

UMBC Honors College Seminars

FALL
2022



HONR 200-01: Talking Democracy [4773]

Instructors: David Hoffman and Romy Hubler, Center for Democracy and Civic Life, Wed. 4:30-7:00pm, Honors College Seminar Room [LIB 216M]

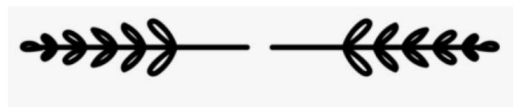
The central questions that the course will explore include: What is the role of a citizen in a democracy? What is the "self" that participates in self-government and civic life? How does language shape our perceptions? How do different modes and styles of communication embed or undermine democratic values? How can people make intentional use of language and communication to foster democratic relationships and civic health? Considering these questions will involve drawing on insights from the fields of psychology, political science, American studies, history, English, and media and communication studies. In addition, this course will help students build skills that enable them to initiate and enact positive social change and will enable students to emerge with greater confidence and clarity about how to move forward as contributors to collective problem-solving and community-building.



HONR 200-02: Hollywood's Civil War [7493]

Instructor: Jeremy Spahr, Honors College, Mon./Wed. 10:00-11:15am, Honors College Seminar Room [LIB 216M]

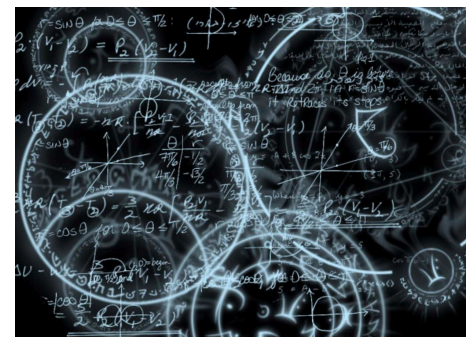
The course will combine a historical overview of the American Civil War and Reconstruction with an examination of how those topics have been portrayed in American cinema. In particular, it will emphasize the complicated and contested nature of historical memory and how the varied cinematic portrayals of this time period reflect changing social and cultural trends in American society. This course will help students recognize the ideological messages, as well as the complicated and contested nature of historical memory in popular culture portrayals of historical events.



HONR 300-01: Mathematics of the Universe [2815]

Instructor: Manil Suri, Mathematics, Mon./Wed. 2:30-3:45pm, Honors College Seminar Room [LIB 216M]

The course will engage students (both STEM and non-STEM) in ways of thinking about the design of the universe. Students will investigate philosophical and artistic questions, using logic and computer simulations, as they discover together how to build our universe and to engage in the playful opportunities available in mathematics. Please note that this course will be about mathematical ideas rather than calculation, so no prior math knowledge beyond high school algebra will be needed.



HONR 300-02: Reading the Body in East Asian Culture [4076]

Instructor: Julie Oakes, Honors College, Tues./Thurs. 10:00-11:15am, Honors College Seminar Room [LIB 216M]

In East Asian history and culture, the body has been embedded in a more holistic approach than the Western perspective, in that humans are seen as sociological beings whose physical states carry meaning to the wider community (rather than bodies being understood objectively and physiologically). Over the semester, we will look at specific examples from China, Japan and Korea that illustrate this concept. For example, how was hair a signifier of female power in Japan--or filiality in Korea? What did Chinese bound feet have to do with Confucian harmony? Or more recently, why are organ transplants deemed ideologically more problematic in Japan?



HONR 300-03: History of Science [4363]

Instructor: Randy Kidd, Thurs. 4:30-7:00pm, Honors College Seminar Room (LIB 216M)

This interdisciplinary seminar traces the history of science from the ancient world to the early 21st Century. We will consider, among other topics, the development of atomic theory, the mechanical world picture, the 17th century Scientific Revolution, the rise of scientific societies, germ theory, and the development of the theory of evolution by natural selection. We will also consider pseudo-sciences such as phrenology and Social Darwinism, as well as the philosophy of "scientism." We will focus on work by Aristotle, Zhang Heng, Ibn al-Haytham, Galileo, the Lavoisiers, Darwin, Lise Meitner, Richard Feynman and many others. In our primary-source readings, we will consider both the scientific content and historical and philosophical context of key scientific discoveries.



HONR 300-04: Mediated Space: Representations of Social Identity in the Shopping Mall to the City [4768]

Instructor: Instructor: Liz Patton, Media and Communication Studies, Tues. 1:00-3:30pm, Honors College Seminar Room [LIB 216M]

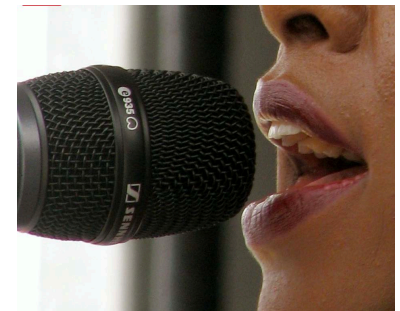
How does the way that society depicts our social places and spaces, such as homes, schools, and prisons, shape our perceptions of aspects of our identity, e.g. gender, race, or class? In this course, we will look at ways that TV, film, and advertising portray spaces and places (what we call mediated spaces) and how that representation affects our understanding of social identity and gives those spaces an underlying meaning. During the course, we will explore questions such as: How do mediated spaces reflect gender stereotypes or expectations? How are race and space co-created in the media? How do such presentations affect the audience's understanding of aspects of social identity? We will probe these questions from different theoretical perspectives.



HONR 300-05: Sounds Like Social Justice [4769]

Instructor: Earl Brooks, English, Mon./Wed. 1:00-2:15pm, ENGR 021A

This course challenges students to think through issues of race, class, and gender in Sound Studies, at the intersection of communication, culture, and technology. Sound Studies joins musicology, history, anthropology, and critical theory and includes a diverse array of methodologies, including digital humanities, archival research, music analysis, sound recording, and ethnography. Students apply scholarship in Sound Studies to collaborative group projects, blogs, scripts, and personal reflections and will utilize technological devices (cameras, sound recorders, and microphones) to create their projects.



HONR 300-06: Cultures in the Middle East and North Africa [4770]

Instructor: Samir El Omari, MLLI, Mon. 4:30-7:00pm, Honors College Seminar Room [LIB 216M]

This seminar will introduce students to topics of the historical and modern Middle East and North Africa (MENA), examining these societies and cultures through regionally and historically focused investigations. Students will review MENA's perceptions across the Arab World, focusing on the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia and the UAE), the Middle East/Levant (Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria), Egypt, and Morocco. Students will analyze case studies involving topics such as women's rights in the MENA region, child refugees in the Levant area, MENA geopolitics and global energy, and the multi religious context of the region. Students will also gain skills in intercultural communication and cross-cultural competence.

