



Fall 2025 HON 400–Level Seminars

HON 410-1001

R 2:30–5:15 p.m.

Instructional Leadership

Dr. William Doyle

This seminar is a substantive introduction to peer techniques effective in leading university-level students in self-motivated exploration of the world of knowledge. You will gain practical skills in classroom management and teaching, furthering your own professional development. *Restricted to Honors College students accepted as peer instructors for HON 105. Obtain permission from your Honors College Advisor.*

HON 410-1002

M, W 1:00–2:15 p.m.

Managing Your Money: Personal Finance For Today’s Students & Tomorrow’s Leaders

Professor Danny Siciliano, CPA, CMA

To be successful in personal finance, students should have the ability to understand and interpret knowledge related to the various financial decisions they will make. Students must also develop proper habits and appropriate behaviors. This course focuses on both knowledge and behavior. By focusing on both, students will develop confidence in making financial decisions that will lead to long-term financial well-being.

HON 410-1003

M, W 4:00–5:15 p.m.

Conspiracy Theories in History

Dr. David Schwartz

From the dawn of human history, people have sought explanations for events in social, economic, and political life. Connecting the dots to string together otherwise random data points into a pattern, conspiracy theorists claim to have uncovered the “real story” that explains why the world works the way it does. This course examines why conspiracy theories are so popular before looking at how conspiracy theories have manifested themselves throughout history, taking in conspiracies related to politics, popular culture, sports, science, medicine, and world domination.

HON 410-1004

W 2:30–5:15 p.m.

The Future of Hospitality & Gaming: Innovation, Leadership & Global Strategy at MGM Resorts International

Professor Amy Lee

This Honors seminar provides a comprehensive exploration of the hospitality and gaming industry through the lens of MGM Resorts International. The course covers key aspects of hotel and casino operations, digital transformation in gaming, corporate finance, sustainability, marketing, entertainment, global expansion, risk management, and public affairs. Through guest lectures from industry leaders, case studies, hands-on projects, and a field trip, students will gain a deep understanding of the challenges and innovations shaping the future of brick-and-mortar and digital gaming platforms. Topics include strategic

partnerships, mergers and acquisitions (M&A), customer analytics, loyalty marketing, sustainability initiatives, and crisis management, preparing students to critically analyze real-world business strategies and develop innovative solutions.

HON 410-1005

M, W 8:30–9:45 a.m.

Conference Culture: Planning Workshop WRHC 26

Dr. William Doyle

This class offers a two-part approach. First, it's designed to help students explore what happens at academic conferences both for organizers and for participants. Think of it as a form of professionalization, where what you learn in the course can get applied to your time as an Honors College student and beyond. As part of our work, we will develop an understanding of what makes a successful conference. As possible, the class will research and discuss academic conferences that take place during the semester as a way to explore what goes into planning, hosting, and reflecting on the process. Additionally, students will gain experience in preparing for and participating in a conference, including the different genres of conference presentations, and begin to understand the value of networking opportunities. Second, this class is designed to provide practical experience in conference planning as the Honors College prepares to host the Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC) Conference in Spring 2026.

HON 410-1006

T, R 1:00–2:15 p.m.

More Than Twitter: The Return of the Essay

Professor Myles Lum

“Like,” “comment,” “share.” Many of us daily scroll through a conveyor belt of news stories, influencer ads, and cat videos, begging to be added to our algorithms, but how often do we stop to better understand the individuals creating those posts on the other side of the screen? Being limited to only 280 characters on X, 2,200 characters on Instagram, or 10 minutes on TikTok, are we able to truly understand the plights, joys, questions, hilarities, or musings others (or we ourselves) have?

In this course, students will disrupt the mediatization of their own and others' lives while also destabilizing the common conception of the “essay.” They will practice new means of expression by diving into the realm of “creative nonfiction” (CNF), where author and audience alike can enjoy the time and space to be heard, felt, and understood on another level. While reading how CNF has a long history that continues to grow, students will enter into the genre's conversation by writing their own CNF essays to be read, workshopped, and enjoyed by the class. Ultimately, students will be working towards investigating themselves, understanding others, and connecting both together - for more than just a “like.”

HON 410-1007

T, R 10:00–11:15 a.m.

The Secret Lives of AI

Professor Julian Kilker

How can we productively examine AI—and other innovations—in more nuanced and useful ways? What's overlooked in the enthusiasm and hype often associated with emerging technologies? This course explores the dynamic interactions between people and AI using established sociotechnical and related approaches. We'll use a technical lifecycle model, focusing on ideation, development, diffusion, mutual shaping, and obsolescence stages. This course leverages a wide variety of industry, scholarly, and popular resources and tools to better understand how to stay current in this rapidly changing landscape.

HON 410-1008**M, W 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.****Science and Stories****Dr. Emma Bloomfield**

“Science and Stories” examines the symbolic features of science and the ways in which humans learn information about the world around us to guide society, reach solutions, and gain knowledge. In viewing science communication as one of the most important ways that people come to learn information, we will examine the role of storytelling in imparting scientific information and promoting scientific appreciation and engagement. We will explore the following questions: How do we know things? How does language mediate our understanding of reality, knowledge, and information? How does storytelling shape our understanding of science? Can science communication use storytelling to be more effective? If so, how? In addition to discussing science as a general field of knowledge and way of knowing (epistemology), we will dive into specific topics such as climate change, medicine and vaccination, health and the body, and media representations of science. Together, let’s explore the intersections of life, meaning, knowledge, and language in historical and contemporary scientific thought.

HON 410-1009**T, R 11:30–12:45 p.m.****Taking the Red Pill: Existing in a Simulated Reality****Dr. Todd Martinez**

The question, “Is this real life?” has become a common thought when people are confronted with a surreal moment that makes them feel as if they’re “in a movie.” These fancies underscore the immense influence of entertainment, technology and the popular media that have saturated our lives. From social media influencers adopting a public persona or “brand,” to manipulative “catfishers,” to so-called “reality” TV personalities arguing for the cameras, we’ve begun to normalize and capitalize on existing “in simulation.” In fact, we’ve now reached the point where AI and “deep fake” technology can effectively mimic human behaviors. Indeed, this begs the question: Why have people grown more apt to escape into these false, alternative realities, even well before the onset of the internet age? We will explore this question predominantly through an examination of postmodern literary texts as well as through discussions of contemporary films and TV shows. In turn, we will identify and analyze the varied forms of personal, social, economic and political trauma that contribute to the characters’ escapes into psychological simulations while also addressing the authors’ critiques of societal mechanisms. We will then “flash forward” to modern applications and personal reflections of these ideas, as rooted in postmodernist thought.

HON 410-1010**R 2:30–5:15 p.m.****Western Legal Traditions****Professor Robert Rabbat**

“The United States Constitution is the seminal document in the history of our country and, arguably, democracy itself; indeed, many would contend the Constitution provided the basis for the massive success and global dominance the United States has enjoyed over its history. But is the Constitution now the root of problems in the United States? Is increased political polarization caused by flaws inherent in the Constitution, or perhaps due to the inevitable evolution and progression of our nation? If so, what, if anything, can we do about it? In this interactive seminar, we will tackle these questions and attempt to provide some solutions. We will form a “Second Constitutional Convention,” debate these important topics, and attempt to re-write the Constitution to save democracy in America.

HON 410-1011**F 11:30–2:15 p.m.****Makers and Innovators****Instructor TBA**

This course introduces students to the tools and skills used in engineering maker spaces, emphasizing safety, basic tool usage, and prototyping. Students will work both independently and in groups to develop their skills, creating items for personal and educational purposes, setting up a path to become a maker and innovator. The course will cover a variety of hands-on projects to enhance students' problem-solving, creativity, and technical abilities.

HON 410-1012**M W 10:00–11:15 a.m.****Banned Books: Closed Pages-Closed Minds****Dr. Jeanne Holland**

Throughout history, books in certain cultures, religions, and political systems are marked as unsuitable or dangerous. These books challenge conventional wisdom and are determined to be threatening to institutions and people that support the status quo. Today in the United States, school boards, public library boards, government entities, and churches have launched aggressive attacks to ban certain books and authors. In this course we will consider:

- Should books be banned in tax-supported institutions like public schools and public libraries?
- Who makes the decisions about which books are banned?
- Is it all right for church groups to ban books in their bookstores and libraries?
- Why are certain books banned? Are some books so obnoxious, they should be banned/burned?
- Can ideas be banned?

Students will pick certain banned books as their own and prepare presentations and research papers. Guest lecturers will include a journalist, librarian, public policy expert, and Black literary scholar.

HON 420-1001**M, W 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.****Global Asian Popular Culture****Dr. Richard Miller**

Global Asian Popular Culture examines the peoples of Japan, Korea, and China (including Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore) as consumers, interpreters, and producers of global popular culture: music, film, television, literature, fashion, and internet-based forms. No prior knowledge of East Asian languages and cultures is required, although there will be opportunities to make use of such knowledge. By the end of the course you will be able to articulate salient aesthetic features of global Asian popular culture and articulate their relationships with social, political, and cultural aspects of the originating and receiving cultures.

HON 420-1002**M,W 1:00–2:15 p.m.****Fashion History****Dr. Deirdre Clemente**

From rolled stockings and bobbed hair to afros and dashikis, clothing and appearance serve as indispensable markers of the last century's sweeping change. This course examines how key social and cultural developments came to influence fashion trends and presents how a diverse cross-section of Americans used personal appearance to define and display who they were. It begins with the redefinition of masculinity and femininity that was linked to the emergence of sports culture at the turn of the century, and it concludes with a discussion of technology and the rise of offshore clothing production.

The course is at the crossroads of several disciplines: history, economics, sociology, marketing, and business. In this class you will hold historical objects, talk about social stratification, write about ethnic identity and race and come to better understand the interconnections between consumerism and American business. This course juxtaposes the broader historical context of modernization, immigration, and urbanization with the role that clothing played in the everyday lives of a range of Americans.

HON 420-1003

F 11:30 a.m.–2:15 p.m.

Stand Up With Honors: Theory and Practice of Comedy

Professor Sean Clark

This course will elevate your public speaking and presentation skills to a new level with the added challenge of comedic expectation. In the first half of the course, the instructor, an experienced comedy writer, will engage the class in a study of several stand-up comedy styles and forms. The mid-term will consist of the first presentation of the student's own original stand-up comedy routine. The second half of the course will focus on the rehearsal process, honing and sharpening the routine, culminating in a performance under lights with microphone in front of a live audience.

HON 420-1004

T 2:30–5:15

Developing the Virtues of Hospitality Design

Professor Glenn Nowak

This class takes lessons from hospitality design and applies them to the built environments of our everyday lives. Lectures and in-class studio critiques of student design proposals will appropriate the architecture of tourist corridors for the needs of our neighborhoods, the desires within our dwellings, and the potentials of urban planning in the Anthropocene. No prior art/design experience is required.

HON 430-1001

W 4:00–6:45 p.m.

The Changing Notions of National Identity: Migration and Multiculturalism

Dr. Joanna Kepka

This seminar explores the changing notions of national identity over the past two centuries, from the rise of nationalism and the nation-state ideal to the present era of globalization, migration, and multiculturalism. In this context, the course also examines different models of integration, hybrid identities, and cultural racism and xenophobia associated with immigration in the XXI century. While this seminar focuses on western Europe and North America as recipient societies of today's migrants, it also goes to other geographical regions, most notably the Middle East, to seek their perspective on the phenomena studied in class. Given the large number of immigrants seeking permanent residence in these regions, these societies have come to question what the character of their national identity and citizenship is and should be.

HON 430-1002

M, W 2:30–3:45

Roma Culture

Oksana Marafioti, MFA

This course begins with the history of Romani arrival in Europe, traces Romani cultural, social, and political presence in Europe and the United States, and ends with a reflection on the importance of contemporary Romani knowledge production. The course consists of weekly lectures and class discussions, as well as guest appearances delivered by renowned Roma artists and scholars. Topics discussed will include the following: identity and historiography, linguistic overview, slavery and the

Holocaust, antigypsyism, feminism, intersectionality, and LGBT movements, art, dance, literature, and music overview, and Romani knowledge production.

HON 440-1001

T, R 10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

American West Storytelling: Lions and Tigers and Bears on the Prairie? Storytelling, Myths, and Other Tales of Settlement in the American West

Dr. Dan Bubb

Part of the historic narrative of migrant settlement in the American West is folklore - stories of people who recorded their experience of independence, disaster, and fortune as they migrated to the region. Some tales contained exaggeration and myth where heroic figures such as Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone purportedly overpowered giant bears or singlehandedly defeated a large group of Native American warriors. While these stories were exaggerated, they nonetheless embedded themselves in westerners' psyches by capturing the imagination of the listeners who had little historic reference. They also were exposed to predominantly Eurocentric stories. As a result, history books often told the story of settlement in the West from a Eurocentric perspective.

In this course, we will explore the powerful effect of folklore and storytelling in the American West, and how the stories helped shaped westerners' perceptions of the region and themselves. We will explore from the perspectives of the many peoples of various ethnicities who settled in the West to provide you a more fulsome account of American western history. In other words, we will explore settlement in the American West beyond "Cowboys and Indians" by including stories of western settlement and development from the perspective of the Japanese farmer, the Chinese railroad worker, the Latino rancher, and other people who settled in the West.

HON 440-1002

W 2:30–5:15 p.m.

We Will Be Heard: The Fight for Female Equality Expressed Through Film **Charles Stanton, Esq.**

Female empowerment can best be defined as working toward the promotion of three major goals: working to enhance women's sense of self; allowing women to determine their own choices; finally, enhancing a woman's right to influence justice for herself or others. To that end cinema is a catalyst for social change and a tool for empowerment. We will trace over the last fifty years how the gender gap has narrowed as more women are coming to the forefront of the movie industry not merely as performers but as directors and producers. Still, many challenges remain so we will work to create a model for what we hope will ensure women in the future a level playing field of opportunity.

HON 440-1003

Asynchronous Web-based **Music and Social Protest**

Dr. Heather Lusty

Music has always been a medium through which the "common man" tells tales of injustice. This course will approach social protest music through multiple lenses, beginning with the folk ballad as an historical form and its appropriation by popular folk musicians in the 1960s. From there, we will examine "phases" of protest music, including (but not limited to) anti-war protests, the anti-nuclear rhetoric of the 1980s, national events/identity, race inequality and oppression, political oppression, and sexual agency/identity, and religious dissent. Finally, we will consider how some genres, like hip-hop, punk, and heavy metal, are generally more "woke" than the radio-friendly, mass-marketed mainstream.

HON 440-1004**Asynchronous Web-based****Country Music in American History****Professor Cian McMahon**

According to a recent poll, country music is the third most popular musical genre in America after rock and pop. But if only 49 percent of Americans admit they like listening to country music, a much bigger percentage would agree they like arguing about it. Is country music a never-ending stream of clichés and cowboy boots? Or has it been the home for some of America's best storytellers? Is country music a narrow genre for racists and rednecks? Or is it a common ground for Americans of all backgrounds?

This course uses the study of country music to question some of the key themes and problems in twentieth-century American history (such as race, class, and gender) while simultaneously allowing you to sharpen skills of critical reading and clear writing.

You will exploit some of the resources the university provides, continue to develop critical thinking and study skills, and access and evaluate information from a variety of sources. Finally, the course will prepare you to function in a diverse world by talking about what it means to be an ethical and engaged citizen.

HON 440-1005**T, R 4:00–5:15 p.m.****Courts in American Politics****Professor Marlon Urquico**

Understood to be the nation's least political branch that's directed to solely interpret the Constitution, the United States Supreme Court is often revered for its majesty and cautious deliberativeness. However, from time to time, the justices have fervently feuded with one another and the Court has stepped into the contentious political arena, handing down controversial and consequential policy decisions that impact all Americans. In this course, students will study the history of the Supreme Court and its role in American politics. By examining the Court's past in chronological eras, students will understand how chief justices led the Court and associate justices thought about and decided major policy issues that have shaped American life into what it is today. Students will also come to know the Court's overall structure, standard proceedings and everyday operations. Finally, they will apply theory into practice by analyzing court cases and participating in mock senate confirmation hearings for judicial nominees, court conference debates and oral arguments. By semester's end, students will not only have a firm understanding of the U.S. Supreme Court's story and functions but will have also developed a better sense of their own judicial philosophy. May be used to satisfy the university multicultural requirement.

HON 496-1001**F 8:30–11:15 a.m****Writing and Environmental Advocacy: Honors Service Learning****Professor Denise Tillery**

People have been writing about the environment for centuries, but the genre has taken on new urgency in the twenty-first century. This semester, we'll sample some classics of environmental writing from the mid-twentieth century, then dive into current events.

While we read and discuss classic and contemporary works, you'll also do service work with a local environmental group, and learn how writing works in practical ways to protect local spaces.

This is a service-learning course requiring off-campus site visits and engagement with community partners. You will be required to complete 15-20 hours of service work during the semester. Service-Learning Honors Program (SH) students have priority registration and will enroll with permission of their Honors College advisor. Enrollment permission can be obtained from an Honors College Advisor for non-SH students.

HON 496-1002

R 2:30–5:15 p.m.

Navigating End-of-Life: Honors Service Learning

Professor Sheila Bock

This class recognizes death as a universal part of the human experience and thus as something that warrants the attention of the living. Throughout the semester, we will give focused attention to some of realities and practicalities of death and dying. Students will consider how social, cultural, political, and economic factors heavily inform how individuals' experiences with death and dying take shape. Through course readings, guest speakers, class discussions, and service-learning with community partners, students will learn about the important work of professionals and community members who are committed to helping others navigate end-of-life, as well as the challenges they encounter as they work toward facilitating a "good death."

This is a service-learning course requiring off-campus site visits and engagement with community partners. You will be required to complete 15-20 hours of service work during the semester. Service-Learning Honors Program (SH) students have priority registration and will enroll with permission of their Honors College advisor. Enrollment permission can be obtained from an Honors College Advisor for non-SH students.