

UMBC Honors College

Seminars

SPRING
2023



HONR 200: Invertebrate Neurobiology [4489]

Instructor: Chan Lin, Honors College, Mon. 4:30-7:00pm, LIB 216M

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: Facts and Fiction of Exercise [3584]

Instructor: Sarah Leupen, Biological Sciences, Mon./Wed.

10:00-11:15am, ILSB 230

Most people these days are interested in such questions as, "Is sitting actually bad?" "Is running natural for humans or did we evolve this way?" and "Why do I hate exercise when it's so good for me?" As a foundation, we will utilize theories and analysis from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history, and evolution; in addition, since most of us have life experiences that relate to all these things, part of the course "material" will be exercise itself (or related accommodations) and reflection, giving the students a common experience informed by their own disciplinary perspectives. The goal is not to turn anyone into an exercise junkie but to create awareness of the facts, fiction, and outright falsehoods surrounding exercise in our society.



HONR 300-02: Race, Poverty, and Gender in Baltimore [3585]

Instructor: Jodi Kelber-Kaye, Honors College, Tues. 1:00-3:30pm, LIB 216M

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 [3757]

Instructor: Jeffrey Davis, Political Science, Tues./Thurs. 1:00-2:15pm, PUP 354

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 [4090]

Instructors: Simon Stacey, Honors College and David Hoffman, Center for Democracy and Civic Life, Tues. 4:30-7:00pm, LIB 216M

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 [4172]

Instructor: Sally Shivnan, English, Wed. 1:00-2:15pm (synchronous portion), PAHB 428

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.

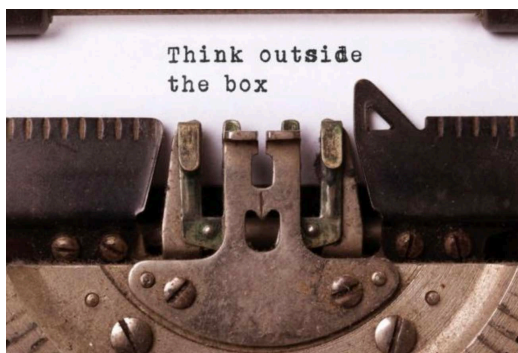
HONR 300-06: Community Engaged Writing [4314]

Instructor: Elaine MacDougall, Writing Center, Tues./Thurs. 10:00-11:15am, LIB 216M

This seminar focuses on a frequently ignored segment of the population: the incarcerated. Students will be challenged to analyze prison writing by authors both inside and outside the walls in order to critically engage with counter story in prison narratives; in addition, they will be asked to question systemic inequalities that lead to incarceration in the first place. Finally, as a capstone activity, students will research and assess a Maryland-based organization that was founded around issues such as recidivism, re-entry, and/or prison education projects in order to better understand initiatives happening in local communities. Instead of being lecture-based, this course will allow the students to co-create the breadth of topics discussed and lead discussions on the material.



Note: This course will also count as an AP English Replacement course for the Honors College requirement.



HONR 300-07: Developing the Documentary [4739]

Instructor: Jules Roskam, Visual Arts, Wed. 1:00-3:30pm, LIB 216M

Over the past decade, documentary filmmaking has experienced a creative explosion alongside an expansion of its potential for commercial success. Through weekly readings, screenings and class discussions, the course presents an abridged survey of contemporary non-fiction filmmaking practices. On a practical level, students will learn about the pre-production process for documentary filmmaking through exercises in idea generation, research, proposal writing, impact campaigns, team building, and distribution. We will work together to develop each student's unique idea while exploring issues of aesthetics, ethics and responsibility, and the current socio-cultural context of non-fiction film production. No experience with filmmaking is required.