

## **Spring 2009 Honors Seminars**

**HONR300L111**  
**Honors Ethics**  
**Ulary, G**  
**MR 12:30-1:45**  
**Slot 8**

**Description:** In this course, students will reflect upon and critically evaluate a number of fundamental moral questions as they are broached in some of the major ethical theories (utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, rights-ethics, care-ethics, etc.).

Besides Honors, this seminar satisfies the CORE Ethics requirement.

**HONR300L112**  
**Honors Ethics**  
**Campisi, J**  
**TR 3:30-4:45**  
**Slot 14**

**Description:** In this course, students will reflect upon and critically evaluate a number of fundamental moral questions as they are broached in some of the major ethical theories (utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, rights-ethics, care-ethics, etc.).

Besides Honors, this seminar satisfies the CORE Ethics requirement.

**HONR314L111**  
**Versions of the Self**  
**Fine Arts**  
**Pearlman, S**  
**TR 5:00-6:15**  
**Slot 16**

**Description:** What is the face you had before you were born? How would you answer that Zen riddle? How can "you" have had a face before you were "you"? How can "you" talk about yourself as an observer? Building on fiction and non-fiction readings like the Zen riddle above that help us reconsider the nature of "self," students will have the opportunity to construct an autobiographical manifesto that explores, defines, and manifests "self." This will be an excellent journey for those who believe they know who they are, for those who believe they don't, and for anyone who wants to find out.

Besides Honors, this seminar satisfies the CORE requirement in Fine Arts.

**HONR321L111**  
**Art of Culture**  
**Opera**  
**White, J**  
**W 6:30-8:50**  
**Slot 23**

**Description:** This course will have two objectives: to provide an introduction to opera, its form and its history, and to expose students to opera through the study of selected operas and attendance at performances of those operas at the Metropolitan Opera house in New York City. Honors will cover the costs of travel expenses and opera tickets. Written assignments will consist of critiques of the performed operas as well as essays on various aspects of the art form.

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

**HONR322L111**  
**Art of Culture**  
**Representations of Tibet**  
**Bayer, K**  
**MR 9:30-10:45**  
**Slot 2**

**Description:** This course will historically analyze the popular understanding of "Tibet." The region, culture, and people have appeared in various forms through the projects of multiple actors and authors: European explorers and adventurers, seekers of cultural and religious utopias, Hollywood and its adherents, political activists from Chinese revolutionaries to Tibetans who remain in China and those in exile to Human rights advocates, to name but a few. Most recently, Tibet emerged on the Olympic scene as a critique of Chinese political legitimacy, but from both within and outside of its borders, many have used Tibet when negotiating trade relations, globalization, ecotourism, and even the post September 11th War on Terror. We will be using travel literature, film, art, documents, and historical essays to explore this topic. Some of the issues we will address are: who and what are the voices of Tibet today? How have different representations of Tibet been created and used? How do nationalism, imperialism, revolution, and globalization impact the nature of the image of Tibet? Why does Tibet as a construction have such staying power? Indeed, across history, what was and is Tibet?

Besides Honors, this course satisfies the CORE History requirement.

**HONR330L111**  
**Hudson River Valley Studies**  
**History**  
**Marshall, N**  
**W 2:00-3:15, F 3:30-4:45**  
**Slot 12**

**Description:** This course will examine the history of New York by linking historical content and interpretation with artistic and literary works produced in or about the Hudson Valley. Works such as the Narrative of Sojourner Truth, paintings from the Hudson Valley School, fiction and description by Washington Irving, and William Kennedy's *Ironweed* will be critically situated in the dramatically fluid historical development of New York.

Besides Honors, this course satisfies the CORE requirement in History and serves as elective credit for the History major and minor.

**HONR331L111**  
**Hudson River Valley Studies**  
**Literature**  
**Saunders, J**  
**TR 11:00-12:15**  
**Slot 7**

**Description:** This course will examine poetry written in the Hudson Valley region in the contemporary period, 1950 through the present. Course readings will introduce students to the work of poets who have lived and visited in the region: Billy Collins (recent Poet Laureate), Eamon Grennan, William Bronk, Nancy Willard, Howard Moss, Dana Gioia, Howard Winn, and many others.

Besides Honors, this course satisfies the CORE requirement in Literature and serves as elective credit in the English major and minor. (Please note that this course satisfies the genre requirement for the English major.)

**HONR341L200**  
**Global Engagement**  
**Spirituality in Contemporary America**  
**Luske, B**  
**M 6:30-9:00**  
**Slot 21**

**Description:** Sociology construes religion mostly as a functional requirement for human existence. It conceives religion as an implicit projection of societal organization onto the universe. Its main theme is that all human cultures have endeavored to lessen our vulnerable insecurity as mortals through religious myths and practices purporting to explain existence and insure its continuation. So considered, matters of the spirit are social constructs. Similarly, Marx and Freud viewed religious thought as a functionally necessary projection of human powerlessness onto an omniscient and protective authority (God the father). For Marx this was true at least for unjust societies, and for Freud true of all societies since none could be free. The sociologist Max Weber comes closest to my standpoint on religion; namely, that humanity is above all else a profoundly conscious species whose central activity as symbol makers leads us to seek the meaning of the universe and our place in it. This course will depart from the standard sociological preoccupation with objective analysis and comprehension of major spiritual traditions. While we will draw on key principles and themes derived from all the major world religions, our primary focus will be on American culture with regard to how individual and collective spiritual well being is either augmented or threatened. The underlying theme of the course is that the core spiritual ideals and values of all the major world faiths, and especially the ethic of compassion, presuppose a commitment to lessen human suffering, and therefore privilege the pursuit of social justice and peace on earth as major concerns. My main hope for this course is that each student will find important practical tools and opportunities for achieving significant personal spiritual insight and growth.

Besides Honors, this course satisfies the CORE requirement in Social Science.

**HONR340L111**  
**Global Engagement**  
**Travel Stories, Language & Translation**  
**Keith, Claire**  
**W 2:00-3:15, F 3:30-4:45**  
**Slot 12**

**Description:** "And so I told the sheik that he should ..." One of the persistent myths in travel literature of all ages and places is that of language transparency - the apparent ability of the narrator to engage directly with characters and situations encountered on the roads of the world. As globalization transforms the very premises and definition of travel, the essential act of translation that enables the literary narrative is often barely acknowledged and usually marginalized by authors and critics alike. The course proposes to reflect on the literary and theoretical issues raised by the figure of the translator in travel literature of various countries, languages and periods. Some theoretical readings will be included.

Besides Honors, this course satisfies the CORE requirement in Literature and serves as the English major requirement for comparative, ethnic or national (non-Anglo-American) literature.

**HONR350L111**  
**Science, Technology, and Society**  
**Cryptography**  
**Kirtland, J**  
**TF 12:30-1:45**  
**Slot 9**

**Description:** Cryptography is the study of coded messages. This course will examine a variety of methods or ciphers used from ancient societies up to those used today. A variety of famous ciphers such as the Caesar, Vigenère, Enigma, and RSA public-key ciphers will be investigated. At a more general level, we will explore the mathematical techniques used to create ciphers and the statistical methods used to break ciphers.

Besides Honors, this seminar satisfies the CORE requirement in Mathematics.

**HONR351L111**  
**Science, Technology, and Society**  
**Environmental Science and Policy**  
**Rich Feldman**  
**R 12:30-3:15**  
**Slot**

**Description:** The course will look at the work being done to conserve natural resources and to prevent ourselves from poisoning our fellow species and us. Science, politics, economics, history, and many other disciplines all come together in this course as students consider provocative topics concerning local, national, and global environmental affairs.

Besides Honors, this course satisfies the CORE Natural Science requirement, the first required course for Environmental Science or Environmental Policy majors, and the Related Field Elective for Biology majors.