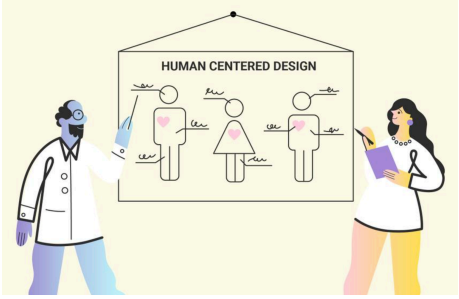
Spring 2027 Honors College Seminars

Please note that "Seminar Room" refers to the Honors College Seminar Room

HONR 200-01: Human Centered Design (4060) / Tu/Th 1:00pm - 2:15pm, MATH/PSYC 08

Instructor: Jamie Gurganus (Engineering and Computer Education Program)



This course introduces students from all majors to the principles and practices of Human-Centered Design (HCD). Students will work in diverse, interdisciplinary teams on real-world problem-solving projects that emphasize empathy, creativity, ethical awareness, and opportunity recognition. Grounded in a sequential framework that asks students to empathize, define, ideate, test, then implement, the course guides students in cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset by encouraging them to see problems as opportunities, take initiative, and create value for others. By focusing on designing with and for people, students will learn to develop solutions that are innovative, socially responsible, and ethically grounded. Students will gain transferable skills—including collaboration, problem-framing, systems thinking, empathy, and ethical decision-making—that prepare them for success across disciplines and career paths.

HONR 200-02: Food and Religion: Meaning-Making and Cultural Resilience (6996) / Thursday 1:00pm - 3:30pm, Sherman 115

Instructor: Matt Hoffman (i3b)



Food is one of the most central human experiences, connecting people across the table and around the globe. Food also serves as a core component of culture and religious traditions, from sacred meals and dietary laws to the engagement with issues of inequality and food insecurity. The guiding questions for our course are: how do people use food to make sense of themselves and the world around them? And how do choices about food relate to religion and other ways of making meaning? This seminar will explore the various components of these connections, including stories and rituals from faith leaders and storytellers; ethical concerns about food sustainability and justice; and the role the food can play in community building and bridging spaces of difference. Experiential opportunities will feature heavily into this course with both on-campus and off-campus "field trips" to help broaden perspectives and engage with the embodied practices of food preparation and consumption.

HONR 200-03*: Invertebrate Neurobiology (6997) / Wednesday 1:00pm - 3:30pm, Sherman 115*

Instructor: Chan Lin, Honors College



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 role invertebrates play as critical research animals. As well, we will focus on some of the greatest discoveries in neuroscience, many which are Nobel prize-winning stories.

HONR 300-01: Through the World of Biography: Life Writing and Historical Narratives (3488) / Tu/Th 11:30am - 12:45pm, Sherman 115

Instructor: Michelle Scott (History)



This seminar will explore how biography and its sub genres allow readers to capture the essence of a historical era or moment. Why are Americans so fascinated with historical period pieces and biographical documentaries on celebrities, politicians, or public figures? How did the multi award winning hip hop musical *Hamilton,* emerge from a historical biography on the founding father? Why are some clamoring to learn if characters from HBO's *Gilded Age* are really modeled after the Vanderbilts, the Astors, or Ida B Wells? In this course we will examine how the American historical past is remembered (or mis-remembered) in historical biographies, and how those memories are shaped through the lens of regional, gender, and racial analysis. In a collaborative workshop style, students will read and comment on each others' work as they develop a research paper, including the process of devising topics, finding sources, writing outlines and completing drafts.

HONR 300-02: Race, Poverty, and Gender in Baltimore (3489) / Mo 1:00pm - 3:30pm, Sherman 115

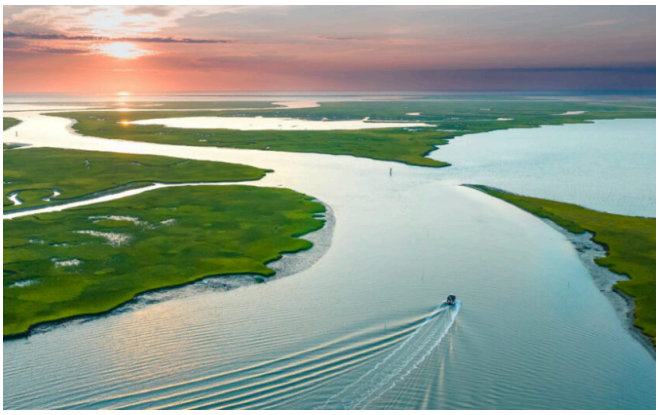
Instructor: Jodi Kelber (Honors College)



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: Climate Change in the Chesapeake Bay (3614) / Mo 4:30pm - 7:00pm, Sherman 115

Instructor: Anthony Campbell (GESTAR II, Goddard Earth Sciences Technology Research)



This interdisciplinary seminar will introduce students to the geology of the Chesapeake Bay, the impact of the last ice age, and the human history and culture of the bay; this foundation will then allow us to transition to the "satellite era," where we will examine how we monitor the environmental health of the Chesapeake Bay using satellite technology. The course will introduce students to spatial data analysis, remote sensing, and data analysis. Students will create a detailed spatial analysis of the bay accompanied by a collaborative report where students produce a study of the bay's coastal ecosystems, utilizing historic aerial imagery and knowledge acquired throughout the course. No special preparation is required, as an emphasis will be on communicating and collaborating *across* disciplines.

HONR 300-04: Your Brain on Nature (3840) / Mo/We 10:00am - 11:15am, MATH/PSYC 102

Instructors: Sarah Leupen and Cynthia Wagner (Biological Sciences)



Are you someone who has always enjoyed the outdoors? or conversely considers yourself more of an "indoor" type? Well, this seminar is for both of you! This course aims to explore our interactions with nature by critically analyzing the data-supported benefits of spending time outside as well as identifying the barriers we sometimes have to being in nature. Topics include the neurobiology of stress, the effects of nature on mood and emotion, the socioeconomic disparities in access to nature, and even the benefits of ecotherapy and "forest bathing." This seminar has something for all types of learners, such as cutting-edge readings, teamwork, whole-class discussions, and (optional) once-a-month weekend nature outings. We even hope to plan a camping trip at the end of the semester for anyone who wants to join! By the end of the semester we want you to have a deeper understanding of how you want to associate with nature in both your short and long term futures.

HONR 300-05: Cognitive Load in High Stress Situations (3899) / Tu/Th 8:30am – 9:45am, Sherman 115

Instructor: Kyle Bates (Emergency and Disaster Health Systems)



This course begins by introducing students to Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), which is a way to analyze how stress, fatigue, distraction, and environmental complexity impact memory, attention, and decision-making. Students won't just *learn* about Cognitive Load Theory; they'll also get to *apply* it when analyzing how people think and perform under stress in fields such as medicine, athletics, aviation, firefighting, disaster response, and academics. Students will connect theory to real cases and their own experiences. Students will also develop practical strategies for managing overload in their own academic and professional lives.

HONR 300-06: Performing the Political: Embodying Resistance in 20th & 21st Century Performance (3978) / Tu/Th 10:00am - 11:15am, PAHB 124
Instructor: Jill Vasbinder (Dance)



In this course, we will examine the ways in which political and social ideas have been embodied in performance in 20th and 21st century America. Focusing on the period since 1900, where new definitions of self and new relationships between self and society were being forged, we will explore the creative power of performance as an agent of change. Topics will include the advent of dance marathons, dance in the conservative McCarthy era, and Childish Gambino's *This is America*. This interdisciplinary course will employ many "lenses" as we analyze the works in question, such as gender studies, political and historical, performative (dance, theater, and music), and fine arts. The final, original research project may be presented as a performance or a more traditional form of assessment.