

HONORS FORUM COURSES Spring 2017

HF 200-001 **Saratoga Architecture** **1 Credit**

ADD-ON to AH 251C

J. Lopez

Time/Location: TBA

A study of Saratoga architecture. For this Honors Forum (HF) course, students will develop and lead a 30-minute presentation on significant buildings, parks, or other important structures in Saratoga Springs. The possibility of local sites—Victorian buildings, racetrack, monuments, or even Skidmore College—is endless, offering a varied corpus for analyzing and interpreting the historical arc of Saratoga’s built environment. Examination of local architecture offers the possibility of recurring onsite visits, giving students an intimate understanding of their object of study. In addition, a local site allows students the opportunity to gain knowledge via interviews, a method that will require developing a questionnaire. Presentations will provide analytical explanation of the historical, aesthetic, material, and/or programmatic concerns of the architect, explaining how the “design” is a discursive tool in their philosophical, social, or economic agenda. In consultation with the instructor, students will develop a reading list about their building that includes but is not limited to the following: study of the architect; the intent of the structure; philosophical current; material and aesthetic concerns; or the building’s afterlife.

HF 200-002 **Bible & Literature** **1 Credit**

ADD-ON to EN 230

M. Marx

M 5:00-6:00/BO 102

This Honors Forum Add-On to EN 230 “The Bible as Literature” focuses on “The Bible *And* Literature.” Students will read David Maine’s *The Preservationist* (based on the Noah story), Geraldine Brooks’s *The Secret Chord* (based on the stories of King David), Katherine Anne Porter’s *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (informed by The Book of Revelation), and Paul Buhle’s *Radical Jesus A Graphic History of Faith*. Students in the add-on will write one short paper and give an oral presentations on these books to the EN 230 class, highlighting the ways authors have used Biblical source material.

Science Literacy Seminar “It’s About Time” Clusters

HF 200-003 Cluster I “Perceptions of Time” **1 Credit**

J. Sullivan

J. Chohnoky

R. Roe-Dale

E. Bastress-Dukehart

F 1:30-3:30/Somers Room, Tang

How do we learn to perceive time? How do we perceive time both continuously yet discretely? How do we perceive and reason about timescales (e.g., the “deep time” of Earth’s 4.6 billion year history; the lifespan; historical time)? Students in this one-credit Honors Forum course will consider perceptions of time from different disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. Using the Tang Museum exhibit, *Sixfold Symmetry: Pattern in Art and Science* as our classroom, we will explore how patterns and their disruption can inform our perception of time and its passage.

HF 200-004 Cluster II “Keeping Time” **1 Credit**

E. Halstead

A. Frappier

M. Hoffman

C. Hill

M 2:00-3:20, PMH 251

What is time? How is time measured? Is time the same for everyone? How are we affected by our current frame of reference, juxtaposed against billions of years of history? Does the mere passage of time eliminate value or does time create value?

In this one credit honors forum seminar we will explore these questions and more from an interdisciplinary perspective.

HF 200-005 Cluster III "The Nature of Time"

1 Credit

M 2:10-3:30. Harder 201

B. Bogin

A. Ernst

B. Garbin

B. Possidente

Students in this one-credit Honors Forum course will explore the nature of time in relation to four different disciplines. Specifically, students will learn about the internal sense of time generated from "biological clocks" that create daily, lunar, and annual cycles in our behavior and physiology; the concept of time in Dante's vision of the afterworld; the connection of time to rates of use versus regeneration, and how this drives sustainability; and Buddhist conceptions of time including philosophical reflections on the true nature of time, ritual performances involving the creation of sacred time, and contemplative practices exploring the experience of time. Students and faculty will engage in conversations about common readings in order to approach the topic of time from scientific along with other disciplinary perspectives. Early in the semester, students will form interdisciplinary teams and propose a project, with a clear scientific component, related to the course material. Once faculty accept the proposals, students will work to complete their project throughout the rest of the semester. The projects may take a variety of forms, and creative elements are encouraged, but they all need to contain a quantitative reasoning element.

HF 203-001

Citizen Studentship

4 Credits

R. Rotheim

T/TH 3:40-5:00 pm/Lib 213

A course that places students at the center of the learning process. Students from Skidmore College designed the course's structure, readings, and pedagogy as an introduction to a self-motivated and self-governed approach to learning. Interdisciplinary by nature, the course challenges students with critical thinking and writing, student-driven discourse, governance, citizenship, and character development. Students and the instructor work in a collaborative manner to design course goals, select readings, develop assignments, and direct class discussions. *Prerequisites* Expository Writing and at least sophomore standing or permission of instructor.

HF 215-001

Peer Health Education

3 Credits

J. McDonald

M 12:20-2:20/Ladd 106

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

Pre-Columbian Fakes

1 Credit

Add on to AH 351-C

J. Lopez

Time/Location: TBA

A study of pre-Columbian fakes. For this Honors Forum (HF) course, students will produce a documentary scrutinizing the aesthetic value, reception, and circulation of pre-Columbian fakes. In addition to lectures, course readings, films, and class discussions to “Pre-Columbian Art and Architecture in the Modern Imagination,” student in the HF will learn of the theoretical and historical arguments for, and against, fakes and how to conceive of their value, if any. In consultation with the instructor, students will prepare a 10-15-minute documentary of original research, offering new insights and perspectives on pre-Columbian fakes. Importantly, by producing a documentary, students will gain understanding of the role of the digital humanities in scholarship. Via a series of workshops devoted to teaching digital technology, students will learn how to effectively use PowerPoint and iFilm.

HF 300-002

Essays on Theater

1 Credit

Add on to TH 334

M. Wolff

Time/Location: TBA

Whether we are actors, directors, stage managers, essayists, or passionate spectators, theater ignites our particular sense of engagement with vivid experience, emotional discovery, and with language. In the first half of the course, we will read several plays and at least one musical, with the aim of practicing and improving close script analysis in discussion, and then in writing. Likely scripts for our exploration may include *An Intervention; The Who and the What; Middletown; Songbird; Heartless*, and *Fun Home*. We will read related materials and original sources. In the second half of the term, we study more personal literary essays about plays and theater, by writers such as Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, David Mamet, and Hilton Als, and you will write such an essay on a theater experience of your own. You will present some short writing responses in workshop discussion, and--also for workshop--complete two longer essays for the term, drawing from the script readings and from your theater experiences.

4th CREDIT: HONORS STUDENTS ONLY: Honors students in this course will work more frequently toward formal writing workshop presentation of two additional essays of 3 pages minimum, one for each Unit. These students will also revise their course works to craft a sustained sequence of the assigned writings on Theater, as a small, coherent "collection." Honors students will meet during the term in group and in one-to-one conferences.

HF 300-003

Curating Contemporary Art

1 Credit

Add on to AH 315

J. Underwood

Time/Location: TBA

Linked to an upper-level course that will thematically address contemporary art production (1980-Present) by African artists active on the continent and in the Diaspora. This one-credit experience will focus on the art institutions that contemporary artists have employed or undermined to shape their status as a contemporary artist—special attention will be given to these institutions on the African continent, and to those founded by Africans in the Diaspora. The parent course will cover the broad socio-historic context of African art since 1980 while examining major trends in the field; the Honors Forum is a specialized discussion on the venues that have served as platforms—to different ends and for different audiences—for this art. By means of additional reading, class discussion, a visit to Manhattan-area institutions, and a curatorial project in collaboration with the Tang collection, students will chart the possible trajectories of African artist, gaining a sense of how these creators navigate unique challenges in the global art world. (Must be taken with AH315 Contemporary African Art.)

HF 315-001 **Adv. Peer Health Education** **1 Credit**
J. McDonald
Time/Location: TBA
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.

CS 275H **Computer Science Research** **1 Credit**
T. O'Connell
Time/Location: TBA
An introductory exploration of research in computer science. The students, in collaboration with a faculty mentor, will participate in a research project in a particular area of computer science. The research projects may, for example, include designing new algorithms for computational problems, surveying the research literature, implementing existing algorithms from the research literature, or performing computational experiments.
Prerequisites: permission of instructor.
Note(s): Students may only take four CS 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. CS 275H may not be counted toward the CS major.
Must be taken S/U.

DS 202A **Public Sci Communication: Web** **1 Credit**
E. Schielke
T 2:10-3:30pm/Lib 113A/B
Develop public science communication skills as you work with a local nonprofit to design content for their website. We will explore how to make information about tree identification and forest ecology appealing and accessible to the general public, and develop basic skills in web design. Readings and examples will be drawn from the scientific and popular literature, with emphasis on how to present science compellingly and accurately. Sciences, the arts, and humanities all have a role to play in this project.

EN 105H-001 **Writing on Demand** **4 Credits**
L. Hall
M/W 2:30-3:50pm/PMH 300
When the essayist Joan Didion was in her twenties, she wrote editorial copy for *Vogue* magazine on a wide range of subjects. In her forties, she noted that it is “easy to make light of this kind of ‘writing,’ [but] I do not make light of it at all: it was at *Vogue* that I learned a kind of ease with words... a way of regarding words not as mirrors of my own inadequacy but as tools, toys, weapons to be deployed strategically on a page.” Inspired by Didion’s on-the-job apprenticeship, this course will ask you to undertake the work of a professional copywriter or ghostwriter. What might you be asked to compose? The introduction to the documentary “extras” on a *Mad Men* DVD (e.g., “The 1964 Presidential Campaign”). The “Our Story” blurb for the website of a local restaurant. A capsule biography for a mayoral candidate. A C.E.O.’s response to a request from *Forbes*: “Tell us about the biggest mistake you ever made as a leader.” The instructor will furnish you with material; with her guidance, you will shape it into publishable or, as the case may be, presentable prose. Expect frequent short assignments. Your grade will be based on those assignments, your class participation, and a final exam.

EN 105H-002

Land of Absurdity

4 Credits

M. Wiseman

M/W/F 9:05-10:00am/PMH 301

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 228H-001

Victorian Illustrated Book

4 Credits

C. Golden

T/R 11:10-12:30pm/PMH 304

What was the last book you read with illustrations? Was it a graphic novel, a comic book, or a children's book? All of these types of books have their roots in the Victorian illustrated book. This vibrant genre came into being, flourished, and evolved during the long nineteenth century and finds new expression in our time in the graphic classics, a prescient modern form of material culture that is the heir of the Victorian illustrated book. This Honors, writing-intensive course explores the evolution of the Victorian illustrated book with attention to illustration, critical analysis, and creative practice. Readings will include Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* (1836) and *Oliver Twist* (1838), Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* (1902) series, which demonstrates how the Victorian illustrated book found a new home in children's literature at the fin de siècle. Will Eisner's *Fagin the Jew* (2003), our final selection, reimagines *Oliver Twist* and turns Dickens's classic into a hyper-modern form for twenty-first century readers. Students will engage in curatorial work in the rare book room and put on a library exhibition on an aspect of Victorian literature and culture. In addition to reading and writing frequent papers and designing a brochure to accompany the exhibit, students will become author-illustrators and create their own illustrated texts.

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

1 Credit

R. Hurwitz

W 4:00-5:20pm/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

Mathematics Research

1 Credit

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.

Prerequisites: permission of the instructor.

Note(s): 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.