Honors Seminar Descriptions Fall 2014

HON 410-1001
W 2:30-5:15
Instructional Leadership
Dr. Maria Jerinic

This seminar is substantive introduction to peer techniques effective in leading university-level students in self-motivated exploration of the world of knowledge. Restricted to Honors College students accepted as peer instructors for HON 105.

Hon 410-1002
T/TH 10-11:15am
Media, Privacy and Surveillance
Dr. Julian Kilker

What are the implications of corporations, governments, and individuals using technologies for surveillance and for protecting privacy? This question has become even more complex with Edward Snowden’s recent release of secret NSA documents. In this course we’ll cover topics from varying definitions of privacy to the classic Panopticon to modern digital media systems such as those used in Las Vegas. We’ll examine corporate, government, and citizen uses of surveillance, as well as research representing individual concerns about privacy. Throughout the course, we’ll use readings, resources, and lectures to help us understand multiple perspectives on surveillance and privacy, both pre- and post-9/11, and pre- and post-Snowden.

HON 410-1003
W 2:30-5:15
Corporate Scandals
Nancy Rapoport, J.D.

Corporate scandals seem to occur regularly, and yet, we never seem to learn from them so that we can prevent them. Many people believe that corporate scandals occur because "bad people" run their companies and make evil choices. This course will explore possible other causes for corporate scandals, using social science concepts to explain "the person and the situation" causes for bad decisions. You will participate in discussions about a relatively recent scandal (Enron), and then each of you will find a corporate scandal to study. You will write a paper about the causes of the scandal that you've selected, and then you will present your research to the class as a whole. 75% of your grade will be based on your paper (both substance and writing style), and 25% of your grade will be based on class participation (yours and your colleagues during your presentation).

HON 410-1004
T/Th 11:30-12:45pm
Victorian Legacies
Dr. Maria Jerinic

Sometimes, nineteenth-century British novels are dismissed just too easily: too long, too stuffy, too boring. In this class, we will challenge these claims by examining the impact of Victorian writings and society on contemporary U.S. culture. Readings will probably include Charles Dickens’s Christmas Carol, Benjamin Disraeli’s Sybil, and Bram Stoker’s Dracula. We will also explore recent visions of Victorian society by reading late twentieth-century novels such as A.S. Byatt’s Morpho.
Eugenia, The Difference Engine by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling (or another Steam punk text) and films such as The Young Victoria (2009) and The Prestige (2006). Assignments probably will include two shorter essays and one creative project with a related presentation.

HON 410-1005
M/W 1-2:15PM
Contemporary Moral Issues
Dr. William Ramsey

This seminar will provide a philosophical analysis of various contemporary moral problems and debates. The main goal will be to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the ethics of such pressing issues as abortion, physician-assisted suicide, terrorism, torture, the death penalty, and extreme poverty. Students will learn about major philosophical positions, arguments, counter-arguments, and analyses of these important topics. Along with acquiring a much deeper understanding of the moral dimensions of these issues, students should also gain the ability to develop and defend their own views on these topics in an intellectually responsible manner.

HON 420-1001
M 2:30-5:15pm
Acting for a Living
Clarence Gilyard, MFA

What does acting have to do with where I'm going? Quo Vadis? And since we're on the subject, let's just be HONEST about what we want out of life. After all, in the words of the great now deceased Polonius, "To thine own self be true…" Once you leave UNLV you are going to do and be whatever and whomever you like. Right? Are you able to articulate those two? How do you project yourself manifesting the two? The road to where you want to go in your life seems to lie in the arena of your chosen field of study. Yet you may have questions about such matters as goals, obstacles, excellence, integrity, values, happiness, relevance…This course will use the rubrics of classic Stanislavski actors training, and draw striking relationships between how the acting artist's process creates an effective character and how the artist in you creates an effective future master of the universe. In the words of the great now deceased Shakespeare, creator of Polonius, "All the worlds a stage…"

HON 430
T/TH 10-11:15am
Soccer and the Making of the Modern World
Dr. Cian McMahon

Over the course of a few weeks in July 2010, over three billion people—almost half the planet—sat down to do the same thing: watch the World Cup tournament. In this course we will use association football (known to Americans as “soccer”) as a new way to learn about how labor, capital, sex/gender, consumerism, social class, national identity, and violence have operated in world history since the mid-nineteenth century. From humble beginnings, soccer has evolved into a twenty-first-century mega-business worth hundreds of billions of dollars. Having removed all hindrances on the free movement of labor, capital, and commodities, it is also a case study of multinational capitalism run rampant. A Nigerian guy plays for an English team owned by a Saudi prince. A Russian oil tycoon owns a Chinese team featuring Argentine players. Korean kids wear Brazilian jerseys to soccer practice in America. And yet, for all the boundary-blurring going on, the sport simultaneously commands fierce loyalties based on “old-fashioned” notions of race, class, gender, and nationality. As such, the history of soccer offers a
unique lens on the socio-economic forces that have shaped the modern world over the past century and a half. Effectively communicating one’s ideas in writing is a keystone of the Honors College experience. This seminar will encourage you to hone your analytical and writing skills by emphasizing essay-writing assignments and group discussion. An interdisciplinary collection of readings and source materials will include a few excellent monographs along with some documentaries, contemporary op-ed articles/cartoons, and Among the Thugs, an excellent insider’s view on hooliganism by Bill Buford.

HON 440-1001
T/Th 1-2:15pm
Narratives of 9/11: Making Sense of Trauma
Dr. Tim Gauthier

The course will explore, through its examination of various discursive forms, how meaning has been constructed and shaped around the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001. As the world adapted to living “in the shadow of no towers” (in Art Spiegelman’s words) people strove to find ways to explain an altered global landscape. As a consequence, 9/11 has been variously portrayed as a national tragedy, a leveling of the geopolitical playing field, a government conspiracy, or even a forewarning of the end of civilization. Through a study of various textual constructions, students will be made aware of the role narratives play in contextualizing traumatic events and of incorporating them within what Stephen Greenblatt calls the “circulation of social energy.” Whether it is 102 Minutes, written by two reporters from the New York Times, a graphic novel created by a grieving widow, Don DeLillo’s novel Falling Man, or the film United 93, each text provides the reader/spectator with an entry point towards making sense of one of the most significant moments of this new century. We will examine these narratological strategies, finally, as a way of making sense of these events for ourselves.

HON 440-1002
T 2:30-5:15pm
Supreme Court and American Life
Dr. Michael Green

The U.S. Supreme Court decided the 2000 presidential election, and Americans accepted the result—some not happily, but they accepted it. Yet the court, as one of its justices says, has no armies, and no one can watch its proceedings on television. How does the court work? What role does it play in our society? How do justices get appointed—and why are there only two women justices but six Catholics, with liberal and moderate justices who once were attacked as conservatives and conservatives who vote with liberals? This course will explore that through reading, lecture, discussion, video, and other sources.

HON 440-1003
T 2:30-5:15pm
A History of American Violence:
Dr. Michael J. Alarid

The United States has long held the dubious distinction of being the most homicidal nation among affluent world democratic societies, with a rate four to ten times higher than comparable nations. Violence, especially homicide, has been endemic in the U.S. since the earliest European colonization of the Americas and scholars have long struggled to explain why the United States in particular has remained so homicidal. These same scholars have proposed numerous theories, which include America’s abundance of guns, America’s long history of racial strife, and America’s poverty, which was caused by centuries of unchecked capitalism. However, none of these theories have proven sufficient. In this course
we will examine the latest theory that seeks to explain why Americans are so homicidal. We will consider the social, political, and economic factors at play, in addition to how the legal system and lawmakers have attempted to deal with America’s homicide problem. Utilizing Randolph Roth’s latest book, *American Homicide*, we will first explore why Americans resort to murder, both over time and by region. With Roth’s thesis as our framework for understanding homicide, we will transform our enquiry into a study of violence more broadly. We will examine numerous case studies of violence and homicide in American history, first at home and later during times of war. Our journey will take place across time and space: from the 17th to the 21st centuries and from the eastern United States, to the American Southwest, to the islands of Southeast Asia. Ultimately, our goal will be to search for patterns in the history of the United States to uncover why violence is so endemic in American culture.