

UMBC Honors College

Seminars

Spring
2020



HONR 211: Great Books Seminar II [xxxx]

Instructor: Christopher Varlack, Honors College, Tues. 4:30-7:00pm, LIB 216M
Societal Reconstructions and Cultural Reclamations: 21st Century Great Books by Women Writers

In our world, great books are not just a marker of a distant past. Since the start of the twenty-first century, a number of new great books have emerged that have been groundbreaking in their efforts to transform how we see and understand society as well as ourselves. This course, with its focus on societal reconstructions and cultural reclamations specifically in great books by twenty-first century women writers across the globe, aims at interrogating those more modern great books such as Yaa Gyasi's 2016 novel *Homecoming* and Toni Morrison's 2012 *Home* that have invariably impacted cultural and social discourse through their perspectives. Together, we will engage with these texts and others through in-depth class discussion, oral presentations, and brief critical writing assignments as we attempt to process the ideas these authors introduce and to determine what constitutes a great book today in contradistinction to the great works of the past.

HONR 300-01: Physiology of Dinosaurs [5171]

Instructor: Sarah Leupen, Dept of Biology, Mon./Wed. 10:00-11:15am, ILSB 230

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 300-02: Race, Poverty, and Gender in Baltimore [5172]

Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye, Honors College, Mon./Wed. 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 300-03: Contemporary Theater [5653]

Instructor: Nyalls Hartman, Dept of Theater, Wed. 4:30-7:00pm, 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 300-04: Refugee and Migration Law [5654]

Instructor: Jeffrey Davis, Dept of Political Science, Tues./Thurs. 11:30am-12:45pm, 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 300-05: Be Your Best Self in Real Life [6813]

Instructor: Instructors: Simon Stacey (Honors College), David Hoffman and Romy Hubler (Dept of Student Life), Wed., 4:30-7:00pm, FA 018

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 300-06: African-American Popular Culture [6816]

Instructor: Chris Varlack, Honors College, Thurs. 4:30-7:00pm, FA 002

In all forms of popular culture, representations of the African-American people have always been at the center, particularly in theater and television, where visual depictions of stereotypes shaped the U.S. cultural imagination on key topics such as race while also raising a defense of the racial hierarchy in place during the Jim Crow era. This course seeks to examine popular culture across time, from the postbellum era to the present, in an effort to trace how the representation of Black culture has evolved. We will examine the depictions of the African-American condition from the perspective of white storytellers with emphases on Thomas Dartmouth Rice's Jim Crow caricature, the Mammy figure in film such as *Gone with the Wind* and *Judge Priest*, and as documented in Marlon Riggs' 1986 *Ethnic Notions*. In addition, we will examine how that story has changed with Black actors taking center stage, from *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*, to *Black Panther*, to Jordan Peele's 2019 horror film, *Us*.

HONR 300-07: Disaster Politics [7275]

Instructor: Brian Grodsky, Dept of Political Science, Mon./Wed. 1:00-2:15pm, FA 018

This course will introduce students to the political and policy dimensions of disaster. The two key questions we ask are how does disaster affect the social/political landscape and how does the social and political landscape affect the ability to deal with disaster? Through studies in political science, sociology, history, economics, psychology, (emergency) medicine and other fields, we will examine both domestic and foreign policy implications on the modern state, victims and communities (with special emphasis on vulnerable populations).

HONR 300-08: Mystery and Detective Fiction [7940]

Instructor: Norman Prentiss, Honors College, Tu. 1:00-3:30pm, LIB 216M

Whatever the genre, authors bury secrets for us to uncover: readers become detectives, speculating about a character's motives or anticipating the next plot twist. Mystery and detective stories make this process more explicit, and the skills we develop in reading Agatha Christie and Raymond Chandler can help us uncover secrets in other texts. This course studies mystery elements in literary classics such as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and traces the mystery genre from its origins in Poe and Doyle, to the hard-boiled Black Mask school and police procedurals, through to modern-day forensic thrillers. In-class comparisons of genre classics to shorter literary excerpts, film clips, and other works of art, help students extend their study of course material to mysteries and problem-solving in other disciplines, and to narratives enjoyed outside the classroom.

HONR 300-09: Integrative Health in Aging [7941]

Instructor: Robin Majeski, Erickson School of Aging Studies, Tues./Thurs. 10:00-11:15am, LIB 216M

The course presents an interdisciplinary examination of an integrative approach to wellness promotion in aging which brings together conventional western and complementary/alternative (CAM) modalities to promote health in aging. We will use philosophy, history, health, biology, and psychology to answer key questions. We will analyze patterns of and motivations for the use of CAM modalities of health care among older adults, a key component of an integrative health approach, and examine the importance of an integrative approach to addressing health conditions which are common in older adults.

HONR 300-10: Law and Public Health [7944]

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

Immigration, Tax, and Gun Laws, among others, are not generally thought of as "public health laws." Yet, they have a significant and often surprising impact on public health. In this course we will survey both traditional public health laws (e.g. alcohol or nutrition laws) as well as other types of laws that also affect public health. We will read relevant laws, journal articles, policy papers and news articles on these topics and employ some non-traditional writing assignments such as letters to the editor, op-ed articles and congressional written testimonies.