

HONORS FORUM COURSES Spring 2018

HF 200.002-.005 - HF Science Literacy Clusters
E. Bastress-Dukehart

Science Literacy Seminar “Space Project” Clusters

HF 200-001 Cluster I Visualizing Space: Measuring, Understanding, and Selling the Cosmos **1 Credit**

M. Crone

T. Weintzen

S. Mulligan

F 1:30-3:30/BO 280

This class offers an investigation of the different ways we make outer space intuitive and meaningful across disciplines. Drawing from the methodologies of astronomy and physics, we will explore ways of measuring vast distances so that we can piece together the three-dimensional structure of the solar system, galaxies, and the cosmic web. Taking a page from the international business world, we will consider ways in which space exploration, travel and commercialization are being marketed and popularized, including through media depictions. And utilizing the resources of literature and the humanities, we will ask how grappling with the size of the cosmos may enhance our understanding of human precarity and our own historical moment.

HF 200-002 Cluster II

Mapping Space

1 Credit

M. Hofmann

E. Halstead

R. Overbey

M 4:00-5:20/Dana 276

How did ancient Buddhists define and visualize space? How did modern Buddhists change their ideas about space in response to Western science? Is space infinite? If not, does it have a center? What is the geometry of space? How can we determine the geometry of our own planet? (Maybe the earth really is flat)
What does the inside of a black hole look like?

HF 200-003 Cluster III

The History of Space

1 Credit

J. Chalnoky

B. Bogin

E. Bastress-Dukehart

M 2:30-3:50

Dana 165

Space, our place in it and our relationship to it, has been conceptualized in an astonishing variety of ways in different disciplines and cultures. In this course, we will consider some moments when our concept of space was transformed. How did geoscientists’ model of Earth’s crust evolve from a cohesive, solid, and immovable mass of rock to a dynamic system comprised of numerous continent-sized plates in constant motion? How did European thinkers grapple with the mysteries of their universe as they shifted from an Earth centered model to one in which our planet was simply the third rock from the sun? How did Tibetan views of space transform with the introduction of Buddhist cosmologies in the 8th century CE and more recently with modern scientific discoveries?

HF 215-001 **Peer Health Education** **3 Credits**
J. McDonald
W 10:10-12:00/Tang
Thurs. 5:40-6:30/Ladd 107

This course builds on concepts covered during Peer Health Education by guiding students through the process of promoting health and wellbeing among the Skidmore student body. The course is student-driven and allows the opportunity to further delve into specific areas of study that are of particular interest to each student. Students will design, implement, and evaluate programs and outreach education in a variety of topics relevant to the lives of college students including alcohol and substance use and abuse, sexual assault, eating disorders, stress, mental health, sexuality, and other topics commonly addressed by peer counselors and health promotion professionals. In addition, students will continue to build on leadership and communication skills by serving as peer counselors on the Skidmore campus.

HF 300-001 **Essays About Theater** **1 Credit**
Add on to TH 334
M. Wolff
Time/Location: TBA

Honors students meet in conference with the Instructor to develop two substantive essays, additional to those assigned in 334, for formal presentation to the class. Before the end of the semester, these students will also revise their Honors course work and develop a sustained sequence of the complete assigned writings on Theater, as a small, coherent essay collection. Honors students meet with the professor during the term in small group discussions, as needed.

HF 300-002 **The Politics of Dystopia: Tyranny in 20th Century Literature** **1 Credit**
Add on to PL 351B
F. Taylor
Time/Location: TBA

This course is devoted to a close study of portraits of tyranny and unfreedom in twentieth century literature. The totalitarian experiments of the twentieth century combined with dramatic advances in technology seemed to spawn new thinking about what shape future tyrannies might take. Would future political and social experiments bring about dystopian results due to their perverse or merely unrealistic ambitions? Or might our technological capacities allow such political engineers to succeed all too well? Does human nature place limits on what political and social reformers can accomplish? Or might it now be possible to transform and shape human nature itself such that the political and social orders of the future will be entirely and dramatically new? We will examine these and related questions by reading authors such as George Orwell, Arthur Koestler, Aldous Huxley, C. S. Lewis, Kurt Vonnegut, Walker Percy, and Kazuo Ishiguro. Students enrolled must read one additional novel from a list of options and complete an essay comparing it to a novel from the parent course.

HF 315-001-007 **Adv. Peer Health Education** **1 Credit**
J. McDonald
Th 5:40-6:30/Ladd 106

An expansion of concepts covered in Peer Health Education by allowing students to fine tune their health promotion and peer counseling skills. Students will select specific areas of interest and will work closely with other Peer Health Educators and the instructor to plan, implement, and rigorously evaluate outreach programs on campus. The course will focus on building leadership and communication skills and on deepening the expertise of the students on college health related issues.

Prerequisites HF 215 and permission of the instructor.
Not for liberal arts credit. May be repeated for credit.

EN 105H-002

Land of Absurdity

4 Credits

M. Wiseman

M/W/F 10:10-11:05/PMH 304

This course will take us into the land of absurdity, as mapped by fiction writers, filmmakers, poets, and playwrights. We will venture into regions of dark humor, charged outrage, searing satire, and profound silliness, with the aid of such guides as Fyodor Dostoyevsky (whose *Underground Man* is sometimes considered a proto-existential absurdist), Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, Italo Calvino, Lewis Carroll, Donald Barthelme, Haruki Murakami, and Flann O'Brien, among others. We will see the absurd as brought to us onscreen by such directors as Luis Buñuel, Spike Jonze, Terry Gilliam, and Stanley Kubrick, and Monty Python will add pointed silliness to our proceedings.

Sinister, ludicrous, surreal, irreverent, or all of the above, these portrayals and explorations will help us to think about, and especially to write about, the absurdity we might find in our own lives. We will ask, how do these visions illuminate our own dilemmas? How, in other words, can an absurd perspective help us to live? How does an appreciation of paradox deepen and free our thinking? How can chaos and incoherence be shaped—how is incoherence made coherent? Thus, the relationship between certainty and chaos, the disjunction between seeing and knowing, the blurred distinctions among sense, senselessness, and nonsense, the uses of satire, and the mingling of the sublime and the ridiculous will serve as catalysts for our writing as well as for our discussions.

Our writing practice will emphasize understanding and developing our own writing processes. Students will write frequent short papers of several types—personal, analytical, persuasive, reflective—and three substantial essays, submitted first as drafts and then in careful revision.

EN 229H-001

Intro. To Medieval English Literature

4 Credits

K. Greenspan

T/R 11:10-12:30/PMH 303

From the saintly to the sinful: a sampling of the treasures of medieval English literature, presented in the context of the rich material and intellectual culture of the 12th through the 15th centuries. Our recurring theme, "Visions of Life and Death," will lead us to examine such topics as resurrection and immortality, heaven, hell, and purgatory, penance and pilgrimage, death, relics, and remembrance, ghosts and otherworld journeys. We will read all works in their original dialects, giving enough attention to Middle English grammar and vocabulary to make the readings easily accessible. (Counts as a "Language and Literature in Context" course. Counts towards the Early Period requirement.)

HI 116H

Sea Changes

4 Credits

T. Nechtman

W/F 8:40-10:00/TLC 302

A survey course in global history that takes the world's oceans as its subject. Students will explore themes ranging from naval history to legal history, from environmental history to zoological history, and from the history of exploration and adventure to the history of imperialism and conquest. Students will work with primary and secondary sources and develop their analytical and writing skills as they ask questions about the field of history itself. What assumptions have historians made when they focus on nations and continents? What institutions and categories have they privileged with their focus? What have we missed because we look only at the history of land? How and why does history's narrative shift when we undertake a "sea change" in our perspectives? (Fulfills social sciences requirement.)

MA 126H-001, 226H-001, 326H-001 Hon: Prob Solving (Fr) 1 Credit

D. Hurwitz

W 4:00-5:20/Harder 203

Students at all three levels will work collaboratively on problems posed in various undergraduate mathematics journals and other sources. Solutions to journal problems will be submitted to the journal editors for acknowledgment and possible publication. Problems are taken from all areas of specialty within mathematics.

Prerequisites: QR1.

May be repeated for credit. Must be taken S/U.

MA 275H.001-012 Mathematics Research 1 Credit

S. Baland

D. Bunk

M. DiMaio

J. Douglas

M. Hofmann

M. Huibregtse

R. Hurwitz

E. Lopez

L. Spardy

C. Szabo

R. Trousil

D. Vella

Time/Location: TBA

Exploration of a research topic in mathematics. The students, in collaboration with a faculty mentor, will participate in a research project in a particular area of mathematics which may be related to the faculty member's research program. Students may only take four MA 275H courses in their careers and may take no more than two in any given semester. If two are taken in a single semester, each must be a different section. MA 275H may not be counted toward the mathematics major. Must be taken S/U.

PL 205H.001 Modern Political Thought 3 Credits

F. Taylor

W/F 12:20-1:40/Ladd 106

Political thought of the Early Modern period to that of the mid nineteenth century. Selected thinkers include Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Tocqueville, Marx. Particular emphasis will be placed on the aspirations of classic liberalism and the successive criticism these aspirations inspired. Provides foundation for upper division work in political theory.