



Fall 2022 HON 400-Level Seminars

HON 410-1001

T/R 10:00-11:15am

Physics for Presidents

Dr. Dr. Jason Steffen

A class for every major, this course covers the physics that every future leader should know: energy and electricity, weather and weapons, climate and quantum mechanics, information and data, light and space. We will learn how the world works, what it takes to keep it going, and how to judge the merits of proposed programs to fix its problems.

HON 410-1002

F 11:30-2:15pm

Becoming and Being a Lawyer-- Law School, Law as a Profession, & the Life of a Lawyer

Sagar Raich, J.D.

The law is one of the most interesting and widely applicable fields of study today. From classrooms to courtroom to boardrooms and beyond, the applicability of law is second to none. This course is an introductory course in preparing for law school, what law school is like, introduction to the different areas of the law, and what the actual practice of law entails after law school and the bar exam.

HON 410-1003

T 2:30-5:15pm

The Expressive Culture of Death

Dr. Sheila Bock

It is a truism that death is a part of life. This class will examine the different ways that death captures the attention of the living and the different forms of expressive culture it inspires. Together, we will explore a range of topics, including (but not limited to) expressions of grief, modes of memorialization, tragedy-inspired humor, true crime fandom, and beliefs and stories about the unrestful dead. Throughout, we will consider how the personal and larger-than-personal converge at these different sites of creative expression, creating opportunities for reflection, critique, community-building, and political action.

HON 410-1004

M/W 4:00-5:15pm

What if? Exploring Alternate History Fiction

Dr. David Schwartz

Fiction is about imagining other possibilities. Alternate history (also alternative history or alt history) imagines a world in which a point of divergence (POD) leads to a different reality than the one we know. For example: what if the British had defeated the colonial rebellion in North America? A good alt history has a clear POD that creates a different world that tells us something about our own. In this class, students will learn about the conventions of alt history, read several noteworthy examples of the genre, consider what makes a good alt history, and ultimately write their own alt history short story or other creative project.

HON 410-1005

T/R 1:00-2:15pm

Lifelong Learning

Dr. Corrin Sullivan

One of the most cited, powerful, and undervalued tools noted by today's leaders of multimillion-dollar enterprises and noble laureates is the application of self-motivated lifelong learning skills that go beyond specific knowledge, memorization, and competency in occupational fields. This course delves into the practice of transferable lifelong learning skills essential to an individual's intellectual, wealth, physical and emotional success regardless of occupational interest, situation, or life role. The power of inquiry is refined and explored to help identify and solve problems, develop breakthrough ideas, pursue new opportunities such as entrepreneurship, and expand personal development. Attention is also directed towards the role of lifelong learning in enhancing social inclusion and civic responsibility through the power of asking "Why?"

HON 410-1006

T/R 1:00-2:15pm Web Live/Remote Synchronous

Love Letters & Existential Musings: The Personal Writings of Famous Authors

Professor Jaclyn Costello

Most of us will fall in love at some point in our lives, and that blissful period of time will be filled with declarations of adoration sent to our lovers via lengthy texts, voicemails, Whatsapp memos, and Snapchat messages. Some of us may also have an existential crisis (or several!) at some point in our lives - no longer sure of who we really are, what our individual destiny entails, or if there is a collective purpose to humanity's existence. These musings, too, may be shared in our blog entries, social media posts, or personal texts to friends. Both falling in love and philosophical pondering are states of being that have been around for, arguably, thousands of years; but before the digital age, the greatest outlet in which to share these expressions of love and philosophical angst was through good, old-fashioned letters. In this class, we will read a sampling of such letters, written by some of the world's most beloved authors and poets. This class may be a good fit for you if you're curious about the personal, inner-worlds of these writers - or - if you're looking to explore themes relating to love, relationships, purpose, meaning, and the joys and challenges of existence through the perspective of great minds of the past. We will be reading: "Letters to Milena" by Franz Kafka, "The Dark Interval" & "Letters to a Young Poet" by Rainer Maria Rilke, "A Literate Passion" by Anais Nin & Henry Miller, and "Letters" by Kurt Vonnegut. For a final project, you will have the opportunity to compile your own collection of 'letters' to a friend or loved one - either as traditional, hand-written letters, or as a more contemporary collection of reflections using various digital means of communication such as text messages and social media correspondences.

HON 410-1007

M/W 11:30-12:45pm

Philosophy and Animals

Dr. CE Abbate

We share the world, including our homes, with animals. Consequently, our actions affect them- both intentionally and unintentionally- in many different ways. What do we owe to them? Answering this requires that we consider carefully questions about animal minds, animal well-being, the moral status of animals, and moral theory. In this course, we will do just this. We will explore what it means for an animal's life to go better or worse (for the animal) and what the implications are for us as moral agents. In particular, we will consider what we owe not only to the animal companions living in our homes, but also what we owe to animals who are used for human gain (such as farmed animals, animals used in the entertainment industry, and so forth) and what we owe to "wild" animals, who are unintentionally impacted by every-day human activity. We will moreover pay special attention to the ways in which we might transform our current relationships with animals into meaningful ones, thereby improving not only the lives of animals, but also promoting our own flourishing.

HON 410-1008

M/W 10:00-11:15am

Batman Begins: How the 19th Century Created the Dark Knight

Dr. Brian Wall, J.D.

From his origins in Detective Comics #1 to his contemporary interpretations by Grant Morrison and Christopher Nolan, Batman is the most famous superhero - and, arguably, one of the most famous fictional characters - of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This fame stems from consistently established fictional tropes and the character's remarkable versatility, allowing him to be depicted as a campy do-gooder in the 1960s and tortured avenger in the 2000s while retaining his root origin story and characteristics. In this course, we will explore the nineteenth century philosophical ideas, literary tropes, and historical and economic theories that helped create Batman, and will examine how those ideas influence Batman comics, television shows, and movies from the character's inception to the modern day.

HON 410-1009

T 2:30-5:15pm

Progress & Collapse: A Global History of Engineering

Dr. Carlos Dimas

Engineering, the sciences, and technology have played fundamental roles in the history of the world. Developments in communication, transport, medicine and public health, and agriculture have factored into the development and collapse of empires, the flourishing of cultures and societies, and the processes of colonialism and imperialism. Working under this basis, this course investigates the notion of science, technology, and engineering as patterns of progress and collapse from a global and historical perspective. In particular, students will engage with the politics of, and the social, environmental, and historical impact of large-scale infrastructure.

HON 410-1010

T/R 11:30-12:45pm

Aviation in the West

Dr. Dan Bubb

Prior to the arrival of the airplane, settlers who migrated west largely had to travel to the region by train or ship. The journey was long, tedious, in some cases treacherous. When the airplane arrived in the West, it transformed the entire region through speed, space, and time. The airplane revolutionized travel by cutting travel time by more than half, offered an exciting and adventurous sense of travel for westerners and non-westerners, and captured Americans' imagination about a unique metal contraption with wings called an "aeroplane." Essentially, the airplane not only made traveling within and outside of the region easier, but also created what aviation historian Joseph Corn coined as an "air-minded" society. Today, the West remains the epicenter of aviation, referenced by its numerous international airports, and the hub of the aerospace industry. In this course, we will explore how the airplane shaped and redefined the West by pushing its geographical, political, economic, and cultural boundaries. We also will explore the critical role airports play in the West as symbiotic partners to airplanes in helping grow regional and local economies, and as tourist and cultural centers. We also will explore the role the aerospace industry plays, especially looking at the growth and development of the space frontier.

HON 410-1011

R 2:30-5:15pm

Gen Xers: Who Are They & Why Should You Care?

Dr. Maria Jerinic

Generation X, the allegedly invisible generation made up of cynical slackers, has suddenly re-assumed center stage. Ostensibly, Gen Xers (born between 1964 and 1979) know how to deal with isolation, boredom, and disappointment, or so the public conversation goes. Is that so? How did they get that rap, and why should Gen Z care? In this course, we will focus on novels, music and films of and about Gen X in order for Gen Z to explore the function and impact of generational categories, and to maybe better understand those adults who raised and taught them. As if! There will be a creative project and a research paper, a movie night or two, and maybe some dancing!

HON 420-1001

M 2:30-5:15pm

Fashion History

Dr. Deirdre Clemente

From rolled stockings and bobbed hair to afros and dashikis, clothing and appearance serve as indispensable markers of the last century's sweeping social change. This course examines how key social and cultural developments came to influence fashion trends and presents how a diverse cross-section of Americans used personal appearance to define and display who they were. It begins with the redefinition of masculinity and femininity that was linked to the emergence of sports culture at the turn of the century, and it concludes with the rise of the "hip-hop nation," whose cultural influence defies race, class, and geography. The course juxtaposes broader trends such as modernization, immigration, and urbanization with the role that personal appearance played in the everyday lives of a range of Americans. The histories of the body, gender, and sexuality are integrated with topics including social stratification, ethnic identity, race, consumption, and material culture.

HON 420-1002

T/R 2:30-3:45pm

Staging Power: Music Theater in Western Culture

Dr. Anthony Barone

This course is a survey of music-theatrical works (especially opera, but other forms of music-theatrical spectacle will be examined) from the establishment of court and civic musical theater at the end of the European Renaissance to the present, with particular attention to the expression of different kinds of power and power relations—political, social, sexual, religious, and ethnic. The course will look at works from among experimental Italian operas around 1600; the court operas and ballets of seventeenth-century France; the disruptive comic opera tradition of the eighteenth-century; nineteenth-century theater of revolution, nation-building, and empire; early twentieth-century modernist musical theater; and post-War currents from the later twentieth-century and present day. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach that combines viewing and listening with readings in sociology, history, aesthetics, political theory, and other branches of philosophy. (Musical training and literacy are not required.)

HON 420-1004

T/R 1:00-2:15pm Web Live/Remote Synchronous

The BIPOC Experience in the World of Dance

Professor Victoria Baltimore-Dale

This course will explore the role of BIPOC communities and artists in the development of various dance idioms of the world. Students will delve into the history of the struggle of BIPOC artists to have their works produced, the development of their choreographic philosophies, and their impact on the dance movement vocabulary of ballet, jazz, modern tap, and hip hop. The class will investigate how dance creation has been affected by historical eras of upheaval and oppression. Special focus is placed on the qualities of movement of select BIPOC artists and dance companies. Students will be able to explore their own creativity through movement and digital platforms.

HON 430-1001

T/R 10:00-11:15am

Soccer and the Making of the Modern World

Dr. Cian McMahon

Every four years, more than one billion people (over one-seventh of the world's population) sit down to do the same thing: watch the FIFA World Cup final game. In this course we will use association football (known in North America as "soccer") as a new way to explore how labor, capital, and commodities have shaped various forms of human solidarity since the mid-nineteenth century. From humble beginnings, soccer has evolved into a twenty-first-century mega-business worth hundreds of billions of dollars. As such, its history offers a unique lens on the socio-economic forces that have shaped how people think about themselves over the past century and a half. We will explore the subject through an interdisciplinary collection of books, films, and articles. Effectively communicating one's ideas in writing is a keystone of the Honors College experience so this seminar will also encourage you to hone your analytical and writing skills by emphasizing essay-writing assignments and group discussion.

HON 430-1002

M/W 10:00-11:15am HYBRID with in-person meetings on Mondays

Roma Culture

Professor Oksana Marafioti

Introduction to Roma Cultural History begins with the history of Romani arrival in Europe, traces Romani cultural, social, and political presence in Europe and the United States, and ends with a reflection on the importance of contemporary Romani knowledge production. The course consists of weekly lectures and class discussions, as well as guest appearances delivered by renowned Roma artists and scholars. Topics discussed will include the following: identity and historiography, linguistic overview, slavery and the Holocaust, antigypsyism, feminism, intersectionality, and LGBT movements, art, dance, literature, and music overview, and Romani knowledge production.

HON 430-1003

W 2:30-5:15pm Web Live/Remote Synchronous

Literatures of Science and the Future

Dr. Heather Lusty

This course will take a three-pronged approach to conceptualizations of the future of the human species and the planet Earth. We will begin with a brief exploration of contemporary concerns about the planet (population, warming, AI, resources, the oceans, etc.). This will help familiarize students with the development of the literary canon as we read across several major themes including narratives of climate/dystopia, world building, and ethics/personhood.

HON 440-1001

F 11:30-2:15pm Web Live/Remote Synchronous

Healthcare reDesign

Dr. Kate Martin

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant gaps and design flaws in our healthcare system. Long-standing health disparities acutely worsened in vulnerable populations and the need to address them has become even more important than ever. Problem-based learning, commonly taught in medical schools, engages students in a subject by working through a poorly-defined problem. Design thinking is a way to develop and promote creativity in the problem-solving process. This course focuses on human-centered design thinking to address complex social problems. Students will review case studies to systematically examine innovative solutions that have come about because of design thinking. Assignments include readings and reflections on selected articles and video content as well as a text on health design thinking. Class time will be dedicated to discussions around topics involving vulnerable populations in healthcare. Students will develop their own human-centered design proposal as a semester project. This course requires no prior skill or background in healthcare, design or engineering.

HON 440-1002

W 2:30-5:15pm

Are There Ethics in Business? A Critical Film Appraisal

Charles Stanton, ESQ

Through the lens of film, we will catalog the way American business really works. What are the standards and guidelines that govern the corporate world? How do these rules affect not only those who work in the business universe but all of us? One of the seminal questions we will hope to answer is how industry has either helped or harmed the advance of social justice. We will study such core issues as employee efficiency, workers' rights, the fight for unionization, and the quest for women's equality. Most importantly whether there are legal safeguards available to ensure corporate responsibility and accountability. If not, what legal protections can be created. The main goal of the course is to provide our students with a more nuanced view of how business operates and to prepare them to question actions that may threaten our society.

HON 440-1003

Web-based/Asynchronous Online

Health Disparities

Dr. Johanna Adlam

This public health course will explore the root causes of health disparities associated with race, ethnicity, social class, and culture in the United States. We will also examine how the social determinants of health impact health outcomes for populations of color. Students will learn research methods and data analysis skills to independently investigate health-related inequities and understand the extent of the health status gap for marginalized groups. Additionally, we will discuss potential solutions to address health disparities and promote health equity, diversity, and inclusion within a public health context.

HON 496 - 1001

F 8:30-11:15am

Honors Service-Learning

Dr. Bryan Blankfield

This service-learning course provides students with the resources to better understand and alleviate instances of social injustice regarding mental health in the Las Vegas valley. This class will partner with Southern Nevada's branch of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and help prepare them for their next mental health campaign in the 2023 state legislative session. The semester will proceed in three primary phases. First, students will complete readings on the rhetoric of stigma and past efforts to address mental illness. Second, students will conduct research and learn how to compose documents for a successful advocacy campaign. Third, students will integrate the two previous phases while designing a variety of 1-page briefs and white papers for NAMI to use in future advocacy campaigns. Each week students will spend time in class on Fridays from 8:30 – 11:30am, or spend 10 hours a week with NAMI, or some combination of both (e.g., we may have a guest lecturer for an hour on Friday at 9:30, and the hours spent with NAMI will be reduced). Students will need to have their own transportation to and from service-learning locations.

***NOTE:** Honors College students who are not in the Service-Learning Honors program can take this course in place of an HON 440.