

HON 290 Seminars: Spring 2016

HON 291: Aesthetic and Humanistic Inquiry

HON 291: Harry Potter and the Muggle World

Tammy Mielke

This course focuses on gaining a greater understanding of Harry Potter as literary and cultural phenomena. This course studies the critical discourse that has emerged over the last decade or so as it relates to the novels and other cultural and artistic manifestations. This series is explored in terms of its broader social and political implications.

HON 291: Children's Film and Lit

Tammy Mielke

This is a course in children's literature and children's film; although it would be more correct to say literature and film intended for a child audience. This class focuses on cinematic adaptation of literary works, exploring how theme, form, technique, and style manifest in both film and written text for a specific audience. We are also vested in exploring how the intended audience is both inside and outside both the literature and the film to determine—through authorship and directing, publishing and producing - the desires of adults have in the shaping of the generation after them.

HON 291: Comic Books and Other Intermedia

Rob Wallace

Over the past few decades, comic books have finally started to get noticed in the United States as a legitimate form of artistic expression. Outside of the US, comics have been both popular and respected for many years, and even before the modern comic book was created, forms of writing mixing with images were being created that would influence subsequent generations of popular culture. This course will survey the history of comic books and associated forms of visual and textual art (such as concrete poetry and Japanese ukiyo-e prints) and encourage students to create their own text/image works.

HON 291: Wild Writers Writing Outdoors

Ted Martinez

In this course we will discover the magic of nature writing, why writers do nature writing, and the magic of writing outdoors about place. An emphasis will be placed on the creation of nature writing and discovering nature through experience and writing. We will analyze the elements that make good nature writing and attempt to emulate what we have learned by writing about place while writing in the outdoors. We will read classic nature authors such as Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams and John Muir. We will also foray into the philosophical underpinnings of nature writing and environmental philosophy.

HON 291: Hollywood Wars

John Martin

Hollywood films shape the American movie going audience's perception of war's reality in powerful ways. Some war movies inspire patriotism and a sense of national purpose, while others mount bitter attacks on the human costs of conflict and question its necessity. This course surveys the development of the American war film as a genre. We will introduce basic terms central to the study of film as a medium and provide some models for critical analysis.

HON 292: Cultural Understanding

HON 292: Way Out West: Cultural Studies of the American West

Rob Wallace

Cowboys, Indians, shootouts, horses . . . but also punk rockers, beat poets, aliens, and detectives. This course will investigate various archetypes of Western culture as well as figures not usually associated with the American West. From the Mexican/American borderlands, to the Pacific Rim, to the high desert, to the urban sprawl of Los Angeles, we'll analyze a shifting set of histories and mysteries that remain central to how the U.S. views itself and how the world views the U.S.!

HON 293: Applied Science

HON 293: Plants and People

Ted Martinez

Plants and people have co-evolved for thousands of years, but how much do you really know about the plants we depend on so much? Learn about plants as a source of medicine, food, fiber, alcohol, nutrition and health. Plants provide for us from our birth to death, exist in our culture and rituals, economy and industry, and comfort us in our homes. In this class we will examine plants in our everyday lives. There will be a focus on the principles of plant biology and taxonomy with an emphasis on human reliance upon plants including those used as a source of food, fiber, medicine, and other commercially important uses. Focus will also be on human nutrition, important plant families such as grasses and legumes, starchy foods, stimulating and alcoholic beverages, herbs, spices, and medicinal and psychoactive plants. There will be field collections and plant walks to foster a scientific appreciation of the plants around us.

HON 294: Social and Political Worlds

HON 294: Improvisation in Art and Life

Rob Wallace

Improvisation is one of the most important techniques used by artists in many disciplines. But as scholars have started to discover in recent decades, it turns out that improvisation is also one of the most important tools that humans can use to survive and thrive. This course will investigate the rich history of improvisation as a theory and practice in the arts and other aspects of human experience.

HON 294: Zombie Apocalypse!...and Other Dystopias

Will Cordeiro

This class will examine visions of dystopias—including, yes, the zombie apocalypse!—and their social, political, and ecological implications, primarily through watching and discussing a range of classic and contemporary films, such as *Blade Runner*, *Brazil*, *Metropolis*, and *Videodrome*. Besides fantasy dystopias set in the future, we will also look at “realistic” dystopias that are set in the past or present resulting from such causes as failed social planning, empire-building, environmental disasters, or plague. Supplementing the films, the class will engage with science fiction literature as well as the historical, ecological, architectural, economic, and philosophical context of dystopias. We will investigate selected utopic movements, too, discussing the different values by which visionaries sought to shape ideal societies, thereby gaining insight into their problems and potentials as well as the way they have shaped our current culture. We will seek to understand how the fears embodied in dystopias—and the hopes that fashioned utopias—inform or reflect our own societies and communities today.

HON 294: A life of meaning: Contemplation, compassion and community

Cassie Dakan

What does it mean to “stop the noise” or to experience “quiet ego”? In a hurry-up, want-it-now, future oriented modern Western world, how can we live in the present – in immediate, reflective and meaningful experience, among caring and supportive people? In this class we will read about, discuss, and practice the course title.

HON 294: Into the Future: Visions of Tomorrow

Cassie Dakan

Foresight is the newest term for the study of envisioning the future. How do people imagine and theorize multiple possible, probable, and preferable futures, seeking to understand what may continue and what may change for life on Earth. Foresight study merges the social and natural sciences, and parallels the field of history. Importantly, it examines how humans will behave and interact as complex world systems and dynamics shift.

HON 294: Now You See Them, Now You Don't

Robyn Martin

Societal motivations and reactions to unknown anomalies, like UFOs, Bigfoot, and the Bermuda Triangle, among others. Analyzes reports of unknown objects and creatures globally, and the controversies that surround them by studying the historic and current attitudes worldwide toward some of these phenomenon, including the scientific community, search/proof organizations, the “lunatic fringe,” charlatans, the entertainment industry, and the press, and the reasoning behind the continuing societal need to believe in an unknown.

HON 294: On Leadership

David Camacho

This course is about leadership. As a member of the Honors Program community, you have a special and significant opportunity to affect the lives of others. Stated a bit differently, what obligation do you have to building community? Consider the following: Skill in building community is one of the highest and most essential skills a leader can command.

Students will examine the development of leadership theories. Attention will then be given to assessing leadership skills. At its core, leadership is about knowing one’s own personal values. Leaders that practice their personal values set a clear example for others, especially when their values are congruent, desirable, and beneficial for their communities. What shared values bring together diverse communities that define the complexity of the human experience?

HON 294: Playing the Game of Thrones: The Political Power of Genre, Bodies, Religion, and Society

Tammy Mielke

“When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die.” In this course, we will look at the reality of Cersei Lannister’s words by analyzing this history of Martin’s world and his use of genre to present “the relationships between the psychological, social, cultural and political components of human communities, and the dynamics of human behavior in varied contexts.”. Students will analyze the actions and decisions made by the characters, and critique their strategies in both the written series and the HBO TV series. Each week class will be based on reviewing the events in the assigned reading from that week and by comparing the patterns in the text and show with human behavior in our world. We will investigate the sometimes contradictory but always complex and interesting politics of the show. We will unearth the many ways in which the text/show operate as a discourse on power: political power via government and personal sphere; power through bodies in terms of gender and age; power through religion and ethnicity; and power through society in terms of wealth and poverty.