

# Honors College Seminars

Fall 2014



## **HONR 100: Honors Forum I**

Instructors: Simon P. Stacey and Jodi Kelber-Kaye, Honors College

This course introduces Honors College students to academic methods and disciplines as they interact with faculty and creative artists. Students are expected to do and present research, participate in campus activities and service, and reflect on what it means to be full members of a community of learning in the Honors College.

## **HONR 200: Being Human: The Brain, The Mind, & Pieces of You**

Instructor: Megan Rivera, Geography and Environmental Systems

Few of us take time to observe our thinking-mind in action--How does it work? What does it do? What are the implications? We will explore these questions, drawing from knowledge developed in philosophy, neurology, evolutionary biology, religion, psychology, medicine, pedagogy, anthropology, literature, quantum physics, and physiology. Simultaneously, students will explore the nature of their own minds using a range of techniques including meditation, supplementing the course material with direct experience. In addition to weekly assignments, students will design a research experiment to test a student-developed hypothesis related to the course material.



## **HONR 210: Great Books Seminar I: Narrative, Dramatic and Visual Traditions**

Instructor: Ellen Handler Spitz, Honors College

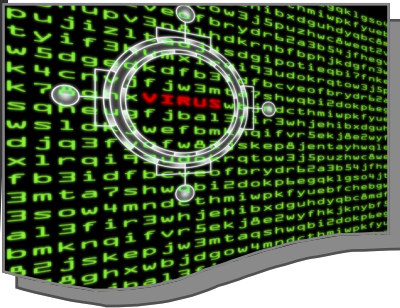
An introduction to the great books of world literature, religion, philosophy, history, and science from ancient times to the present day. This course will include readings from such works as Genesis, Ramayana, several Greek tragedies, Aristotle's Poetics, Vergil's Aeneid, Ovid's Metamorphoses, and the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

## **HONR 300-01: Understanding HIV & AIDS**

Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye, The Honors College

This course will focus on how 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: Spies, Assassins, & Cyberwarriors: Modern National Security Law**

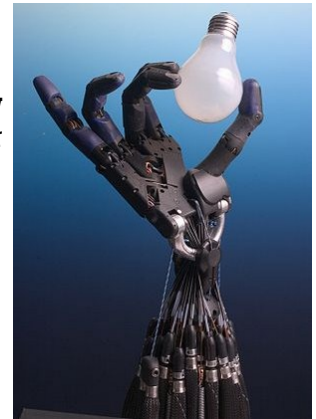
Instructor: Jeffrey Davis, Political Science

Over the past few years, the world has learned of massive electronic surveillance programs, U.S. cyber-attacks against Iran's nuclear program, and the targeted killing of suspected terrorists often by unmanned aerial vehicles. The slightly older controversies over the detention and interrogation of alleged terrorists remain on the front pages. These national security operations, and the efforts to constrain them to the law, challenge the legal frameworks typically applicable to war, security and policing. Are modern national security operations such as targeted killings, drone attacks, cyber warfare, unlimited detention, extraordinary renditions and mass surveillance lawful under domestic and international law? To what extent can states and officials be held accountable for abuses committed in these national security operations? This course is also listed as POLI 439.

### **HONR 300-03: Robots and Society**

Instructor: Susan Hoban, Goddard Earth Sciences and Technology Center

Robots are becoming an increasingly ubiquitous part of modern society, though ideas about robots date back to at least the era of da Vinci. The objective of this course is to introduce students to concepts related to the use of robots in society. We will delve in technical, ethical, legal and creative ideas surrounding the increasing role of robots in our lives. Students will try their hands at building an extremely simple robot to help them understand some of the realities of robotics and dispel certain misconceptions about how robots make decisions and act on those decisions.



### **HONR 300-04: Race, Science, and Society**

Instructor: Shawn Bediako, Psychology

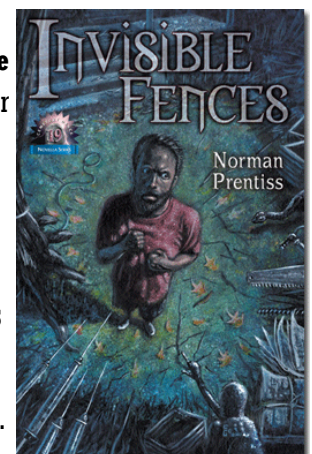
This course examines the practice and process of science through a cultural lens informed by the attitudes, values, and traditions that characterize American society. We will engage an historical analysis of issues that emerge when "race" converges (and conflicts) with "science."



### **HONR 300-05: Horror and Suspense Literature**

Instructor: Norman Prentiss, Fiction Writer

When Hamlet's father's ghost first walked across the stage, Shakespeare's audience was predisposed to accept a supernatural presence alongside more realistic depictions of family turmoil. If modern audiences no longer believe in ghosts, do we have different things to be frightened about? This course explores unsettling presences in various fictional works, from Edgar Allan Poe's detective fiction to the hard-boiled noir of James M. Cain and Cornell Woolrich, ending with a nightmare vision of modern parenthood in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child*. In-class comparisons of current readings to shorter literary excerpts, film clips, and other works of art, help students extend their study of course material to works in other disciplines, and apply techniques learned in this class to books read in future classes and narratives enjoyed outside the classroom.



### **HONR 300-06: Cultures of Childhood**

Instructor: Ellen Handler Spitz, Honors College

This class will explore changing notions of childhood, changing representations of children, cultural artifacts for children, children's aesthetic lives, and, above all, literature and media designed for children. A major interpretive lens throughout the seminar will be child psychology, among others.

