

Honors Seminar Descriptions

Spring 2022

HONR 492

Section 1: Making a Difference, but How? A Course on Civic Engagement – Anne Scott

MWF 10:00- 10:50 AM

Through our social media, news sources, daily conversations, personal experiences, and even some of our classes, we have become increasingly aware of the world's many immediate and chronic problems, their characteristics, and their complex relationships. Starting somewhere – anywhere—to try to solve these issues can often seem overwhelming. Sometimes these issues are right at our front doors, within our local and regional communities, waiting for a helpful response from our politicians, cities, students, activists, or leaders! How do we make a difference in this complex world of ours? In this course, you will learn not only about the historical background and context for the idea of “civic engagement” but about the ways, both big and small, that an engaged citizenry can help shape our communities and world for the better. What does a positive and effective civic engagement look and act like? What are the limitations of certain kinds of civic engagement, and how do we improve these so as to improve our outlook of our justice system, our ways of governing, or even the water we drink? These are the kinds of questions that we will ask and debate throughout the course of this semester. Your class participation, discussion assignments, interdisciplinary research paper, “flash” civic engagement papers, and even your unique contributions to our “teaching day” presentations will encourage you to think in new ways when it comes to our world's complex challenges. This class will help you take steps to contextualize and understand some of these challenges and to propose, and formulate, some of the steps needed to create meaningful change.

Section 2: Change - Social, Environmental and Economic Perspectives – J. Raadik Cottrell

Section 3: MWF 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM

There's only one thing for sure in life and that's *Change*. We as individuals *change* (i.e., *beliefs, attitudes and behaviors*) throughout our lifespan and so does the world around us. In lieu of today's rapid societal, environmental, economic, technological, etc. changes, the need for more balanced development is acute. Bold and transformative steps are necessary to shift global societies on a positive course of change to a more sustainable and resilient path. Today's young generation is undoubtedly one of the most influential agents of change for a more sustainable future. Changing worldviews and the ability to take advantage of the advancements of today's science and technology create endless opportunities and pose challenging ethical responsibilities.

Section 3: Philanthropy In Action: Passion To Serve – F. Glycenfer

MW 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM

We often wrestle with how to put our good intentions more fully into action in ways that will benefit our community as well as enhance our individual lives. Digging into the meaning of philanthropy which literally means the “love of people” can give us refreshed purpose in understanding why we engage in these endeavors. Volunteering in America is at an all-time record high; however, there can often be challenges between making the world a better place and actually achieving it. This course empowers students to maximize their potential to participate fully in philanthropic service through the lens of alleviating material poverty by investigating theoretical constructs, viewing video examples, incorporating fiction reading, and practical hands-on experience. The call for aid in our world is great—our passion to serve must be greater.

Section 4: Music and the Moving Image – D. Obluda

TR 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM

Much of the media we consume on a daily basis contains a combination of images, sounds, and music, and this synthesis of art forms enables creators to generate highly nuanced characters and stories. Over years of exposure to films and television, we have acquired a shared knowledge of conventions and expectations that direct how we interpret various forms of media. Anyone can close their eyes and identify complex emotions and ideas (loss, transcendence, fear, etc.) just from a film's soundtrack. What types of sounds and music evoke heroism in your mind? Why is the music that accompanies a monster often scarier than its appearance—for example, *Jaws* or *A Quiet Place*? How do music and ambient sounds bring you into the world of a video game? This class will explore the relationship between the entire universe of moving images (from film, television, video games, YouTube, TikTok, advertisements, social media, and others) and that of music and sound. We will investigate how music functions within these contexts and explore how the synthesis of music and moving images can reflect and influence our identity and culture.

Section 5: Globalize This: Fear and Loathing in the Age of Progress and Prosperity – K. Jagers

TR 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

In this seminar we will explore both the perils and promises of globalization. For better or worse, the process of globalization is fundamentally transforming the economic, cultural and political foundations of the globe. While globalization holds out the promise of progress – providing significant opportunities for the emancipation of much of the world's population from the tyranny of poverty, ignorance and political repression – it simultaneously evokes a sense of fear and loathing throughout much of the globe. Globalization is a contentious process -- its meaning almost entirely dependent on who is talking about it. Pro-market economic reformers, displaced workers, environmental and human rights activists, security experts and cultural nationalists, to name a few, all compete for the right to stake claim to the idea of globalization and shape public perceptions about its potential impact on the world in which we live. In a very real sense globalization has become the buzzword that serves to crystallize disagreements concerning the speed and direction of social and political change in the world at-large. While both the meaning and merits of globalization have become highly politicized in recent years, with intellectual debate about this topic sometimes transforming itself into contentious political action and legislation, in this class we will seek to evaluate the origins, nature and impact of this phenomenon by using insights and analytical tools from the humanities (e.g., history and philosophy) and the social sciences (e.g., economics, political science, psychology and sociology).

Section 6: Freedom in Focus – K. Jagers

T 2:00 PM – 4:30 PM

This seminar is organized around the idea, and practice, of freedom. While freedom is said to be "on the march" in the world today, what, precisely, does this mean? What does it mean to have free will; to live in a free society; to express oneself freely? Moreover, is the march of freedom inevitable? Is it desirable? Should it be unbridled in both its promotion and construction? While there is a temptation in our society to uncritically accept the idea of freedom as an unalloyed "good," by viewing the concept of freedom through the analytical lenses of philosophy and the social sciences we are better able to understand the "bounded" role of freedom in human society. The objective of this course is to think critically about the idea of freedom and, in the process, to evaluate the political, social, theological and ethical arguments both for, and against, its promotion. In this course we will examine the idea of freedom by reading the works of classic social theorists and commentators (e.g., Plato, Mill, Kant, Freud, Sartre, etc.) and by interpreting these works through the lens of modern cinema (e.g., *The Seventh Seal*, *The Matrix*, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, *Apocalypse Now*, *A Clockwork Orange*, etc.).

Section 7: A History of Sex in Art – S. Zwick-Tapley

MW 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Nudity. Eroticism. Power. Victimization. Gender. Destruction and promotion of religious norms. Since the beginning of artistic expression the fine and performing arts have explored sex. What intrigues us most? What captivates us? In this class we'll discuss ancient Greek theatre, Renaissance portrayals of Jesus, 2nd century Indian erotic temple art, English Restoration Theatre, Japanese shunga and hentai, Argentinian tango, rap and contemporary American photography and film. In addition, the theme of censorship will be explored.

****Warning:** This class covers art depicting heterosexual sex, homosexual sex, transgender sex, sex with children, sex with animals and sex with Jesus. In addition, there is material that depicts sexual violence including violence against transgender people. Please drop this course if this is triggering for you.**

Section 8: Change - Social, Environmental and Economic Perspectives – J. Raadik Cottrell

MW 5:00 PM – 6:15 PM

There's only one thing for sure in life and that's Change. We as individuals change (i.e., beliefs, attitudes and behaviors) throughout our lifespan and so does the world around us. In lieu of today's rapid societal, environmental, economic, technological, etc. changes, the need for more balanced development is acute. Bold and transformative steps are necessary to shift global societies on a positive course of change to a more resilient path. Today's young generation is undoubtedly one of the most influential agents of change for a more sustainable future. Changing world views and the ability to take advantage of the advancements of today's science and technology create endless opportunities but also pose challenging ethical responsibilities. Most current global events have shown the fragility of our global systems and the urgent need for a change. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations is a plan of action for people and planet well-being. The 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. This course through multidisciplinary approach perspective examines how responsible practices guided by international and local institutions may help realize human rights for more, while accounting for the resources our planet is able to provide us. Students will be engaged in classroom debates and discussions, explore different scenarios of change through case studies and individual research. Interdisciplinary and multicultural viewpoints are encouraged to gain an understanding how flows of information, people and knowledge can make a meaningful change.