

Course Descriptions

University Honors Program

Spring 2015

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Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

The Death of God

Mark Ralkowski

HONR 1016:10 – 3 credits

TR 2:20-3:35 PM

CRN: 45184

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

This section of Origins will be an in-depth study of the concepts that shaped the modern worldview. We will consider the Christian origins of modern individualism, the scientific revolution and the “disenchantment of the world,” the new politics that gave a central place to human rights and individual liberties, and the critics of modernity—e.g., Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger—who hoped to lay the foundations for a new and better beginning.

The Rise of the Individual

Ronald Dworkin

HONR 1016:11 – 3 credits

T 3:30-6:00 PM

CRN: 45185

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities; ESIA: 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. By spending the semester in that zone where universal ideas meet up against the limits of culture, students will gain insight into some of the current debates in our own culture, and why those debates are not so easily resolved.

Intellectual Sextants

Rebecca Carr

HONR 1016:12 – 3 credits

TR 9:35-10:50 AM

CRN: 45186

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

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Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

Ideas are instruments or tools by which we navigate reality and by which we change reality. Ideas are provisional; when useful, we keep them around, but when ineffective or inefficient, we discard them. Ideas don't have lives of their own; they originate with human beings and are dependent on human beings. A notion of responsibility follows from this view of ideas; human beings must pay attention to those ideas by which one navigates and must continually assess the consequences that follow from these ideas.

Liberty

Theodore Christov

HONR 1016:13 – 3 credits

M 12:45-3:15 PM

CRN: 45188

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities; ESIA: 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, Engels, 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.

Revolution

Joseph Trullinger

HONR 1016:14 – 3 credits

TR 12:45-2:00 PM

CRN: 45189

Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities; ESIA: 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. The word revolution carries multiple meanings. First, the word can mean a radical change that installs a fundamentally better way of living or seeing the world. In this sense, revolution is a salutary overhaul of what is defunct or oppressive. However, revolution can also imply a catastrophe, a disintegration of order that throws the world out of its proper balance, leaving individuals helpless and fragmented. Finally, revolution can also mean "to complete a turn," to come back to where one started. Would we be transformed for having gone through this cycle? Can we—as members of Western civilization, broadly understood—ever come back home again, so to speak? Are the traditional ways truly "home," or are they only home for a certain group of people? Where do we go now, if not there? We will begin with a consideration of the Christian roots of modernity, which lay the foundations for modern individualism through its emphasis on inner, spiritual freedom. We will then turn to the scientific revolution and the new form of rationality that it establishes, making humanity the sovereign master of the earth. These two forms of conscientious reflection in turn laid the groundwork for new theories of politics, which place popular sovereignty and individual liberty at the center of political life. In the final section of our course, we will consider thinkers who attempt to clarify the contradictions of modern rationalism and realize the still unrealized ideals of the modern age.

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Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

Theories of Justice

Eyal Aviv
HONR 1016:MV – 3 credits
TR 1:00-2:15 PM
CRN: 45190
Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities; ESIA: 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 theologians, philosophers 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 to raise critical questions, discuss and debate them in class and further develop the academic skills that we began exploring in the first semester.

Intellectual Sextants

Rebecca Carr
HONR 1016:MV1 – 3 credits
MW 4:10-5:25 PM
CRN: 45191
Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities

Ideas are instruments or tools by which we navigate reality and by which we change reality. Ideas are provisional; when useful, we keep them around, but when ineffective or inefficient, we discard them. Ideas don't have lives of their own; they originate with human beings and are dependent on human beings. A notion of responsibility follows from this view of ideas; human beings must pay attention to those ideas by which one navigates and must continually assess the consequences that follow from these ideas.

Power

Helen McManus
HONR 1016:MV2 – 3 credits
MW 10:00-11:15 AM
CRN: 45192
Fulfills: CCAS: Humanities; SEAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities

If individual liberty is a central aspiration of modernity, what power can the state claim? What kinds of power have informed, sustained, and corrupted modernity's ideals? This Origins seminar will explore ideas of power from early Christianity to the present. Our readings will include the theories of power that upheld the Holy Roman Empire and absolute monarchies, the accounts of popular sovereignty that legitimated the revolutions of the modern age, and responses to twentieth-century totalitarianisms. We will ask when and why we might want to distinguish between power, rule, sovereignty, and authority. We will consider questions of power not only in the context of the state and international affairs, but also in the family, the workplace, and other aspects of our everyday lives. In our discussions, we will reflect on the adequacy of our theoretical resources to address current political problems. When and in what terms should we raise questions of power today?

Freedom and the Modern Age

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Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought

Lee Okster

HONR 1016:MV3 – 3 credits

MW 8:30-9:45 AM

CRN: 45193

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

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 or convention, are symptomatic expressions of modernity's radical commitment to freedom. The breathtaking scope of its emancipating impulse appears not only in the revolutionary politics of the age (e.g., the American, French, and Russian revolutions, as well as the Arab uprisings) but also in its defense of the unrestrained expression in the aesthetic sphere. Our readings this semester will examine the intellectual revolutions that established freedom as the central value of the modern age and institutionalized it in the liberal state, the market economy, and the self-reflective individual. We will begin with a consideration of the Christian roots of Western modernity, which laid the seeds for modern individualism through its emphasis on inner, spiritual freedom. We will follow this through a progression of thinking that laid the groundwork for new theories of politics, which place popular sovereignty and individual liberty at the center of political life. In the final section of the course, we will consider thinkers who attempt to clarify the contradictions of modern rationalism, individualism, and our current mechanistic and technological emphases, all of which reveal the still unrealized ideals of the modern age.

Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

Revolutions in Astronomy

Bethany Kung

HONR 1034:10 – 4 credits

MW 9:00-10:50 AM

CRN: 42635

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab; GWSB: Science; SEAS: Elective; ESIA: 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.

Revolutions in Astronomy

Bethany Kung

HONR 1034:11 – 4 credits

MW 11:00-12:50 PM

CRN: 45194

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab; GWSB: Science; SEAS: Elective; ESIA: 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.

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Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

Your Place in Nature

Bernard Wood

HONR 1034:2 – 4 credits

TR 9:35-10:50 AM

CRN: 42462

Lab: HONR 1034:30, W 5:10-7:00 PM, CRN: 46998

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab; GWSB: Science; SEAS: Elective; ESIA: Science

The name of this course is taken from the title of a book published in London in 1863. It was called 'Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature' and its author was Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895). It was one of two books about human origins published in 1863 (Charles Lyell's 'Antiquity of Man' was the other) and because it is more wide-ranging than the latter, Huxley's book qualifies as the first scientific account of human origins. The course will compare and contrast what was known about 'Man's Place in Nature' at the time Huxley wrote 'Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature' with what we think we know now. It will cover the history of ideas about our relationship with the rest of the natural world, how we work out how animals are related, the fossil record for human evolution and the growth of the sciences involved in the interpretation of that fossil record. It will explore the social and intellectual context of relevant discoveries as well as the biographies of the people who made major contributions to working out the relationships among the great apes and to the recovery and interpretation of the fossil evidence for human evolution.

Capital Climate Initiative

Houston Miller

HONR 1034:13 – 4 credits

TR 9:35-10:50 AM

CRN: 43618

Lab: HONR 1034:31, T 11:10 AM- 1:00 PM, CRN 45734

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab; GWSB: Science; SEAS: Elective; ESIA: Science

This course will be a continuation of an effort begun in Fall 2011 through the UHP to bring climate change awareness to the GW campus by deploying greenhouse gas sensors on the GW campuses and displaying this information visually at the sensors and on the internet. By the end of the academic year students will develop hands-on experience with optical sensor technology, microcontrollers, and programming. The first semester is being spent following a more traditional laboratory course approach to understanding how the atmosphere works, what greenhouse gases are, the role of carbon in the global energy mix, and how climate models work. The second semester will focus more on building and deploying sensors, and "messaging" climate science and data to our constituents.

Marine Biology

LaTisha Hammond

HONR 1034:MV – 4 credits

TR 11:00- 12:50 PM

CRN: 47000

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab; GWSB: Science; SEAS: Elective; ESIA: Science

The ocean covers approximately 71% of the Earth's surface. In the media we hear about this vast ocean in stories and anecdotes about fish, sharks, coral reefs, and the occasional giant squid. However, when it comes to decisions about the oceanic environment

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Scientific Reasoning and Discovery

and it's many other inhabitants, how do we make informed decisions regarding issues such as wild-caught vs. farmed fish, overfishing, pollution, and biodiversity without an understanding of the various marine habitats and organisms. This course is an introduction to the marine environment and the biological diversity within, from the coast to the deep sea. Topics include the physical characteristics of the ocean, marine habitat types and structure, organism physiology, zoology, and ecology. We will also delve into human interactions with the marine environment, marine biology in popular media, environmental issues, sustainability, and policy discussions around conservation. Labs will introduce techniques for studying related topics. Additionally, 1-2 possible field trips, including the local aquarium, will help further our studies. 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, research, and group projects.

Global Climate Change Biology

LaTisha Hammond

HONR 1034:MV1 – 4 credits

TR 8:30- 10:20 AM

CRN: 46999

Fulfills: CCAS: Natural/Physical Science with Lab; GWSB: Science; SEAS: Elective; ESIA: Science

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-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 human society, environmental issues, 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.

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Introductory and Special

Introductory and Special

Honors Macroeconomics

Michael Bradley

HONR 2044:10 – 3 credits

TR 11:10- 12:25 PM

CRN: 40247

Fulfills: CCAS: Social Sciences; ESIA: ECON 1012 requirement; HONR 2048

HONR 2044 satisfies the same curriculum requirements ECON 1012 and serves as a prerequisite for upper-level economics courses.

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Self and Society

Self and Society

Introduction to Political Communications

Christine Clapp

HONR 2047:10 – 3 credits

TR 11:10- 12:25 PM

CRN: 45196

Fulfills: CCAS: Social Sciences; ESIA: Elective; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective; GPAC Oral Communication

Equivalent Courses: COMM 1040

Study and practice of the basic techniques of public speaking used to inform, to entertain, and to persuade audiences. Emphasis on the speech-building process: audience analysis, research, development, composition, organization, style, delivery, and criticism.

Essential Concepts in Politics

Ingrid Creppell

HONR 2047:12 – 3 credits

T 12:45- 3:15 PM

CRN: 47002

CCAS: Social Sciences; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective

In this course we examine three fundamental concepts of modern political life: the state, rights, and the public (sphere/opinion). These ideas developed out of a long history and continue to inform political argument and action today. We study their origins and transformations through key works of the following authors (among others): Hobbes, Weber, Geertz, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Paine, Jefferson, Tocqueville, Dewey, Habermas, and Arendt. The aim is to understand basic conceptual building blocks of the political world, the central debates surrounding them, and their legacy into the present. We also consider how the ideas are being reshaped in the 21st century as the world becomes more globalized. Some questions to be explored: when did the modern state emerge on the world stage? What powers does it have? What moral status can it claim? What are natural rights? On what is this idea based? What is the difference between individual rights and human rights? Are rights relative to different political-cultural traditions? What do we mean when we talk about the public? When did a public sphere take shape? How are public opinion and democracy connected? Can we now conceive of a global public sphere?

Hollywood and Politics

Patricia Phalen

HONR 2047:13 – 3 credits

W 3:30- 6:00 PM

CRN: 47003

CCAS: Social Sciences; GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective

If you've ever seen a movie in a theater, watched a television series, followed (or worked on) a political campaign or voted, this just might be the seminar for you! In Hollywood & Politics you'll learn how West and East Coast elite interact, clash, challenge and

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Self and Society

conspire to affect what American citizens see on the screen. We'll discuss everything from personal influence to organized campaigns; we'll study the ways popular culture can affect political awareness as well as the ways politics might affect popular culture. "Hollywood" includes film, television and music recording, and "Politics" refers to local, state or national political activity as well as the internal politics of the media industry. We'll talk about Hollywood institutions and the societal issues surrounding media and, of course, we'll talk about the history of events and relationships that have defined the Hollywood-D.C. connection.

Ethics in World Politics

Martha Finnemore

HONR 2047:80 – 3 credits

T 12:45- 3:15 PM

CRN: 47623

Fulfills: CCAS: Upper-level Political Science elective; ESIA: Advanced Fundamental for International/Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Economic & Social Systems Concentration, Conflict Resolution Concentration, International Politics Concentration

Equivalent Courses: PSC 2994

This seminar will explore whether and how different ethical claims shape global politics. One long-standing school of thought argues that ethical concerns do not and should not apply in the international realm. Ethics are a luxury, this argument holds, one that we cannot afford in a dangerous world. Critics of this view are many, but they disagree among themselves about what actions, exactly, are ethical and how best to pursue ethically desirable goals. We will consider contrasting arguments about these issues and apply them to real-world political problems including war, genocide, poverty, and human rights.

Difficult and Obscure Texts

David Grier

HONR 2048:10 – 3 credits

T 3:30- 6:00 PM

CRN: 47006

Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective

This course is as old as the Honors Program itself. We read texts, argue about them for 3 hours a week and write a few essays. More to the point, we attempt to place these texts in intellectual and social context. Readings vary depending on the interest of the class, the vagaries of the in structure and the events of the semester. Should Pervez Musharrif again address the campus, you can be sure we will spend a week taking his speech apart. A video introduction to the class can be found at:

<http://dando.dagrier.net/?m=201310>

Justice and the Legal System II

Jill Kasle

HONR 2048:11 – 3 credits

MW 12:45- 2:00 PM

CRN: 47006

Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective

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This course analyzes and explains the American legal system, including institutions (the Supreme Court), documents (the Constitution), and processes (how a court decides a case). Justice and the Legal System is a law school course in constitutional law that has been adapted for students in the Honors Program; thus, the course employs modified law school teaching methods, exams, and grading standards. The primary goal of the course is to help students continue to develop their intellectual sophistication. Specifically, the course emphasizes the development of analytic skills and the ability to think, write, and speak clearly and concisely.

Holocaust and Memory

Walter Reich
HONR 2048:80 – 3 credits
T 5:10- 7:00 PM
CRN: 47625
Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective
Equivalent Courses: IAFF 3190

The development, representation, uses and misuses of Holocaust memory. The writings and testimonies of victims and survivors; the challenge of memorializing and writing about the Holocaust; its implications for ongoing genocides and crimes against humanity; and its increasing vulnerability to intellectual, cultural, historical and political misuse.

Environmental History Since 1750

Christopher Klemek
HONR 2048:12 – 3 credits
W 11:00- 12:50 PM
CRN: 43595
GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective

How has the West's 300-year engagement with earth's ecological systems affected ideas, politics, and nature itself? Start with a philosophical consideration of Enlightenment thought regarding humans and their environment. Then note the surprisingly central role of climate change during the Age of Revolutions. Discover relationships between nature, science, and empire--from Darwin's pacific islands to French North Africa to our own Chesapeake region--including the improbable roots of global environmentalism. Industrialization, with its revolutionary effects on commodification of resources, also brought unprecedented urbanization to humans...and other species: You may be surprised how horses and even trees became "living machines" in industrial cities! Explore class conflict, the "tragedy of the commons," and the conservationist foundations of the modern nation-state: Why do game wardens carry guns and park rangers dress like soldiers? Follow the twisting route of ecological restoration and other attempts at "earth repair": Victorians invented the concept of pollution after centuries assuming smoke sanitized the air. Consider tropical ecological degradation as "externalities" accompanying the proliferation of cars, suburbs, and other northern consumption patterns. Trace the rise of eco-politics--including eco-terrorism--in the US and Europe. Finally, compare environmentalists from Thoreau to Gandhi, who've asked: "How much should a person consume?"

Africa & African Americans

Nemata Blyden
HONR 2048:MV1 – 3 credits
T 1:00- 3:30 PM

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Self and Society

CRN: 47004

Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business Elective/Unrestricted Elective

In a 1925 poem, the African American poet Countee Cullen posed a question long asked by men and women of African descent. "What is Africa to me?" Cullen's poem *Heritage* attempts to answer the question and illustrates some of the ambiguities and complexities in the relationship between African Americans and Africa. The Africa in Cullen's reverie is clearly an imagined one. Cullen's question had been asked by African men and women from the moment they were forcibly enslaved, and continues to be asked by African Americans today. How they answered this question has changed in the intervening centuries, but Africa has been ever present in the consciousness of African America. This course will examine the links between African-Americans and Africa, exploring themes such as African influences on African-American life and culture, slavery and slave culture, emigration and back to Africa movements, nationalism, missionary movements, African-American perspectives and perceptions of Africa, and African-American contributions to African history. Emphasis will be on how African-Americans have historically viewed and associated themselves with Africa, both as their place of origin and as a prospective homeland. How African-Americans have written about Africa will be an important theme as we look at primary documents.

Epidemics in American History

Vanessa Gamble

HONR 2048W:80 – 3 credits

MW 12:45- 2:00 PM

CRN: 47810

Fulfills: WID

Equivalent Courses: HIST 3301W; AMST 3950W

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. We will use primary documents, historical accounts, memoirs, and films to understand the history of these diseases.

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Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities

Islam & the West

Seyyed Nasr

HONR 2053:80 – 3 credits

TR 11:10- 12:25 PM

CRN: 47628

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

Equivalent Courses: REL 3990

This course examines the interaction between Islamic and Western civilization during the past fourteen centuries. After setting the general geographical and historical background for the course, Christian contact with Islam and the development of Christian views about Islam as a religion are discussed. Then extensive attention is paid to the formation of Islamic civilization and the influence of Islamic ideas upon the West in the fields of theology, philosophy, science and the arts, including literature. Attention is then given to the encroachment upon, and finally colonization of, much of the Islamic world by the West and the spread of Western ideas among Muslims. This section is followed by a discussion of the various Islamic responses to the advent of modernism coming from the West. The course concludes with an analysis of present day relations between the two civilizations.

World Epics: The Human Journey

Cheryl Vann

HONR 2053W:10 – 3 credits

TR 9:35- 10:50 AM

CRN: 43443

Fulfills: WID; CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

Continuing with the concepts explored in the Origins courses of what makes us human, what do we value, and why, this course will encounter epic poetry from around the world, with a major but not exclusive focus on non-Western sources. We will investigate the meaning of courage, the value of sacrifice, the benefits of human love, the worth of spiritual belief, the grounding of family, the necessity of duty and honor, and the struggle for identity in Mesopotamia's Gilgamesh, Japan's Tale of the Heike, India's Ramayana, Persia's Shahanmeh, Mali's Sundiata, Arabia's Antar, Ireland's Tain, Iceland's Hrolf Kraki (styled a saga rather than an epic), and Russia's Song of Igor's Campaign. Composed or written down over the space of millennia, each of these epics reveals that the works these countries consider to be cultural foundations and world treasures retain profound meaning in the modern world.

Detective Fiction and Film

Rebecca Boylan

HONR 2053W:11 – 3 credits

T 3:30- 6:00 PM

CRN: 44180

Fulfills: WID; CCAS: Humanities; ESIA: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

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Arts and Humanities

Detectives are a rather singular breed, empowered by a second sight often blind to their own natures. Some wield a gun, others yield to the girl (or guy), while still others fascinate with their “little gray cells” or exude a mystique almost as alluring as following the track of their gum shoes in pursuit of evil. Our own game’s afoot. From beneath the fedora, we’ll ferret out origins of various detective personas. How does the madman in Poe inspire the raving Holmes? Is there a semblance of Baker Street’s ego maniac in the fastidious Hercule Poirot? How does the hardboiled cynicism of Marlowe and Hammett resurrect in “Scorcher” Kennedy? We will explore detective fiction from the 19th to the 21st centuries set in England, Ireland, San Francisco, Berlin, and Prague. There’s nothing like a chill winter’s eve to curl up with Agatha Christie’s *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, to double check the locks against the chilling BBC’s *Broadchurch* or to enjoy the detective story as thriller in *L. A. Confidential*. We will explore the genre’s identifiable textualities, the transition from fiction to the screen (*True Detective*), and detective stories as popular culture, historical time travel, brain exercise and ethical catharsis.

Literature and Culture of WWI

Jennifer Green-Lewis

HONR 2053W:12 – 3 credits

F 12:45- 3:15 PM

CRN: 45863

CCAS: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

This course examines the difficulty of representation in the wake of violent and unimagined experience. Focusing primarily on British efforts to make sense of the Great War of 1914-18, we will ask: what becomes of poetry, and prose, as well as other art forms, such as painting, architecture, and music, when their inherited forms of expression prove inadequate to convey modern human experience?

The foundational texts for this course will be provided by those who experienced the war firsthand, and we will spend some time getting to know their authors: David Jones, Wilfred Owen, Edmund Blunden, Edward Thomas, Isaac Rosenberg, Ivor Gurney, Siegfried Sassoon, Charles Sorley, Eric Maria Remarque, Robert Graves.

We will read their work in the context of history and memoir and other representational forms, some of it produced by those who did not experience warfare directly, such as Virginia Woolf and T.S. Eliot; some of it produced by much later cultural historians of the twentieth century (Paul Fussell; Modris Eksteins); and some produced by artists whose works offer very different ways of representing human relationships to suffering, beauty, and the passage of time (Picasso; Lutyens; Stravinsky).

Craft from William Morris to DIY

Bibiana Obler

HONR 2053W:80 – 3 credits

W 1:00- 3:30 PM

CRN: 47005

Fulfills: WID; CCAS: Humanities; GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

This seminar examines the relationship between art and craft from the late nineteenth century to the present, with an especial focus on the theory and history of craft as a distinctive approach to creative production. Why did William Morris turn to handicraft as an alternative to the ills of industrialization? Why did the Zurich Dadaists consider cross-stitch embroidery preferable to oil painting? How did the G.I. Bill result in a proliferation of craft studios across the United States? What is the appeal of Etsy in the information age? We will consider craft through time as well as space: where and when does the carving of African masks morph from craft

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to art—and back again? When is sewing a handicraft and when (and where) is it the “mass production” of sweatshops? In addressing questions such as these, we will draw on art history (e.g. Glenn Adamson, Elissa Auther, Julia Bryan-Wilson) as well as anthropology (Alfred Gell), sociology (Richard Sennett), and theories of class, gender, race, and politics (e.g. Hannah Arendt, Karl Marx). We will also take advantage of Washington’s museums, such as the Renwick Gallery, the National Museum of African Art, and the Textile Museum.

Care of the Self

Mark Ralkowski

HONR 2054:80 – 3 credits

TR 4:45- 6:00 PM

CRN: 47630

Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

Equivalent Courses: PHIL 3100

"The Care of the Self" is the name of Michel Foucault’s last book. It is also the name he gives to the ideal of self-cultivation that he traces back to the ancient world, where philosophy was a way of life and existence was an “art.” As Pierre Hadot puts this point, “philosophy [in the ancient world] did not consist in teaching an abstract theory ... but rather in the art of living. It [raised] the individual from an inauthentic condition of life, darkened by unconsciousness and harassed by worry, to an authentic state of life, in which she attains self-consciousness, an exact vision of the world, inner peace, and freedom.” This seminar will be divided into two parts. In the first, we will study the emergence and development of the self-cultivation ideal in the ancient world. In the second, we will study how this ideal evolves in the writings of Montaigne, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, and Foucault. The goal of this seminar is to become familiar with the idea of philosophy as an art of living, to study how it reemerges in the thinking of several major modern philosophers, and to reflect on what it would mean for us to continue doing it today.

Myth as Truth

Joseph Trullinger

HONR 2054:81 – 3 credits

TR 9:35- 10:50 AM

CRN: 47633

Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

Equivalent Courses: PHIL 3100

This course will be an experiment in thinking about how a myth can be true—and what we mean by truth. The word myth has come to mean the very opposite of truth; in common parlance, a myth is an untruth that is thoughtlessly accepted and propagated without rational confirmation. In this sense, a myth is “just a story” (mythos), and appears diametrically opposed to its counter-concept of reason (logos). The original meaning of the Greek word mythos is “story”—which is also one of the meanings of logos—and with this a hidden affinity between the two becomes thinkable. What if mythos and logos are two different but compatible ways of telling a story? What if myth is not the lowest form of thoughtlessness, but actually a higher form of thoughtfulness, a poetic way of thinking that deals with realities so deep they can’t be directly analyzed? Perhaps this kind of truth lies within our stories about the sacred, our myths.

We will explore the philosophical dimensions of mythology with particular emphasis upon the strenuous efforts to grasp the same in modern German philosophy and literature, which did so in relation to the intermingling of ancient Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions. Basic familiarity with these mythologies is expected, although we will briefly examine myths from other traditions (to

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be selected by the class). We will make an initial tour of the fitting nature of myth for conveying truth, and then consider the basic character of myth in general. We will then turn to writings that consider the spiritual truth within myths to be open only to that which is spiritual within the human being, that is, the mind's creative potency. By contemplating these philosophical theories of mythopoiesis (myth-making), we will see whether we have a way of relating to images without being enslaved by them, that is, whether the imagery of myths in actuality sets us free by teaching us to be at home in the world.

Buddhist Philosophy

Eyal Aviv

HONR 2054:M80 – 3 credits

TR 11:30- 12:45 PM

CRN: 47634

Fulfills: GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

Equivalent Courses: REL 3614

This course will introduce Buddhism's diverse philosophical perspectives. Students will learn about the unique problems and questions Buddhist philosophers have engaged with throughout its history. We will discuss themes such as theories of personal identity, philosophy of mind and metaphysics, among others. Students will acquaint themselves with the unique vocabulary, concepts, ideas and debates typical of the Buddhist intellectual tradition and highlight differences and similarities with the Western intellectual tradition.

Beyond Shakespeare: Adaptations, Appropriations, and Transformations

Cheryl Vann

HONR 2054W:10 – 3 credits

TR 12:45- 2:00 PM

CRN: 43444

Fulfills: WID; GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

Cultures around the world have been consuming and disgorging Shakespeare's works for hundreds of years, using both the plays and individual characters therein aesthetically and propagandistically to comment on and to reveal tensions within their own time and place. His works have been used by warring political factions and rival ideologues, by the powerful and by the victims of power. We will examine in whole or in part plays, novels, poems, and films from France, Germany, Spain, Turkey, India, Africa, and the United States to test whether Coleridge's "great, ever-living dead man" can be credited with Harold Bloom's contention that Shakespeare invented the human, and if so, what it might mean to be human.

Jane Austen: Literary Icon

Maria Frawley

HONR 2054W:11 – 3 credits

M 12:45- 3:15 PM

CRN: 44286

Fulfills: WID; GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

This course focuses on the literary achievements of Jane Austen and on her continuing relevance to our own culture. Our reading

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will include all of her novels (from *Northanger Abbey* through *Persuasion*), some unpublished early writing (including her satiric *History of England*), and work unfinished at her death. Understanding the social and historical contexts that shape Austen's work will be a major preoccupation, and to this end we will explore the ways her fiction expresses values associated with neoclassical literature while simultaneously responding to the more revolutionary tenor of the Romantic age in which she wrote. Among our many topics for consideration will be the ways Austen both reflects and responds to social hierarchy and class relations in Regency England; the relationship between gender ideology, "conduct book culture," and Austen's representations of women's lives; Austen's views of national identity in the era of the French Revolution; and Austen's narrative techniques. We will have fun looking at clips from the many film adaptations of her novel! Students can expect to come away from this course with a solid grasp of the social, historical, and literary contexts of Austen's fiction; with greater appreciation of the stylistic achievements of her fiction writing; and with the ability to critically assess how Austen's works have been received and adapted over time.

Capitalism & the Enlightenment

Theodore Christov

HONR 2054W:80 – 3 credits

M 9:00- 10:50 AM

CRN: 47629

Fulfills: WID; GWSB: Non-Business and Unrestricted Elective; SEAS: Humanities Elective

Equivalent Courses: HIST 3001

Was the new market society emerging in the 18th-century ushering in an era of wealth and civilization, or was it promoting corruption and exploitation? In this course we explore Enlightenment theories of political economy and the various critiques and affirmations of modern civilization by tracing the lively debates about the formation of capitalism. We trace distinct early-modern traditions of political economy that engage contested theories about commerce, luxury, greed, poverty, empire, slavery, and liberty. In examining the morals and politics of commercial society, we focus on the interplay between self-interest and moral sentiments, the ethics of pleasure and luxury, the changing definitions of credit and reputation, and the growing problems of poverty, inequality, and criminality. In the context of what Albert Hirschman famously called "political arguments for capitalism before its triumph", our topics include advocacy of mass production, the four-stages theory of history, and the rise of modern capitalism. The seminar mixes canonical thinkers (Mandeville, Montesquieu, Hume, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Kant, Marx, Weber) with more recent secondary scholarship. As a WID and a reading-intensive course of about 150 pages per week, there will be short weekly writing reports culminating in a 30-page final paper.

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Contract Courses

Contract Courses

Honors Internship

Chosen by student
HONR 2182:10 – 0 to 4 credits
CRN: 83941

Please see an Honors Advisor for further information.

Honors Undergraduate Research

Chosen by student
HONR 2184:10 – 0 to 4 credits
CRN: 81005

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: 82135

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.

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Senior Capstone and Thesis

Senior Capstone and Thesis

Honors Senior Thesis

Chosen by Student
HONR 4198:10 – 3 to 4 credits
CRN: 80749

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.

March Senior Capstone: Time

Eyal Aviv
HONR 4199:10 – 1 credit
R 5:00- 6:50 PM
CRN: 43098

Meets March 5, 19, 26 and April 2. 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.

March Senior Capstone: Time

Theodore Christov
HONR 4199:11 – 1 credit
R 7:00- 8:50 PM
CRN: 43958

Meets March 2, 16, 23 and 30. How do we understand and measure time? If we look for the past, it has already gone; if we look for the future, it has not yet arrived; as for the present, it is continually split up into infinitely divisible units. Could it be that the essence of time is absence itself? Also, if God is outside time, how could humans come into existence within time, and, more generally, what is the relation between time and eternity? These questions will guide our capstone reflections as we attempt to understand the puzzle about the existence of time, a problem that we can identify as our own. There will be pre-assigned readings for the first

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Senior Capstone and Thesis

meeting only. The remainder of the readings will be determined by the class itself.

April Senior Capstone: Time

Bethany Kung
HONR 4199:12 – 1 credit
F 12:00- 1:50 PM
CRN: 44687

Meets April 3, 10, 17 and 24. 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?

February Senior Capstone: Pleasure

Joseph Trullinger
HONR 4199:13 – 1 credit
T 6:10- 8:00 PM
CRN: 47007

Meets February 3, 10, 17 and 24. Everyone wants to be happy—but not everyone agrees about what makes for a truly joyful life. What else could be more important, then, than coming to terms with what pleasure is in the first place, and sorting out how we ought to see our bodily desires? In this course we’ll explore the timeless idea that nothing in life is more valuable than pleasure (also known as hedonism). This course will not be an endorsement or a condemnation of hedonism, but rather an opportunity for you to come to an informed conclusion of your own about the life of pleasure. We will discuss a variety of classical and contemporary views on hedonism, beginning with Epicurus’ point that immortality would make a joyful life impossible, and ending with the 20th century philosopher Herbert Marcuse, who sees hedonism as a life-affirming alternative to today’s dead-end consumerist culture.