

Honors Seminar Descriptions

Fall 2022

HONR 392

Section 1: Being Human: You as a Biological Being! - T. Dewey

Section 1: MWF 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM

Have you ever wondered how the evolutionary history of Homo sapiens has shaped you? What are the unique aspects of human brains, language, and culture that have been influenced by our evolutionary history and still impact your life today? Explore the unique biological aspects of Homo sapiens and how our biology impacts decision-making, health, psychology, and interactions with other humans through readings, videos, podcasts, and discussion. Conduct independent research on remarkable or impactful human innovations and how our history of innovation may change the future.

Section 2: Self In/Of Landscape: Expanding the Field of Ecopoetry – J. Doxey

Section 2: TR 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM

Can poetry and art make a difference in addressing climate change? Can social change be achieved through literature? This course will focus both on the Anthropocene – how humans have shaped the landscape – and how the landscape shapes our identity through the discipline of Ecopoetry in particular. The field of ecopoetry (and, in extension environmental humanities) is amorphous and yet distinct. The art and thinking that is produced within the Anthropocene is not just reflections on the land, but also interrogations of space and identity within the context of climate change. We will examine text, art, and history within ecopoetry/ecoliterature to get closer answers to questions such as: What differentiates ecopoetics from the tradition of pastoral writing? How is identity shaped by surroundings, whether that's pastoral or urban? How does landscape shape our identity? How do we define the "field" and notion of landscape to expand beyond traditional definitions? How does the form of open-field poetry lend itself to ecopoetry? In what other types of "fields" do we and literature exist? How do we create art and literature in the age of the Anthropocene? How do we create amongst climate grief? Likely we will generate more questions in the quest, which will be welcomed. We will talk about language as a field, the significance and implications of naming a land, defining "nature" in relationship to human nature. While the course is based in poetry, we'll expand environmental literature to various texts including creative nonfiction, visual art, critical theory, fiction, history, soundscapes, sociology, ethnography, etc, and create work relevant to each student's academic focus and pursuits. This class will delve deeply into our textual readings and connect them to literary criticism, interdisciplinary works, and multilayered conversations.

Section 3: The Passion Within: Adventures in Creativity - F. Glycenfer

Section 3: MW 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Consider what life would be like if we truly discovered our passions and were able to share them in a vivid way that captures the imagination of influential people in our lives. This seminar presents ways to rediscover our passions through developing a heightened awareness of creativity in social interactions, scientific investigations, and improvisational settings. Students will begin to reap the benefits of a creative life by experiencing how their creative passions impact the world around us. Students will progress through a series of creative stepping stones in order to build a strong foundation for sharing their passions in a variety of everyday life situations. Creative passions are not just for the talented few – it is an opportunity for adventure we all can share.

Section 4 and 7: You'd Be Murdered for This: Art, Political Regimes and Morality - S. Zwick-Tapley

Section 4: TR 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Section 7: TR 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Imagine a painting so scandalous you'd be imprisoned. Imagine a play so threatening you'd be tortured. Imagine a book so controversial you'd be exiled for life. Imagine a film so revolutionary you'd be killed. Throughout history art has challenged dictators, religion and sexual norms and has been blamed for the destruction of morality and civilization. What are these works of art and what made them so threatening? And did these works of art succeed in bringing about the change so feared? This class will explore controversial art from around the world (Europe, Asia, South America and Africa) and look at the political, sociological, and psychological frameworks specific to each culture. Art forms covered will include theatre, dance, the visual arts, film and literature.

Section 5: Tikkun Olam - A. Merline

Section 5: TR 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

"Tikkun Olam" is a Jewish concept defined by acts of kindness performed to perfect or repair the world. The phrase is found in the Mishnah, a body of classical rabbinic teachings. It is often used when discussing issues of social policy, ensuring a safeguard to those who may be at a disadvantage. This course, which is about community engagement and activism uses the books *Bowling Alone*, *Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing*, and *The Community Resilience Reader*. We will learn effective community organizing, how to work with existing municipal, grassroots and other local groups to identify and complete one or several projects that need to be completed in Fort Collins. The projects that we will target will focus on human and environmental sustainability.

Section 6: Myth Busters: Science, Pseudoscience, and Just Plain Nonsense - D. Mykles

Section 6: MW 3:00 PM – 4:15 PM

What is science? What isn't? Modern western science is a product of the Age of Reason in the 18th century, but its origins are traced back to the ancient Greeks. Skepticism and the scientific method are critical to modern scientific practice. Throughout history there has always been an uneasy relationship between science and culture. Science as a human activity is influenced by culture and vice versa. The seminar weaves science philosophy, methodology, and history with social and cultural contexts. "Culture wars" centered around heliocentrism, evolution, relativity, genetically modified organisms, and climate change are examined. A major part of the course is devoted to evaluating claims purporting to use "scientific" evidence. Topics include: vitamin C as a cold remedy, homeopathy, Social Darwinism and Eugenics, detoxification and cleansing methods, nutrient supplements and diets, drugs and the pharmaceutical industry, vaccinations and autism, cancer and electromagnetic fields, placentophagy, and hypnobirthing. Are there common strategies people use? The placebo effect and confirmation bias are discussed. You will have an opportunity to investigate a claim and present it to the class. The goal is to equip you with practical tools for making science-informed decisions, and not simply accept a claim at face value; in other words, being a skeptic. The seminar concludes with a section on bioethics and social policy, using "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" as a resource.

Section 7: See section 4

Section 8: The Bible as Literature - Z. Hutchins

Section 8: MWF 2:00 PM – 2:50 PM

This course will invite students to read the Bible as they might a novel or poem, considering its text *as text*, and not as an oracular source of truth. Although we speak of “the Bible,” this course will work to deconstruct the notion that this library of writings from the Judeo-Christian tradition is one book or even one clearly defined set of books. We will read the Bible using the tools of literary criticism, focusing more on narrative structure, literary devices, and intertextual exchanges than theology. Doing so will emphasize the human contributions to texts whose authorship has traditionally been attributed to God. Learning to read the Bible as literature reveals the remarkably beautiful ideas and moving language that have led to the preservation of these texts while also preparing students to better understand works in the Western tradition, many—and perhaps most—of which have been written in response to or in conversation with this Judeo-Christian canon. Although the Bible is not a book, it has been the inspiration for many books, from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*, which students will be better prepared to appreciate after this course of study.