

Honors Seminar Descriptions

Fall 2020

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: The Beat Generation Writers - A. Merline

Section 2: R 2:00 PM – 4:30 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 3: The Passion Within: Adventures in Creativity - F. Glycenter

Section 3: MW 1:00 PM – 2:15 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. ZwickTapley

Section 4: TR 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Section 7: TR 3:30 PM – 4:45 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: You Watch While I Revise the World”: Investigating the History, Development and Dramatic Cultural Impact of Musical Theatre - W. Longacre

Section 5: TR 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM

What do you think of when you hear the term “musical theatre”? Jazz hands, box steps, and chorus lines? Or do you see images of protest, productions directly ripped from the headlines reflecting gang violence and war, or musicals that expose the plight of historically marginalized and oppressed people groups? The images that come to mind are often contrary to the deep social, political, philosophical, ethical and historical roots that have established most of musical theatre for its history. Certainly, musical theatre has entertained countless audience members for decades through innovative and exciting choreography, music and dialogue. But this class will explore the ways in which it has adapted and changed according to our political and social milieu, and the ways in which it has commented on, critiqued and shaped that very dialogue. Students will view and analyze— through in-depth discussion, writing, and creative proposals—the ways musical theatre has changed since its inception, looking at both the aesthetic innovations and sociopolitical commentary imbedded within each musical we view. In our readings, dialogue and written responses, students will take part in considering musical theatre through multiple theoretical lenses, from postcolonialism to gender/queer studies, Marxism to deconstruction, and others. By the end of the semester, students will have a deeper understanding—and, hopefully, appreciation—for the ways that musical theatre has not only commented on and reflected the times in which it was created, but how it has also contributed to shaping the very development of our cultural history.

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