

UMBC Honors College

Seminars

Fall 2017



HONR 200, section 01 (7215): Invertebrate Neurobiology

Instructor: Dr. Chan Lin, Dept of Biological Sciences **Mon./Wed. 10:00-11:15am**

Understanding how the brain works is one of the biggest challenges in science. In recent years, the development of neuroscience has drawn unprecedented resources and efforts worldwide; however, we are still awaiting an overarching theory regarding how any brain actually works. This seminar will introduce you to a range of historical and modern neuroscience topics, from the squid giant axon's action potentials to jellyfish biofluorescence, with a focus on the roles invertebrates play as critical research animals. As well, we will focus on some of the greatest discoveries in neuroscience, many of which are Nobel Prize-winning stories.

HONR 200, section 02 (8044): Talking Democracy

Instructors: Dr. David Hoffman & Craig Berger, Dept. of Student Life **Thurs. 4:30-7pm**

The central questions that the course will explore include: What is the role of a citizen in a democracy? What is the "self" that participates in self-government and civic life? How does language shape our perceptions? How do different modes and styles of communication embed or undermine democratic values? How can people make intentional use of language and communication to foster democratic relationships and civic health? Considering these questions will involve drawing on insights from the fields of psychology, political science, American studies, history, English, and media and communication studies. In addition, this course will help students build skills that enable them to initiate and enact positive social change and will enable students to emerge with greater confidence and clarity about how to move forward as contributors to collective problem-solving and community-building.



HONR 210 (6252) : Great Books Seminar I

Instructor: Dr. Ellen Handler Spitz, The Honors College **Tues. 4:30-7pm**

An introduction to the great books of world literature, religion, philosophy, history, and science from ancient times to the present day. This course will include readings from such works as Genesis, Ramayana, several Greek tragedies, Aristotle's Poetics, Virgil's Aeneid, Ovid's Metamorphoses, and the Arabian Nights.

HONR 300-01 (1818): Understanding HIV & AIDS

Instructor: Dr. Jodi Kelber-Kaye, The Honors College **Wed. 4-7:30pm**

This course will focus on the ways in which HIV and AIDS are understood in the US, both in terms of their domestic presence and global manifestations. We will examine biological, policy, artistic, and activist ways of producing knowledge about the virus, and how those knowledges, or understandings, depend on each other for meaning. We will also be looking at how these knowledges are interdisciplinary and, while they depend on each other for their meanings, those meanings are often contradictory or even ultimately untrue. Readings will come from all of these disciplines, but no particular expertise in any of them is required for this course. Besides reading, there will be short and longer writing assignments, and a group project that includes an intervention in cultural expressions of HIV and AIDS.



HONR 300-02 (6251): Mystery and Detective Fiction

Instructor: Norman Prentiss, Independent Author **Tues. 1-3:30pm**

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, section 03 (6652): The Impact of US Law on Public Health

Instructor: Dr. Elyse Grossman Dept of Public Policy Mon. 1-3:30pm

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.



HONR 300-04 (7268): Masterpieces of Visual Art

Instructor: Dr. Ellen Handler Spitz, The Honors College Wed. 1-3:30pm

Masterpieces of 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 painting and sculpture, but we will also look at architecture and illuminated manuscripts and read contextually. Topics include ancient Greece and Renaissance Europe; other special topics TBA. Lecture and discussion.



HONR 300, section 05 (8042): Reading the Body in East Asian Culture

Instructor: Dr. Julie Christ Oakes, The Honors College, Tues./Thurs. 11:30am-12:45pm

In East Asian history and culture, the body has been embedded in a more holistic approach than the Western perspective, in that humans are seen as sociological beings whose physical states carry meaning to the wider community (rather than bodies being understood objectively and physiologically). Over the semester, we will look at specific examples from China, Japan and Korea that illustrate this concept. For example, how was hair a signifier of female power in Japan--or filiality in Korea? What did Chinese bound feet have to do with Confucian harmony? Or more recently, why are organ transplants deemed ideologically more problematic in Japan?

HONR 300, section 06 (8043): The Science of Making Good Decisions

Instructor: Dr. John Park, Dept of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering Tues./Thurs. 8:30-9:45am

The movie "Freaky Friday" features a mom telling her daughter: "Make good choices!" Easier said than done--this course will try to help. We will explore the ways people typically make decisions, examine why decision-making is difficult, and look at the shortcuts humans have developed to try to simplify this task. These simplified strategies--heuristics--often mean the difference between life and death, and can sometimes betray us. We will learn about approaches that render decision-making a more principled process. Mathematics and probability theory can be applied to making better decisions, while still accounting for personal needs, preferences, and limitations. This course is also cross-listed as CMSC 491. NOTE: You must have completed MATH 150, or have a Calculus placement.

Honors College Applied Learning Experience Courses

HONR 390: Reflections on Community Service Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye

This course provides opportunities for reflection of the principles and techniques of community service. Through a co-enrollment of PRAC 096, students are introduced to basic methods of community service, a background in the cultural, political, and social contexts of community service, and a forum for discussion of issues surrounding civic engagement and social responsibility. Students apply concepts and skills they develop to actual experiences in community service. **Permission required by the Shriver Center and Honors College.**

HONR 400: Honors Independent Study Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye

Independent study or research under the guidance of faculty mentor. Course guidelines are available in the Honors College. This course is repeatable for a maximum of eight credits.

HONR 410: Honors Internship Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye

This course offers academic credit for an internship. During the semester, student interns perform a minimum of 120 hours of supervised tasks for a research, business, government, or non-profit agency. This course is repeatable for a maximum of 6 credits. **Preliminary authorization by the Career Services Center (Prac 098) and thereafter permission of the Honors College is required.**