

UMBC Honors College Seminars

Spring
2019

HONR 200-01: Hubris & Heroism: Three Quests for the 21st Century [7433]

Instructor: Steven McAlpine, Dept of Interdisciplinary Studies, Thurs. 4:30-7:00pm; LIB 216M

Ancient myth through modern films such as *The Matrix* and *Harry Potter* tell the story of the ordinary man or woman who is called to an extraordinary journey. At the heart of our fascination with the heroic story is the belief that in each of us lies untapped potential to change the world, that we possess a latent power that only needs a call to action. Through the lenses of neuroscience (are we "hardwired" for heroic behavior?), psychology, mythology, philosophy (do heroes have a stronger ethical impetus?), theology and the arts, we will explore how the heroic journey is a necessary step in the construction of one's identity in order to answer the question, "who am I, and what am I called to do in the world?"

HONR 211: Great Books Seminar II [6472]

Instructor: Ellen Handler Spitz, Honors College, Tues. 4:30-7:00pm; LIB 216M

This is a reading, writing, and discussion seminar. Each week we study a major work of literature produced in England, Ireland, France, Norway, Czechoslovakia, the US, among others; these include plays, novels, and short stories, all published between 1650 and 2000. We analyze characterization, plot, dialogue, setting, structure, theme, metaphor, and symbol. We ask the works to become our teachers. As we proceed, the books tend to entwine in a cultural field in which we meander: an inter-text, which they---and we---create together. Writing about literature and discussing it are arts in themselves, critical arts, which we endeavor to learn. Although we take up a large number of works in order to become acquainted with them, we read in as much detail as time permits. Our goal is never to reach consensus but rather to deepen our individual ways of engaging with each text and honing our interpretive skills.

HONR 300-01: Feast and Fast in Medieval/Renaissance Lit and Culture [2286]

Instructor: Kate McKinley, Dept of English, Mon./Wed. 8:30-9:45am; LIB 216M

This course will draw on a rich diversity of texts, literary, religious, culinary, social, and historical, to analyze the significance and uses of both feast and fast in premodern culture. We will begin by examining the serious problem of famine and food scarcity in Europe and Britain, the ways that economic class impacted diet, as well as the religious significance of fasting and of mythic foods such as the Holy Grail. This course is designed to engage students in the emerging discipline of food histories and cultures (or "foodways") and to explore the ethical and social class implications of food and food waste in our own culture.

HONR 300-02: Physiology of Dinosaurs [5582]

Instructor: Sarah Leupen, Dept of Biological Sciences, Mon./Wed. 10:00-11:15am; Fine Arts 018

In this course, we will look at what we know, what we can know, and how we know, about the body systems of dinosaurs: how did dinosaurs breathe and digest and reproduce, how fast did they grow, were they warm- or cold-blooded, how did they get blood all the way up those long necks? We'll read both popular descriptions of dino physiology as well as primary research papers, and spend class time working in groups, discussing as a whole class, and presenting to each other about what we've found. The goal is for you to end up knowing more about how animals work in general than before, and for all of us to be wowed by dinosaurs all over again.



HONR 300-03: Race, Poverty, & Gender in Baltimore [5583]

Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye, Honors College, Tues. 1:00-3:30pm; LIB 216M

Social categories of race, class and gender provide structure for and organize people's lives. These categories intersect with one another, reinforce one another's effects, and can, at the same time, cut against one another. In this course, we will explore how these main social categories operate in the lives of people living (or who lived) in Baltimore. We will first explore how race, class, poverty and gender are defined and then examine how they operate and interact within the context of Baltimore. As any city with a unique history, Baltimore provides a location through which we can examine social phenomena like block busting (neighborhood segregation), health disparities, food access, proliferation of crime and drugs, the judicial system, and more. Students will be engaged with projects in Baltimore. Some short papers and a longer final presentation/paper that incorporates the Baltimore work will be required.

HONR 300-04: Contemporary Theatre [6145]

Instructor: Nyalls Hartman, Dept of Theater, Tues./Thurs. 11:30am-12:45pm; LIB 216M

A great wave of innovative work in the American theatre began around 1960, which continues to influence the nature and form of today's theatre, film, and television. Through selected readings and viewings of archived performances, this course will look closely at artists whose investigation into the purpose of theatre pioneered the experimental theatre movement and through collaboration devised and instigated new forms of theatrical experience. The course will also try to discover innovative work currently in progress today. Students will also create their own performance, utilizing the ideas and techniques of these artists.



HONR 300-05: Refugee and Immigration Law [6146]

Instructor: Jeffrey Davis, Dept. of Political Science, Tu./Th. 1-2:15pm, PUP 354

Right now almost 65 million people are fleeing their homes, driven away by persecution and wars--more than at any time since World War II. This seminar will engage the following questions: To what extent do international and domestic laws protect those fleeing their home country seeking refuge in another country? What is a refugee? What are the legal and political barriers to protecting refugees in the US? How do the legal systems in the US, UK and Germany treat those deemed to be undocumented immigrants? Also listed as POLI 439.

HONR 300-06: Be Your Best Self in Real Life [7615]

Instructors: Simon Stacey (Honors College), David Hoffman and Romy Hubler (Dept of Student Life)

Mon. 4:30-7:00pm, LIB 216M

This course investigates institutions and the ways they can suppress or liberate people's agency: the capacity to make choices and shape our world. Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of how people can become agents in three key institutional realms: education, employment, and civic life.

HONR 300-07: Rhetoric at Work [7620]

Instructor: Chris Varlack, Dept of English, Tues./Thurs. 10:00-11:15am: LIB216M

This course will help students (a) identify their strengths, interests, ambitions, and goals and (b) prepare a portfolio of written materials to use for their professional futures, including applications to graduate and professional schools or internships and jobs. Students will develop a sense of the personal and professional paths and possibilities that they might want to consider. In addition, they will draw on established and state-of-the-art thinking about the process of writing and survey exemplary writing (such as conference proposals and scholarly articles) in a variety of fields in order to become familiar with the conventions, techniques, tools, and approaches to effective writing in the professional world. Ultimately, students will develop and revise a portfolio of work, from personal statements to research papers, reflection essays, and more while considering future avenues for research, presentation, and publication. In essence, this course will help students better understand rhetoric (the art of communication) from theory to practice. This course will satisfy the Honors College's Expository Writing class requirement for students who received AP or IB test credit for ENGL 100.

HONR 300-08: Graphic Diasporic Literature [8245]

Instructor: Christopher Varlack, Dept of English, Wed. 1:00-3:30pm, LIB 216M

This course literature of the African diaspora in graphic form, including works such as All Negro Comics--the first all-Black comic produced in the United States--and Rep. John Lewis' march Trilogy. Interdisciplinary in nature, this course seeks to bridge art, literature, history, politics, sociology, psychology, and more as we seek new approached to communicate the lived experiences of communities often marginalized, silenced, or underserved. In addition to studying examples of graphic diasporic literature produced across time, students will also probe the art and craft of composing graphic texts. This will culminate in the production of a series of brief fictional or autobiographical texts, using online storyboard creators. No experience in art, creative writing, or comics development is necessary. Also listed as INDS 430.

HONR 300-09: Masterpieces of Visual Art [8290]

Instructor: Ellen Handler Spitz, Honors College, Wed. 1:00-3:30pm, LIB 216M

Masterpieces of Western Visual Art is a seminar designed for non-art majors as well as for art students. The Honorable Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer has spoken of his undergraduate art history class at Stanford and the valuable role it has played in his life.

Inspired by that comment, this class is aimed at students who may make careers in diverse fields, but who will travel, go to museums, and enjoy the arts. It focuses on Western painting and sculpture, but we will also look at Western architecture and illuminated manuscripts and read contextually. Topics include ancient Greece and Renaissance Europe; other special topics TBA. Lecture and discussion.