, valuing business projects, and planning for the future. The course will cover new topics such as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria for investing, the role of fintech, and how to build financial resilience during a pandemic. Importantly, the course will cover not only how personal finance decisions impact the wellbeing and happiness of individuals, but also how they impact the wellbeing of society and how access to personal finance knowledge can transform individuals and economies. Applications of personal finance concepts can be used for the greater good.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

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## Political Economy of China, India, and Beyond

Professor Alasdair Bowie

HONR 2047:80 - 3 Credits

CRN 17392

Time: T 05:10PM-07:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Social Sciences, CCAS: Political Science Group A course, GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Social Science

Equivalent Courses: PSC 6336, IAFF 6318

**\*\*This is a graduate level course\*\***

Course Description: This course involves comparative analysis of the relationship between economic interests and politics in East, South and Southeast Asia. The emphasis is on industrializing economies and their integration into global trade and investment networks.

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

## Arts & Humanities

### History of Neuroscience

Professor Leo Chalupa  
HONR 2053:10 - 3 Credits  
CRN 17396  
TR 01:30PM-02:50PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

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.

### Narratives of Slavery and Freedom

Professor Carolyn Arena  
HONR 2053:11 - 3 Credits  
CRN 18325  
F 01:00PM-03:30PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, CCAS: English major/minor upper-level elective, CCAS: History major/minor elective, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

Course Description: This seminar will examine histories of the institution of slavery, abolition, and the lives of enslaved and emancipated people written in Europe, the Caribbean, and North America from the 16th-19th centuries. Whether autobiographies, plays, fictional works, or historical documents, they reveal important truths about the developments of racism and the lived experience of bondage that faced indigenous peoples of America and Africa. We will also focus on the genre of "slave narratives" written by formerly enslaved Black people, and discuss the political power and historical use of these texts during the age of abolition. The first half of the class will address the origins of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the second half of the class on the long process of emancipation from slavery. We will see both the creation and dismantling of slavery and racial ideology as long and ongoing processes.

### Reimagining the Roman World

Professor Rachel Pollack  
HONR 2053:84 - 3 Credits  
CRN 17403

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

TR 03:45PM-05:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Course: CAH 3105

**Course Description:** This course studies the art and architecture of the Roman Empire through the lens of modern archaeology, art historiography, and classical literary sources. Rome's foundational myth and history, recorded by such writers as Virgil, Ovid, Plutarch, Livy, Tacitus, and Suetonius, have established the framework from which we interpret the Roman World. The visual remains of the Roman Empire further illuminate these sources and leave us pondering the reasons why the Romans have left a permanent impression on western art and civilization. Furthermore, we will explore how our ever-changing perception of Roman antiquity has altered our interpretation of the Romans through the analysis of archaeological finds as well as artists from the early modern era who appropriated Roman History.

## Humor

Professor Mark Ralkowski

HONR 2053:85 - 3 Credits

CRN 18473

W 03:30PM-06:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Course: PHIL 3100

**Course Description:** 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, Schopenhauer, Bergson, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Camus, Confucius, Zhuangzi, Chan Buddhist authors, and Freud—in an effort to develop a philosophical appreciation of what we find funny, how humor relates to the good life, the ethics and politics of humor, the relationship between humor and identity, and much more. 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 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 antiquity and continues to make us think about issues in ethics, aesthetics, logic, existentialism, race, gender, and politics.

## Nietzsche and Political Thought

Professor William Winstead

HONR 2053:81 - 3 Credits

CRN 17398

T 03:30PM-06:00PM



# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, CCAS: Philosophy major 2000-level elective; CCAS: Political Science Group E requirement; ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Course: PSC 2991

Course Description: 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 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

Professor Eyal Aviv  
HONR 2053:80 - 3 Credits  
CRN 17397  
TR 03:45PM-05:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Courses: REL 3900, PHIL 3100

Course Description: In recent decades meditation has 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 regimen 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 modern meditation texts. After considering the modern presentation of meditation for Western audiences, we will explore how meditation evolved in early Buddhism. We will then extend our study to include different styles of Buddhist meditations. We will 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 together.

## Utopianism

Professor Joseph Trullinger  
HONR 2053:82 - 3 Credits

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

CRN 17402

TR 03:45PM-05:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Course: PHIL 3100

Course Description: 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 Afrofuturism and contemporary feminist utopias, 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.

## War and Visual Culture

Professor Bibiana Obler

HONR 2053:83 - 3 Credits

CRN 17400

M 09:30AM-12:00PM

Fulfills: CCAS: GPAC Humanities, ESIA: Humanities, GWSB Humanities, Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective, SEAS: Humanities

Equivalent Course: AH 4150

Course Description: This seminar will consider the history of modern art as it relates to the history of modern warfare. How do artists tackle the representation of the horrors of war? Is it possible or even ethical to make art out of such suffering? Can art be an effective weapon in and of itself? Can it be a productive way to escape, critique, document, or remember war?

We will trace how artists and other practitioners of visual culture have responded to and documented war since early photojournalists started bringing their cameras to the battlefields of the Crimean and Civil War. We will look at how artists and designers have both resisted and supported their governments during World War I and II, the Spanish Civil War, the Vietnam War, and the current wars in the Middle East. We will examine various attempts to work through the

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

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trauma of war through monuments and memorials, including several on the National Mall. Students will have the opportunity to pursue substantial research on a topic of their choosing.

# Honors Program

## 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 2021 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 doing departmental honors. 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. Please see an Honors Advisor for further information.

### Mindfulness

Professor Eyal Aviv  
HONR 4199:10 - 1 Credit  
CRN 11900  
T 01:00PM-03:00PM

Course Description: This course will meet on February 2, 9, 16, and 23. Mindfulness is everywhere these days. Politicians, businesspeople, mental health professionals, and more advocate its virtues. It is said to help fight anxiety and depression, make us more creative, and productive, among other wonders. But what is mindfulness? The word is the translation of the Pāli term sati. In recent decades it was appropriated for economic and mental health purposes, but it has a long and complicated history in Buddhist thought and practice. In our capstone experience, we will read one of the most beloved books on the concept and how to put it into practice, "The Miracle of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat Hanh." We will then read Sarah Shaw's new book "Mindfulness: Where It Comes From and What It Means." Shaw's book will give us a well-rounded historical and doctrinal context to understand the nuanced evolution of the term and how it became secularized. A discussion of mindfulness would not be complete without applying it to our lives. Throughout the four weeks, we will try some of these transformative exercises and discuss the results in class.

### America and the World

Professor Theodore Christov  
HONR 4199:11 - 1 Credit  
CRN 12228  
T 04:30PM-06:30PM

Course Description: This course will meet on April 6, 13, 20, 27. 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? The vastly changing political climate recently 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 ought to be. Our readings (primarily to be suggested by students) will seek to be drawn from various sources, including speeches, articles, screenings, all of which designed to help us understand current events. When can a good citizen criticize the government? What types of arguments are "good" ones to have in the public square? How attentive

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

should citizens be to politics? Should America be a cultural mosaic or a melting pot? Should leaders consider citizens of other countries when making foreign policy? Is it right for the government to "nudge" citizens in the "right" direction when making personal decisions? The course is envisioned to allow students to take a leading role in assigning the readings and facilitating the discussions.

## The Power of Gentleness

Professor Joseph Trullinger

HONR 4199:12 - 1 Credit

CRN 12459

R 01:00PM-02:50PM

Course Description: This course will meet on February 4, 11, 18, 25. Questions of power—who has it, who doesn't, why, and what we can do about that—predominantly in the Discourse™. Comparatively rarely, however, do we question what exactly power is; we take ourselves to know what it supposedly isn't, and gentleness would come very late in a list of commonsensical attributes of a powerful person. In this course, however, we will explore the deficiency of this common conception, by exploring how and why gentleness is in actual fact quite powerful—provided we revise current conceptions of power along the lines of forceful self-assertion or even brutality. From Taoist conceptions of wu-wei (non-action) to feminist efforts to distinguish gentleness from self-denying sentimentality, we will gain greater perspective on how we can exist differently in an indifferent world.

## Is Love Really Such a Good Thing?

Professor Mark Ralkowski

HONR 4199:13 - 1 Credit

CRN 14610

R 06:00PM-08:00PM

Course Description: This course will meet on April 1, 8, 15, 22. "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

# Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

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CRN 14612

W 07:00PM-09:00PM

Course Description: This course will meet on February 3, 10, 17, 24. “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 historic forms? Is human happiness ultimately dependent upon deep and abiding love? Must love involve submission and possession? These questions and others will inform our capstone seminar this year as we discuss several of the most illuminating visions of love through the ages with an eye towards acquiring deep 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*.