

Fall 2008 Honors Seminars

Honors Seminars - Humanities

<i>Section #</i>	<i>Ref. #</i>	<i>Professor (Dept.)</i>	<i>Seminar Title</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Time Day Place</i>
1	01805	Francis Cairns (Classics)	Frank Herbert's Dune	3 W	MW 3:35 – 4:50 MON 004
2	07440	Michael Broyles (Music)	Musicians on the Silver Screen	3 W	TR 2:00 – 3:15 LAN 101
3	07441	Benjamin Koen (Music)	Music, the Mind, and Meditation in World Cultures	3 W,Y	MWF 11:15 – 12:05 HMU N0090M
4	08146	Michael Ruse (Philosophy)	Philosophy & Film	3 W	T 9:30 – 12:15 DIF 005

Honors Seminars - Social Science

<i>Section #</i>	<i>Ref. #</i>	<i>Professor (Dept.)</i>	<i>Seminar Title</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Time Day Place</i>
2	07025	Kathryn Tillman (Sociology)	Race Relations in the U.S.	3 W	T 2:15 – 5:00
5	10045	Laura Isabel (History)	Race in American Cinema	3 W	TR 2:00 – 3:15
4	10046	Robin Sellers (History)	Biographies of the American Presidents	3 W	TR 12:30 – 1:45

Honors Seminars - Natural Science

<i>Section #</i>	<i>Ref. #</i>	<i>Professor (Dept.)</i>	<i>Seminar Title</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Time Day Place</i>
1	01931	Nora Underwood (Biology)	The Ecology of Food	3 W	TR 2:00 – 3:15 BIO 0307
2	08751	Kevin Speer (Oceanography)	The Earth System	3 W	TR 2:00 – 3:15 OSB 0327

Frank Herbert's Dune: Frank Herbert (1920-1986) is generally regarded as one of the greatest science fiction writers of the twentieth century, and his Dune Trilogy as the high point of his long career as an author. We shall be studying the Dune Trilogy both as twentieth century science fiction and as Herbert's insightful commentary on the latter half of the twentieth century and vision of times to come. Student presentations will cover the relevant biographical and bibliographical material and many aspects of the Dune Trilogy. This course meets the Gordon Rule Requirement and the Literature Requirement. Prescribed Texts: Frank Herbert Dune; Dune Messiah; Children of Dune (any editions)

Music, the Mind, and Meditation in World Cultures: Throughout diverse cultures of the world, music is employed as a means to access altered, higher states of consciousness. Through lectures and selected readings, recorded and live musical examples, class discussion, and experiential projects, we will explore the subject from an interdisciplinary perspective. There are no prerequisites for this class.

Musicians on the Silver Screen: This course examines films about musicians, such as Mozart, Beethoven, Benny Goodman, Loretta Lynn, and Johnny Cash, among others. We will examine what musical aesthetic values are presented on the screen, how the musician is portrayed within the context of his or her time, and how these portrayals reinforce twentieth-century attitudes about the place of music in American society. No technical expertise or background in music is necessary for this course.

Philosophy & Film: This seminar is based on some fifteen great films of the 20th century, using them as a vehicle to explore important philosophical questions about the nature of reality, the meaning of life, the right moral course of action, the roots of great art, and much more. Each week we will look at one film, followed by discussion, and then every student will write a short (500 word) essay on the film and its philosophical implications and importance. A tentative list includes "Shane," "Vertigo," "Some Like it Hot," "Triumph of the Will," "Birth of a Nation," "Taxi Driver," "Ballad of a Soldier," "The Seventh Seal," "The Passion of Joan of Arc," "Bell de Jour," "Four Hundred Blows," "Citizen Kane," and others. There is no text and no final exam. Grades will be based on classroom performance and written work.

Race Relations in the U.S.: This honors seminar is intended to introduce students to the sociology of race relations. Sociologists argue that discrimination, prejudice and inter-group interaction are all heavily influenced by social factors. In this seminar we will explore the issue of racial inequality and the social factors that influence relations between and among different ethnic and racial groups in our country.

Race in American Cinema: This honors seminar focuses on developing an understanding of the complex relationship between ideas and ideologies of race and U.S. cinema from a historical perspective. Beginning with portrayals of groups marked as racial and ethnic others—native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, and Asians—in early cinema we will analyze boxing films and bullfight films, comedies structured around racial misidentification, and race films as a reaction to the racism that permeated films such as /Birth of a Nation/. We will also scrutinize the relationship of race to sound cinema, especially the musical, classical Hollywood cinema, the auteur cinema of the 1960s and 70s, and contemporary Hollywood. In addition to learning the basics skills necessary to examine filmic texts, we will consider how members of racialized groups have responded to the way racial groups have been portrayed in Hollywood film and explore how racially marked actors have been constructed by the

star system. This seminar will require an additional weekly screening of 1-3 hours per week.

Biographies of the American Presidents: This course will be a biographical study of American presidents. Students will study the biographies of each of the 43 American presidents; consider their qualifications for office as well as their challenges, and accomplishments and/or failures in office. Students will do papers and class presentations on at least two of the presidents (one from the 19th century and one from the 20th century).

The Ecology of Food: What shall we have for dinner? What we eat and how that food is produced are affected by the natural environment, and have profound effects on the environment and our social structures. How we grow our food and the environmental and social consequences of agriculture are major issues in the news, addressed by a growing number of best-selling books such as *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *The Botany of Desire*. Food production (agriculture) is arguably humanity's oldest and most central use of ecological science to manage nature. In this course we will explore the key principles of ecology as applied to major issues in agriculture. We will consider the science and social implications of topics such as genetic engineering, organic agriculture, and "eating locally" through discussions of scientific and popular writings, lectures, hands-on projects and at least one field trip to a local farm.

The Earth System: The goal of this seminar is to expose students to the modern approach to understanding Earth's climate history and climate change on the global scale. The topics covered will be important to your role as a citizen, making choices that affect the Earth's environment, and to some of your future careers, even if you do not become scientists. The first part of the seminar involves the study and discussion of the principal elements of the climate system: self-regulating mechanisms, the Greenhouse Effect, the movement of the atmosphere, ocean, and continents, and the carbon cycle. The last part of the seminar is oriented to short-term climate change such as El Nino and the Southern Oscillation, and finally, recent global warming. You will be responsible for all the material covered during the seminar periods. These seminars involve discussion, exercises, and lectures all designed to help you to understand natural phenomena. The meetings will be less of a lecture format and more of a hands-on, demonstration oriented format, partially devoted to in-class discussion of that week's important concepts, usually from the Chapter/paper being read that week. Discussion will be led by students – this is part of your grade.