



Spring 2027 HON 400–Level Seminars

HON 410s

HON 410-1001 and HON 410-1002

Makers and Innovators

Dr. Priyanka Thakur

Section 1001: Tuesday, 2:30–5:15 p.m.

Section 1002: Wednesday, 2:30–5:15 p.m.

This course introduces students to the tools and skills used in engineering maker spaces, emphasizing safety, basic tool usage, and prototyping. Students will work both independently and in groups to develop their skills, creating items for personal and educational purposes, setting up a path to become a maker and innovator. The course will cover a variety of hands-on projects to enhance students' problem-solving, creativity, and technical abilities.

HON 410-1003

Let's Play! Innovation & Creativity in Gaming

Dr. Daniel Sahl

T 5:30–8:15 p.m.

Everyone has at least one good idea for a game! This course challenges students to innovate and develop new concepts and products in gaming, including video gaming, esports, casino games, board games, and everything else. Throughout the semester, lectures will introduce the fundamentals of game design, including rules and structure, art and story, the player experience, and commercialization. The final project will consist of your own innovative concept for a game or game-related technology. As you develop your concept, you will have the opportunity to receive feedback on your idea from mentors with past success inventing and commercializing new games. To protect any intellectual property disclosed in the class process, students will be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement.

HON 410-1004

Corporate Scandals

Nancy Rapoport, J.D.

M 2:30–5:15 p.m.

This course will explore why people in organizations make serious ethical blunders and what ramifications those blunders can have. An unusual twist this year: we're going to provide some experiential learning for law students and Honors undergrads alike. Our law students are going to play the role of third-year associates in "my" law firm. Our Honors undergrads will play the role of paralegals. Together, law students and Honors undergrads will investigate a corporate or law firm scandal and suggest what happened and what might be done to prevent a similar scandal from happening in the future.

HON 410-1005

Labor and Employment Law

Professor Bill Werner

M, W 10:00–11:15 a.m.

This course surveys the American law of employment, from its origins in English common law to modern state and federal statutory protections, with primary emphasis on civil rights, wage and hour, and labor-management relations laws. It is not the academic equivalent of a law school course but is designed primarily for students considering or planning to pursue a legal education. The course materials consist mostly of pertinent case opinions, statutes, and administrative materials and will include an introduction to the principles of legal research and advocacy.

Students will explore the historical, theoretical, and political underpinnings of U.S. employment law and current workplace legal issues. They will learn to analyze workplace scenarios and practices for legal issues and analyze statutes and case opinions for their logic and their application. Also, students will learn to interpret and apply statutes and case precedents to resolve difficult legal questions and to predict the outcomes of hypothetical cases. Students will explore and examine current emerging legal issues relating to labor and employment.

HON 410-1006

Black Holes and Elegy: A Method for Reading Loss

Dr. Whitney Koo

T, R 10:00–11:15 a.m.

This is a seminar on making out of the remains: the impossible demands of the elegiac tradition to reanimate and to console from within the void of absence. This course, an excavation of memory, will use the accompanying study of black holes as a reading method to understand the contradiction and complications of caring for the dead in poetry. In addition to an overview of the tradition of elegy, this course will focus on the use of blank space, materials, formal play, and sound to negotiate absence and presence in acts of remembrance.

HON 410-1007

The Graphic Novel

Dr. Tim Gauthier

T, R 1:00–2:15 p.m.

Progressively and steadily, over the last thirty years, the graphic novel has become recognized as an accomplished literary and aesthetic form. Beginning with Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* and expanding to include narratological and historical approaches to the medium, students will be introduced to theories and concepts in order to develop a critical approach to these literary and visual texts. Adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, this course will examine a selection of works that define and refine the genre, from writers and artists such as Art Spiegelman, Tillie Walden, and Gene Luen Yang, among others. In the process, we will investigate and unpack themes (violence, politics, racism, illness, ethnic diversity) that remain central concerns of the graphic novel form.

HON 410-1008

What If: Exploring Alternate History

Dr. David Schwartz

M, W 4:00–5:15 p.m.

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 410-1009**Environmentalism & Advocacy****Dr. William Sipe****M, W 1:00–2:15 p.m.**

Since the Industrial Revolution, human activity has triggered our planet's 6th mass extinction and an unprecedented climate crisis. This is a direct threat to our planet's biodiversity, sea levels, infrastructure, and agriculture. Despite this urgent reality, political and social change has been slow and unsteady. Communicating abstractions like "climate" and "crisis" has been challenging for scientists and advocates alike. To overcome this challenge, leaders across different ideologies, religions, and cultures are using various rhetorical tools to communicate the danger and opportunities of our shared ecological future. Using theories of argumentation, persuasion, spirituality, and storytelling, participants in this seminar will learn to evaluate environmental messages, deepen their understanding of complex environmental debates, and effectively articulate their own evidence-based perspectives.

HON 410-1010**Based on a True Story... Or Is It?****Dr. Michael Chin****M, W 2:30–3:45 p.m.**

Why are so many books and films “based on a true story,” and where is the line between fact and fiction? What can historical fiction teach us about our own lives in this contemporary world? And how might one mine one's own experiences in both interesting and morally responsible ways in the pursuit of creating art? From the roots of nonfiction texts which nonetheless contain fictive elements to more overtly fictional narratives that nonetheless pull from historical research and real-life events, this course examines the art and ethics of blurring these lines. Along the way, students participate in critical and creative writing exercises before ultimately generating their own pieces of original creative writing that further explore fact, fiction, and the intersections between the two.

HON 410-1011**Modalities of Citizenship****Dr. Bryan Blankfield****T, R 10:00–11:15 a.m.**

How does one perform citizenship? What it means to be a citizen and the modalities available for acting like one have never been fixed; they shift with cultural norms, media technologies, and the institutions of a given era. This course explores, from a rhetorical perspective, how citizens use various modalities to persuade one another, as well as engage elected officials. Students perform several of these modalities themselves (corresponding with representatives through mail and social media, creating a protest poster, and filing a Freedom of Information Act request) while tracking bills as they move through the Nevada Legislature. At the semester's midpoint, students travel to Carson City for a rare, up-close look at state government in action: sitting in on committee hearings and floor sessions, and meeting face-to-face with the governor, state legislators, and lobbyists.

NOTE: An application and special permission are required to enroll. This course includes a required, fully funded trip to Carson City, March 16–18, 2027. Priority application deadline: Oct. 25, 2026.

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HON 410-1012

The Future of Hospitality & Gaming: Innovation, Leadership & Global Strategy at MGM Resorts International

Professor Brian McDermott

W 2:30–5:15 p.m.

This Honors seminar provides a comprehensive exploration of the hospitality and gaming sectors through the lens of MGM Resorts International. Students will examine key areas of the business, including Gaming Operations, Hospitality, Entertainment, Global Development, and Strategic Growth. Through guest lectures from industry leaders, site visits to MGM properties, and analysis of real-world business cases, students will gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and innovations shaping the future of hospitality and gaming. Topics include the evolution of digital gaming, venue strategy, international expansion initiatives such as Japan, and the planning and execution of MEGA events led by MGM's Entertainment division.

HON 410-1013

Managing Your Money: Personal Finance for Today's Students & Tomorrow's Leaders

Professor Danny Siciliano, CPA, CMA

M, W 1:00–2:15 p.m.

To be successful in personal finance, students should have the ability to understand and interpret knowledge related to the various financial decisions they will make. Students must also develop proper habits and appropriate behaviors. This course focuses on both knowledge and behavior. By focusing on both, students will develop confidence in making financial decisions that will lead to long-term financial well-being.

HON 410-1100

The Cultural History of Magic: From Circe to the Strip

Dr. Katie Walker

M, W 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

The history and literature of magic are as vast as they are fascinating. From accounts of gods and mythic witches in the works of Homer and Horace, the medieval menagerie of werewolves and dragons, the mysterious rapping upon a table in Victorian seances, and finally to the feats and spectacles everywhere on the Las Vegas Strip, magic has served as a mirror. It reflects the cultural preoccupations and fantasies of a given historical people. And of course, it has provoked vicious debate: is magic an evil manifestation of demonic forces? Is it a means for the marginalized (in terms of class, sexual identity, or race) to find expression? Is magic a fiction we buy into in order to imagine new forms of collective being? Or is magic simply a performance, a posture? In our course, we will aim to uncover many (but probably not all) of magic's possible meanings. We will consider how magic has been used as an imaginative and even didactic tool in many cultures. We will also study how magic can be weaponized as a nefarious "other" to an imagined social order. Magic is, above all, provocative. It asks us to think about the consequences of that slippery category of thought called belief. Sometimes we or those we know both believe and don't believe in magic. The indeterminacy of magic means that it is one of the most fruitful (and fun) areas of research.

NOTE: There will be a required class field trip.

HON 410-1101**Wilderness Medicine, Survival, and the Human Condition****Michael Mulick, MD****F 8:30–11:15 a.m.**

Wilderness Medicine, Survival, and the Human Condition is an interdisciplinary Honors seminar that uses wilderness and extreme environments as a lens for exploring human physiology, survival, decision making, leadership, ethics, and our relationship with nature. What happens when the systems and resources of modern society are no longer available and individuals must rely on knowledge, creativity, teamwork, and judgment?

Through readings, seminar discussions, hands-on skills laboratories, case-based scenarios, and field experiences, students will investigate environmental exposure, trauma, altitude physiology, risk, rescue, disaster medicine, and the psychology of survival. No prior medical or scientific knowledge is required. Alongside developing real competency in wilderness medicine and survival skills, students will use the wilderness setting to consider broader questions about human vulnerability, resilience, leadership, health, and what it means to live well.

NOTE: An application and special permission are required to enroll. This course includes short field trips and a required overnight camping trip planned for May 1–2, 2027. Priority application deadline: Oct. 25, 2026.

[LEARN MORE & APPLY](#)

HON 410-1102**Profit and Purpose: Social Entrepreneurship in Practice****Professor Gary Carrier****M, W 2:30–3:45 p.m.**

Social entrepreneurship is the practice of building self-sustaining businesses around a social or environmental mission, a third way between traditional entrepreneurship and philanthropy. This course examines the practice and limitations through the ventures that define it. We trace its origins to cases like Grameen Bank, which pioneered the microcredit model and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, then look at how the model plays out today through purpose-driven companies like Cotopaxi and WAVR Technologies, a UNLV spinout pulling drinking water from desert air. By the end of the course, students will have developed a business model that solves a real social or environmental problem here in Las Vegas.

NOTE: There will be required class field trips.

About the Instructor: Gary Carrier is CEO of KODIE, a hybrid model that helps companies build remote technology teams while training thousands of people from underserved areas for careers in tech. Previously, he led global operations for a company that built the world's first 3D-printed community and managed a portfolio of impact investments across 36 countries. As UNLV's Presidential Fellow, he led technology deployments that supported the Super Bowl and more than 1,000 local businesses. He holds a BA from the University of Washington and an MA from UC Berkeley, where he received a teaching award.

HON 420s**HON 420-1001****Global Asian Popular Culture****Dr. Richard Miller****T, R 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.**

Global Asian Popular Culture examines the peoples of Japan, Korea, and China (including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore) as consumers, interpreters, and producers of global popular culture: music, film, television, literature, fashion, and internet-based forms. No prior knowledge of East Asian languages and cultures is required, although there will be opportunities to make use of such knowledge. By the end of the course, you will be able to articulate salient aesthetic features of global Asian popular culture and articulate their relationships with social, political, and cultural aspects of the originating and receiving cultures.

HON 420-1002 and HON 420-1003**Art Crimes & Misdemeanors: Looting, Fraud, & Shades of Restitution****Dr. Heather Lusty****Web-Based Asynchronous**

This course offers a survey-style approach to various legal concerns in the art world today. Cultural heritage studies encompass the creation, ownership, and transactions involving works of art, immovable historic structures, and cultural objects. This course will introduce several perspectives, preparing students to spot and research legal and ethical issues regarding the acquisition and selling of art in the world today. We will also explore major museum scandals, restitution movements, and international legal treaties regarding the safeguarding and exporting of archeological antiquities. Students will understand the broad, often intricately linked issues with buying, selling, and collecting art, and repatriation, and be equipped with the research and writing skills to articulate them.

HON 430s**HON 430-1001****Global Climate Change Impacts on Pre-Modern Civilizations****Dr. John Curry****M, W 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.**

This course aims to study the ecological, political, and social crises that occurred over the course of the seventeenth century in global perspective. In contemporary times, people throughout the world have become increasingly aware of the impact of climate change upon human societies. It is much less well-known, however, that we already have multiple historical examples of such events, beginning with the collapse of the Late Bronze Age and the eleventh-century collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean world. More importantly for our purposes, the General Seventeenth-Century Crisis, which manifested across multiple geographical regions and societies, was a comparatively well-documented event in the historical record. During this time, a period of global cooling led to food insecurity, political instability, and general misery in many parts of the world. By the time a warmer climate returned, the process of adaptation had dramatically changed both the trajectory of world history and the global balance of power. After tackling the issue of climate change in antiquity and the medieval world, we will examine in detail the impact of a global climate change event on China, Japan, the Ottoman Empire, and early modern Europe.

HON 430-1002**Perspectives from West and South Asia: Invitations to Creative Writing****Dr. Maryam Ala Amjadi****M, W 1:00–2:15 p.m.**

This undergraduate workshop introduces students to foundational practices in fiction and poetry through literary traditions from West and South Asia. With particular emphasis on Iranian literature and Persian poetic traditions, as well as works in translation from Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, and other regional languages, the course explores literary aesthetics, forms, and conventions that are often underrepresented in creative writing curricula. This focus invites students to consider how writers working across different cultural and historical contexts approach questions of voice, image, narrative, form, and artistic purpose, while expanding their understanding of what creative writing can be.

Through close reading, discussion, writing exercises, and sustained workshop practice, students will develop their own fiction and poetry while learning to read as writers. The workshop component emphasizes revision, attentive response, and giving and receiving constructive feedback under the instructor's guidance. By the semester's end, the course provides a broader global perspective on literary practice and equips students with the tools to write, revise, and think about creative work in today's diverse literary world.

HON 440s**HON 440-1001****Neurodiversity, Identity, and Communication****Dr. Haley Decker****M, W 10:00–11:15 a.m.**

Neurodiversity is the idea that differences in how people think, learn, and experience the world, such as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, and more, are natural variations of the human brain rather than deficits that must be “fixed.” Grounded in communication studies (particularly intergroup and intercultural communication) and disability justice, this course examines neurodivergent identities, communication, and experiences, with particular attention to autism and an intersectional consideration of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and other identities. Students will compare models of disability and neurodiversity; explore processes of stigma and marginalization, disclosure, social support, resilience, and intergroup communication; and consider the practical implications of neurodiversity across areas such as education, healthcare, the workplace, science, and interpersonal relationships.

HON 440-1002**Sociology of Selena****Dr. Fatima Suarez****R 2:30–5:15 p.m.**

This course uses the life, career, and legacy of the late singer Selena Quintanilla-Pérez to examine broader social structures, identities, and institutions, particularly the histories, identities, and lived experiences of Mexican Americans and Latinx communities in the United States. Using Selena as a sociological case study, students explore foundational concepts and contemporary debates about race and ethnicity, gender, inequality, culture, identity, and collective memory.

HON 440-1100**Policing Las Vegas: A Multicultural Perspective on the Evolution of Law Enforcement****Dr. Tyler Parry****W 2:30–5:15 p.m.**

The nature of American policing and its applications of law enforcement often intersect with questions surrounding gender, race, class, ableism, and power, as marginalized populations are often disproportionately on the receiving end of police uses of force. Due to these societal dynamics, the institution of policing has undergone various changes since law enforcement agencies were first formed in the colonial era, and each city has its own unique story for how the community has perceived and interacted with its local police. As one of the country’s youngest large metropolitan areas, Las Vegas’ rapid growth throughout the twentieth century impacted every facet of its society, including the police force. This course provides a historical framework through which students can understand the evolution of policing in the Las Vegas Valley. It specifically uses an interdisciplinary framework inspired by historians, sociologists, ethnic studies scholars, critical theorists, and carceral studies researchers to examine the dynamics of community-police relations. Ultimately, this course prioritizes the voices of marginalized people, including those who are police officers, and encourages students to interrogate questions surrounding power dynamics and the position of law enforcement agents within twenty-first-century society.

NOTE: There may be required class field trips.

HON 496**HON 496-1001****Need a Lyft? The Inaccessibility and Unaffordability of Public Transportation for Lower-Income Clark County Residents (Honors Service Learning)****Dr. Dan Bubb****F 8:30–11:15 a.m.**

This service-learning course will explore why there is inequity in accessibility to public transportation across the Las Vegas Valley and enable students to become more familiar with public transportation and urban planning and identify ways to make public transportation more equitable in terms of accessibility. Through research, reflection, and hands-on learning, students will attain a deep understanding of the public transportation system in Clark County and create ways to improve it by making it more accessible to all Clark County residents.

NOTE: *This is a service-learning course requiring off-campus site visits and engagement with community partners. You will be required to complete 15–20 hours of service work during the semester. You are responsible for securing your own transportation to and from service-learning locations. Please note that time spent commuting to service-learning sites will not count toward service hours.*

HON 496-1002**Nature Nearby (Honors Service Learning)****Dr. Bill Doyle****R 2:30–5:15 p.m.**

This class offers a two-part approach to understanding access to nature and taking direct action to expand it in our community. First, students will explore nature and place from humanities-based perspectives as a means to understand walking, gardening, urban and suburban green space, arid landscapes, and the cultural assumptions that shape what we count as nature. Readings, discussions, and other assignments related to these subjects will become context for our investigation of who has ready access to nearby nature in Southern Nevada and who does not. Second, working independently, collectively, and in consultation with campus and community partners, students will research barriers to parks and other green spaces, identify the extent to which community needs are being met, and develop action plans for supplementing existing efforts. Our class will also include site visits and engagement with partners like Get Outdoors Nevada, Green Our Planet, and Clark County Parks and Recreation, all of which work to expand outdoor access. Based on availability, our class may have guest speakers who will share their expertise.

NOTE: *This is a service-learning course requiring off-campus site visits and engagement with our community partner(s). You are responsible for securing your own transportation to and from service-learning locations. Please note that time spent commuting to service-learning sites will not count toward service hours.*

HON 496-1003**Playing with a Purpose: Classical Music in Under-Resourced Communities (Honors Service Learning)****Professor Charles Javier****T, R 4:00–5:15 p.m.**

In this service-learning course, through the partnership with the Foundation to Assist Young Musicians (FAYM), students will learn the vital role performing arts (particularly classical and mariachi music) play in under-resourced communities specifically for young musicians. While developing relationships and collaborating with FAYM's stakeholders, students will be tasked with enhancing the organization's mission through fulfilling its immediate needs as well as laying groundwork for future operational success. The class will take an in-depth look at the core of FAYM's mission and its parent organization's impact around the world (El Sistema) and will gain a better understanding of similar arts organizations in the Las Vegas Valley.

NOTE: *This is a service-learning course requiring off-campus site visits and engagement with community partners. You will be required to complete 15–20 hours of service work during the semester. You are responsible for securing your own transportation to and from service-learning locations. Please note that time spent commuting to service-learning sites will not count toward service hours.*