HONORS TOPICS COURSES
(from Fall 1998 to present)

HON 202 American Identity: The American Self, From Within And Without. This course is an interdisciplinary investigation of American identity -- what constitutes it historically for Americans, as well as what it means to other nations looking at America. Through the disciplinary lenses of literature and philosophy, we will examine the roots of an early American ethos and sense of American personhood, tracing budding ideas from the transcendentalists through turn-of-the-century writers and theorists. Drawing on both traditional and non-canonical works, we will consider themes of self-reliance, independence, individualism, expansionism, pragmatism, protestant work ethic, democratic civic engagement and entrepreneurial spirit. We will examine how writers and theorists have constructed local and international myths and definitions of ‘American identity’, including those who have fought to gain inclusion into the American cultural landscape.

As America has long been a nation of regions-- geographical areas whose inhabitants share enough common experiences, values, and history to make them distinct from other areas-- the course will examine both the notion of "American" identity, and the idea of local identity, to see the way in which writers and philosophers politicize and create themselves. Some examples include Zora Neale Hurston and her Eatonville; Marjorie Rawlings' connection of identity and environment; Jane Addams’ writings from Chicago’s Hull-House settlement movement, circa 1930; John Dewey’s ideas about American education; and writings from the Harlem Renaissance period by Alain Locke and WEB DuBois on culture and national identity. Other authors may include Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, Dickinson, Douglass, Nella Larsen, James Weldon Johnson.

HON 202 Equity. Explores some of the inequities within and among human societies. Examines how inequities are arising in recent times within a relatively egalitarian Amazonian society, and the maintenance, increase and consequences of inequities in the United States and among nation states, globally. At the same time, one of the challenges will be to come to terms with what is meant by the term "equity," and to explore a few ways by which people try to achieve more equitable situations in the world today. **Prerequisite: HON 201.**

HON 202 Fanatics and Visionaries. Exploration of fanaticism and foresight as depicted in world literature, international and historical legal case studies, popular culture, and political practic es. After studying prominent and fictive accounts of fanatics and visionaries, and considering their influence on culture, religion, or politics, students will identify fanatics and visionaries from experience or research. Final projects will seek to address how individuals of seemingly extreme positions affect the evolution of a society or culture.

HON 202 Honors Seminar: Family Values? Taking an interdisciplinary approach, explores the origins and modern condition of the family. Examines the historical background of the family, looking in particular at the impact of industrialization and urbanization on family structure, marriage, divorce, sex, gender roles, and child-rearing practices. Finally, through the use of fiction and film, discusses current concepts about the family versus its contemporary reality. **Honors Degree Program students only.**
HON 202 Honors Seminar: Fanatics and Visionaries. Explores fanaticism and foresight as depicted in world literature, international and historical legal case studies, popular culture, and political practices. After studying prominent and fictive accounts of fanatics and visionaries, and considering their influence on culture, religion, or politics, students will identify fanatics and visionaries from experience or research. Final projects will seek to address how individuals of seemingly extreme positions affect the evolution of a society or culture. Honors Degree Program students only.

HON 202 Honors Seminar: Outside, Looking In – The Dynamics of Marginal Status. Analyzes the structures and dynamics of groups and communities occupying marginal status, that is, those whose access to mainstream sources of power is seriously limited. Topics include the influence of voting rules for the representation of minority interests in the US, women in the US, and Bohemia and communities of social protest. Themes covered include maintaining mainstream power, mechanisms of exclusions from the mainstream, justifications for inequality, outsiders’ strategies for coping with marginal status, and the construction of self identity and the identity of “the other.”

HON 301 Sophomore Honors Seminar: Exploring with Simulations. Explores the use of simulation software applications to reason about decisions made to create solutions to problems from various domains. Knowledge of computer programming is not required, although learning to use a Windows-based application will be necessary.

HON 301 Sophomore Honors Seminar: Gabrieli to Grunge. Investigates the history of Western music, incorporating the social, artistic and scientific influences that have shaped its development. Studies the development of Western music and musical instruments, investigates the scientific and technological innovations that allowed the introduction of new instrumentation, and discovers how instruments have historically been designed, built, and used. Emphasis on understanding how science and technology has affected, and been affected by, the development of Western music.

HON 301 Sophomore Honors Seminar: Theatre Physics. What do Einstein and Shakespeare have in common? Intense focus, astounding imagination, and a desire to understand their part in the cosmos. Examines theatre and physics as partners in an exploration of what physicist Virginia Corless calls "the complex and often bewildering contours of our world." Features plays that bring some of the great moments of physics onto the stage by placing celestial mechanics, relativity, and quantum uncertainty in the midst of human conflict, including: Bertolt Brecht's Galileo, Michael Frayn's Copenhagen (about the friendship between Heisenberg and Bohr), and Steve Martin's Picasso at the Lapin Agile (Picasso and Einstein walk into a bar...). Prerequisites: HON 201 and 202.

HON 301 Sophomore Honors Seminar: Memory and the Photograph. Investigates issues of memory from a psychological perspective, as well as through the study of art and visual culture. Explores the medium of photography, its relationship to memory and personal history, and its inherent communicative capabilities. Allows students to develop methods and techniques for expressing issues of memory via the found and created photographic image. Photographic assignments, weekly readings, participation in seminar discussions, and independent projects based around particular areas of interest (i.e., documentary essay, conceptual series, research paper, case study, etc.) are required. Includes a service-learning component during which students will work with a local population of elderly men and women on photo-based projects related to issues of memory. Prerequisites: HON 201 and 202.
HON 301(1) Honors Seminar: Democracy. Explores contemporary proposals for renewing American democracy. Focuses on what young people need to prepare them for the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society. One objective is to develop a civic education program for the College as a whole.

HON 301(2) Honors Seminar: Religious Activism. Considers the development of public activism in religious groups by examining their role in the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement and nuclear disarmament, and protests against capital punishment, on the one hand; and anti-abortion efforts, anti-gay movements, and involvement in Republican politics, on the other. Examines the motivations for the rise of religious activism, explores the reasons for the shift in its political temperament. Students will learn basic research techniques and complete independent research on one particular movement.

HON 302(1) Honors Seminar: Qualitative Research in Social Science. Hands-on course designed to help students develop an understanding of qualitative research methods and designs in the social sciences. Work by qualitative researchers read and discussed to provide an understanding of lessons learned and challenges faced in moving from project design, to project implementation, to data analysis and reporting. Student research teams will identify possible research problems and design pilot research proposals and procedures to address those problems. Students will then undertake the collection and analysis of actual data and report on their findings. Honors Degree Program students only.

HON 302 Honors Research Methods. Introduces students to research methodology. Integrates substantive examples and studies in the social sciences with the logic and method of conducting scientific research, while taking a social science approach to the study of public policy problems using quantitative skills. Designed to help students think analytically and formally about research questions. Students will analyze public problems such as education, health care, and crime, with major emphasis throughout the semester on race and voting rights, and their political consequences in the United States. Presumes no background in statistics or computer technology.

HON 302(2) Honors Seminar: Weimar Germany. In his new book, Shell Shock Cinema, Anton Kaes argues that the trauma of the First World War and Germany’s unexpected defeat created a deeply shell-shocked and traumatized nation. The first global war ended nearly a century ago, but the ideas it spawned are still with us – from violent nationalism and total mobilization, collective fear and paranoia, to technological warfare. Kaes also argues that Weimar film, though not representing the battlefield itself, was still a site in which the German nation could revisit the traumatic experience of war and defeat. Considers the war and the tensions with increasing modernism in the 1920’s, we will also look at films such as The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Nosferatu, the Nibelungen, Dr. Marbuse, Metropolis, M, and Berlin, a Symphony of a Great City. Honors Degree Program students only.

HON 302(1) Order and Disorder in the Sherlock Holmes Stories. Explores strategies for reading one of the world's most remarkable literary characters. Examines several elements -- including detection, plot, narrative, society, gender, and ideology -- in the Sherlock Holmes stories. In particular, considers issues of order and disorder illuminated in and by and through the stories. Prerequisites: HON 201, 202, and 301.

HON 302(2) Critical and Cultural Perspectives on Gender and Sexualities. This course focuses on the interactive relationships between culture, gender, and sexualities. It explores multiple ways that institutions such as the family, education, the workplace, and media construct, reinforce, and challenge our conceptions of femininity and masculinity as well as hetero- and queer sexualities. The class connects theory and
research to students' academic and personal lives. Throughout the term, participants will analyze current constructions of gender and sexualities and will be encouraged to envision alternate possibilities.

Prerequisites: HON 201, 202, and 301.

HON 302: Sherlock Holmes & Contemporary Critical Contexts. This course examines critical and theoretical strategies for reading one of the world's most remarkable literary characters. We will examine several elements--including plot, narrative, society, gender, and culture--in the Sherlock Holmes stories. In particular, we will consider issues of social order and disorder illuminated by the texts. We will consider also Holmes's place in the literature of mystery and detection, his identity and ideology in their late-Victorian contexts, and, of course, those aspects of his character that make him unique and enduring.

HON 302 The Philosophy of International Law. The purpose of this course is to provide students with a philosophical and legal understanding of international law and America’s legal position on various issues in international law. Please note that jurisprudential concerns will always be in the background of our conversations. However, we will not always discuss them unless they directly inform the practice of international legal or America’s position on some issue in international law. The goals of this course are fourfold: (1) to give students a philosophical and legal understanding of international law; (2) to give students an understanding of America’s position on various issues in international law; (3) to give students a glimpse into what philosophical and legal studies in graduate and law schools are like; and, finally, to provide students with the knowledge and skills to do both graduate level and legal research.