THE HONORS SEMINARS - SPRING 2014

HONR300 L111: Honors Ethics: Ethics and the Mind Sciences – Andrei Buckareff  
MW 9:30-10:45 a.m.  
Besides Honors, this seminar fulfills the CORE Ethics requirement.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 361  
Honors Seminar in Philosophical & Moral Foundation – Ethics & Justice.

Description: In this class we will critically examine some of the most influential ethical theories that have emerged over the past 2,500 years since humans began thinking carefully and systematically about the criteria for good character and right action. Specifically, we will consider virtue theory, sentimentalism, utilitarianism, and Kantian deontology. We will then move to consider some challenges to the different theories that arise from recent empirical work in moral psychology and neuroethics. We will finish up the semester by thinking about what the desiderata of a working ethical theory might be and consider how well the different theories do with respect to satisfying the desiderata in light of the problems raised by empirical research.

HONR310 L200: Versions of the Self: Love and Marriage – Rose DeAngelis and Donald Anderson  
W 6:30-9:15 p.m.  
Besides Honors, this course fulfills the CORE requirement in Literature; for English majors and minors this course fulfills the 300-level genre requirement for the literature major, or the 300-level literature course requirement for the writing major or English minor.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 380  
Honors Seminar in Expression and Creativity - Literature.

This course also counts toward the following Pathways: Gender Studies.

Description: The course will focus on various conceptualizations of love and the ways in which these concepts affect peoples’ expectations about and experiences within marriage. For example, are rising divorce rates indicative of increasing misconceptions about love, or have such perceptions generally been with us throughout history? Is the redefinition of what constitutes marriage a natural evolution of civil rights or a loss of social standards? The assignments will draw upon fiction, drama, and film to center the investigations and discussions—and to provide points of departure for your written and oral work. We will be focusing on American and British works from the Victorian Age to the present to provide contexts that will make you better students of the time-frame in which you do and will function.
HONR321 L111: Art of Culture: Music that Built America – Art Himmelberger
MR 2-3:15 p.m.

Besides Honors, this seminar fulfills the College's CORE Fine Arts requirement.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 381 Honors Seminar in Expression and Creativity – Fine Art.

This course also counts toward the following Pathways: American Studies.

Description: This course will develop the student’s knowledge and appreciation of the creation, development and function of various genres of music and the music industry utilized over a 400 year evolutionary process, occurring congruent to the history and development of our nation. Historical periods and functions include: Purposes and utilization of music by the Puritans; Native Indians; other early settlers; exploratory expeditions; Colonial America; American Revolt and War for Independence; Federal Period and War of 1812, American Civil War, Post Civil War Band Activities and Entertainment Movement by the touring of Patrick Gilmore, John Philip Sousa and others, radio broadcasts of the Goldman Band, Romantic and 20th Century Orchestral Composers, Post Civil War American Broadway Musicals and other music theater activities to include 20th Century Broadway Musical development, Ragtime, Jazz, Big Bands and Blues development. The students will understand how this development of American Music paralleled the growth of our nation.

HONR 320 L111: Art of Culture: Utopian Literature – Michelle Smith
T 6:30-9:15 p.m.

Besides Honors, this course fulfills the CORE requirement in Literature; for English majors and minors this course fulfills the 300-level genre requirement for the literature major, or the 300-level literature course requirement for the writing major or English minor.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 380 Honors Seminar in Expression and Creativity - Literature.

This course also counts toward the following Pathways: Public Praxis.

Description: The word, utopia, coined by Sir Thomas More in the 16th century, is derived from two Greek words: eutopia (“good place”) and outopia (“no place”). This initial tension persists in all subsequent utopian thought and action—how can the perfection promised by eutopia be materialized in an imperfect, fallen world? Indeed, the evolution of utopian/dystopian themes in literature from didactic, explicitly utopian projects (up to and through the 19th century) into dystopian fantasy and science fiction (in the 20th and 21st) might suggest that utopian visions have nothing to offer a postmodern, globalized world. Thus, we will consider: Where are today’s utopias? Are unabashedly utopian projects and
communities still possible? This course will provide students a broad overview of utopian literature, theory, and activism. We will survey a selection of utopian fiction, considering the plots and ideas as well as the stylistic elements of the genre. We will approach each fictional work in its historical context, also considering the effects of the literature, many of which inspired real-world activism and community-building. A primary theme of the course is the fraught relationship between utopian “dreaming” and the real world that inspires it. Though we will focus primarily on utopian literature, we will also consider how the rhetoric of utopia pervades everyday life—from advertising and politics to popular culture and education.

HONR 331 L111: Hudson River Valley Studies: Literary Places – Stephen Mercier
MF 12:30-1:45 p.m.

Besides Honors, this course fulfills the CORE requirement in Literature; for English majors and minors this course fulfills the 300-level genre requirement for the literature major, or the 300-level literature course requirement for the writing major or English minor.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 380 Honors Seminar in Expression and Creativity - Literature.

This course also counts toward the following Pathways: Hudson River Valley Regional Studies; American Studies.

Description: This course asks you to examine and explore literary representations of the Hudson River Valley. We will focus primarily on Hudson River Valley authors. We will examine the relationship between these texts and popular images of the places they represent. Hence, we will look at various types of signifiers, such as literary texts, maps, magazines, pamphlets geared toward tourism, paintings, photographs, web sites, and other visual images. We will then attempt to understand how these varied images shape our conceptions of place and the Hudson River Valley. We will engage in a wide variety of approaches and methodologies, such as literary criticism, landscape geography, architecture, archaeology and artifacts, cultural studies, folklore and mythology, and electronic media.

HONR 331 L112: Hudson River Valley Studies: Edith Wharton – Judith Saunders
TR 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Besides Honors, this course fulfills the CORE requirement in Literature; for English majors and minors this course fulfills the 300-level genre requirement for the literature major, or the 300-level literature course requirement for the writing major or English minor.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 380 Honors Seminar in Expression and Creativity - Literature.

This course also counts toward the following Pathways: Hudson River Valley Regional Studies; American Studies; Gender Studies.
**Description:** Edith Wharton is one of the most illustrious writers associated with the Hudson River Valley.

She utilizes its landscapes and its architectures in many of her fictional works, integrating regional settings with plot, theme, and character. In this seminar we will read a good sampling of Wharton’s novels, novellas, and short stories. In addition to examining her fiction from a literary standpoint, we will try to place it in its cultural-historical context, considering it in light of societal changes taking shape in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Special emphasis will fall on Wharton’s investigation of tensions between society and the individual—tensions originating in cultural values, societal regulations, prescribed roles, or gender issues. Tentative reading list: The House of Mirth, The Age of Innocence, Hudson River Bracketed, New Year’s Day, The Old Maid, Ethan Frome, “Autres Temps,” “Roman Fever,” “The Coward,” “Xingu.” If there is sufficient interest, we will take a field trip to Wharton’s home in Lennox, Massachusetts.

**HONR 342 L111: Global Engagement: The World Revealed Through Song, Reading, and Film – Mar Peter-Raoul**

W 2:30-3:15 p.m.; F 3:30-4:45 p.m.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 360 Honors Seminar in Philosophical and Moral Foundation – Ethics & Justice.*

**This course also counts toward the following Pathways: Public Praxis; Global Studies.**

**Description:** Through fascinating film, biography, & song, students enter deeply into selected areas of the world and learn their political, social, cultural, & spiritual character & ethos, their particular practices, the troubles they face, and how they see the world.

Two examples: The first example: *Little Princes: The Story of One Man Who Promises to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal* is the story of Conor who has set out to backpack around the world before starting graduate work. To impress his friends, he decides to begin the trip by volunteering for two weeks at an orphanage in Nepal. There he learns of grieving, tricked parents and their trafficked children. This appalling truth prompts his promise to find the lost children. In his search, the political, cultural, social, & spiritual life of Nepal is revealed.

A second example: The film "A World Apart" dramatizes resistance to South Africa's apartheid system. In solidarity with the Black struggle for freedom & justice, a white journalist, played by Barbara Hershey, risks prison & worse. "Singing the Spirit Home," is a song, complementing the film, of a jail with black prisoners in cells on both sides of a
walkway where white guards are bringing a shackled prisoner to his execution. As he passes the cells, he hears a slow rising of song… "Do not be afraid/you are not alone/lift your head up high/as we sing your spirit home."

HONR 344 L111 -- Global Engagement: German Civilization Through Film– Martha von der Gathen

T 6:30-9:15

Besides Honors, this course fulfills the CORE Fine Arts requirement.

*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill HONR 381 Honors Seminar in Expression and Creativity – Fine Arts.

This course also counts toward the following Pathways: Contemporary European Studies; Global Studies.

Description: This course is designed to acquaint students with German culture through film. The medium of film can be a strong teaching tool for the understanding of national cultures, perhaps more so than literature, because through vivid characterization it can evoke strong emotions and opinions. During the 15-week course, we will watch and analyze twelve films, beginning with a classic German tale and ending with a modern thriller. These films depict a variety of issues such as homosexuality, racism, bigotry and social issues, giving students the opportunity examine some of the social and psychological aspects of German society. Several films will focus on the Third Reich and the Nazi Regime, in an effort to promote a greater understanding of that infamous period in Germany’s history. Cross-cultural references to American issues (and Hollywood) will also be examined and discussed.


TR 11 – 12:15 p.m.

In addition to Honors credit, this course fulfills a CORE Literature requirement; for English majors and minors this course fulfills the 300-level genre requirement for the literature major, or the 300-level literature course requirement for the writing major or English minor. This course also fulfills a CORE Natural Science requirement. It may count toward the 13 additional credits in related fields within the Policy concentration in the Environmental Science & Policy major; it may count as an elective in the Environmental Policy minor; and it may count as a Social Science and Humanities course in the Environmental Studies minor.

(please register for the appropriate course number based on which CORE area you wish to have filled).
*For students who began the Honors Program in Fall 2013, this course will fulfill either HONR 380 Honors Seminar in Expression and Creativity – Literature OR HONR 370 Honors Seminar in Scientific & Quantitative Analysis.

This course also counts toward the following Pathways: Environmental Studies; Public Health.

Description: This course will present students with a survey of environmental writing that brings together a variety of genres by observers of nature, environmental activists, fiction writers, dramatists, essayists, poets, politicians, and scientists. Selections will range historically from the ancient world to the present, and will focus on the experience of people with nature. The course is designed to foster in students a greater appreciation for nature, and the ways it has been described by writers; to gain an understanding of the effect that this literature has had on our perception of the world and on governmental and social policy; to enable students to investigate their own relationship and responsibility to the natural world; and to place both reader and writer into the context of the world in which they live. From the scientific perspective, writings will be examined for their ecological and environmental context. Students will also learn the practice of nature observation and writing through the scientific practice of a field journal.