

UMBC Honors College

Seminars

SPRING
2022



HONR 200: Invertebrate Neurobiology [4911]

Instructor: Chan Lin, Honors College, Mon. 4:30-7:00pm, SOND 406

Understanding how the brain works is one of the biggest challenges in science. In recent years, the development of neuroscience has drawn unprecedented resources and efforts worldwide; however, we are still awaiting an overarching theory regarding how any brain actually works. This seminar will introduce you to a range of historical and modern neuroscience topics, from the squid giant axon's action potentials to jellyfish biofluorescence, with a focus on the roles invertebrates play as critical research animals. As well, we will focus on some of the greatest discoveries in neuroscience, many of which are Nobel Prize-winning stories.

HONR 300-01: Biology of Obesity [3721]

Instructor: Sarah Leupen, Biological Sciences, Mon./Wed. 10:00-11:15am, ILSB 230

Everyone has ideas about obesity: what makes some people fat and some people thin, how to avoid being obese, the degree to which it is a personal vs. societal problem, and so on. In this course, we will explore the physiology of energy metabolism and the science of how to lose weight and keep it off, as well as the role of exercise. We will also consider the roles of behavior, free will, the food system, and public policy in the obesity epidemic. Students will draw on these different aspects and disciplines in team work, reading responses, analysis of scientific papers and literature reviews. No prior experience in biology is required.

HONR 300-02: Race, Poverty, and Gender in Baltimore 3722]

Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye, Honors College, Tues. 1:00-3:30pm, ILSB 301

Social categories of race, class and gender provide structure for and organize people's lives. These categories intersect with one another, reinforce one another's effects, and can, at the same time, cut against one another. In this course, we will explore how these main social categories operate in the lives of people living (or who lived) in Baltimore. We will first explore how race, class, poverty and gender are defined and then examine how they operate and interact within the context of Baltimore. As any city with a unique history, Baltimore provides a location through which we can examine social phenomena like block busting (neighborhood segregation), health disparities, food access, proliferation of crime and drugs, the judicial system, and more. Students will be engaged with projects in Baltimore. Some short papers and a longer final presentation/paper that incorporates the Baltimore work will be required.

HONR 300-03: Race and Human Rights in the United States [3919]

Instructor: Jeffrey Davis, Political Science, Tues./Thurs. 1:00-2:15pm, PUP 203

Unlike any other nation, the United States was born from a promise. Its founders proclaimed the right to national existence based on the self-evident truth that people possessed rights simply because they were born human. However, from the moment of our nation's birth to the present day, slavery and race have poisoned liberty and equality and have driven Supreme Court justices to extinguish some rights and built impenetrable obstacles to enforcing others. In this course, we will explore many questions, including: What are human rights, where do they come from, and how are they protected in law? Are education and healthcare human rights? Using a comparative approach with cases in the US, South Africa, Europe and Latin America, we will learn more about to what extent can human rights facilitate racial justice, truth and reconciliation.



HONR 300-04: Be Your Best Self in Real Life [4300]

Instructors: Simon Stacey, Honors College; David Hoffman and Romy Huebler, Center for Democracy and Civic Life, Tues. 4:30-7:00pm, SOND 406

This course investigates institutions and the ways they can suppress or liberate people's agency: the capacity to make choices and shape our world. Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of how people can become agents in three key institutional realms: education, employment, and civic life.



HONR 300-05: Adventures in Flash Fiction [4408]

Instructor: Sally Shivnan, English, Wed. 1:00-2:15pm (synchronous portion), Location TBA

Flash fiction ranges in length, but some definitions use an upper limit of 500 words, while some variations, like Twitter fiction, are much shorter. These stories differ from conventional-length short stories in their extreme distillation, focus, and precision, and they are hugely popular, appealing to our multi-tasking attention spans but also to the urgency and energy of our cultural moment. We will study the form, discussing it and writing about it, and students will also produce their own flash fictions, sharing their drafts with the class and revising them to produce diminutive, sparkling word gems.

HONR 300-06: Material Performance in Star Wars [4583]

Instructor: Colette Searls, Theatre, Mon./Wed. 2:30-3:45pm, SOND 406

Star Wars, the most popular, written-about film franchise in history, teems with puppets, masks, and costume-creatures that have remained iconic for nearly half a century. In this seminar, we'll examine how material characters like Yoda, Darth Vader, the droids pose question about contemporary issues like technophobia, human-material relationships, and other-ness. We will inform our discussions with research into the larger context of American puppet emergence during the last quarter of the 20th Century, including a look at Jim Henson' Muppets, and conclude with our own experiential play with material performance.

HONR 300-07: Disaster Politics [7705]

Instructor: Brian Grodsky, Political Science, Mon. 2:30-3:45pm (synchronous portion), MP 105

This course will introduce students to the political and policy dimensions of disaster. The two key questions we ask are how does disaster affect the social/political landscape and how does the social and political landscape affect the ability to deal with disaster? Through studies in political science, sociology, history, economics, psychology, (emergency) medicine and other fields, we will examine both domestic and foreign policy implications on the modern state, victims and communities (with special emphasis on vulnerable populations).

HONR 300-08: Paper Folding Design [7749]

Instructor: Ben Johnson, Computer Science, Tues./Thurs. 2:30-3:45pm, TBA

Note: This is class is Departmental Permission only, prioritizing students who were enrolled in the course Fall 2021.

Combining math (geometry), engineering, design and art, this course will introduce students to the art and design of origami, or paper folding. Students will build their technical and mechanical skills of paper folding and also learn design techniques so they can modify existing designs or create their own. Students will also examine the practical aspects of paper folding design, for example, transporting large telescope lenses into space, or designing more effective surgical stents in medicine.

