

# Honors College Seminars

Fall 2012



## **HONR 100: Honors Forum I**

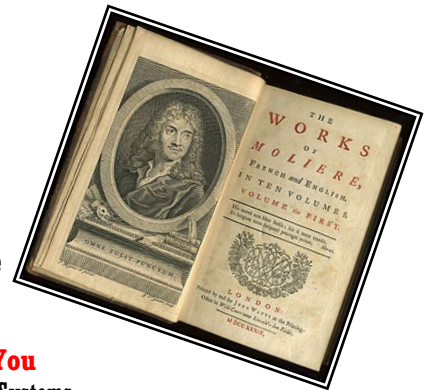
Instructors: Simon P. Stacey and Jodi Kelber-Kaye, Honors College

This course introduces students to the academic methods and disciplines as they interact with faculty and creative artists. Students are expected to do and present research, participate in campus activities, and reflect on what it means to be full members of a community of learning.

## **HONR 210: Great Books I**

Instructor: Ellen Handler Spitz, Honors College Professor of Visual Arts

An introduction to the great books of world literature, religion, philosophy, history, and science from ancient times to the present day. This course will include readings from such works as the Bible, the Bhagavad-Gita, Confucius, Homer, Plato, Dante, Machiavelli, and Shakespeare.



## **HONR 200-01: Being Human: Brain, Mind, & You**

Instructor: Megan Rivera, Geography and Environmental Systems

Few of us take time to observe our thinking-mind in action--How does it work? What does it do? What are the implications? We will explore these questions, drawing from knowledge developed in philosophy, neurology, evolutionary biology, religion, astronomy, psychology, medicine, pedagogy, anthropology, literature, quantum physics, and physiology. Simultaneously, students will explore the nature of their own minds using a range of techniques, supplementing the course material with direct experience. In addition to weekly assignments, students will design a research experiment to test a student-developed hypothesis related to the course material.



## **HONR 300-01: What is a Language?**

Instructor: Stephen Beale, Computer Science and Electrical Engineering

An introduction to the study of languages, or in other words, "Why did that stranger just ask me if I have eaten rice yet?" We will learn how languages express things differently, like greetings (the rice example), vocabulary (did you know some languages have no word for "brother"), and grammar (Yoda - study him we will). Half of the semester will be dedicated to using a computer program called Linguist's Assistant to describe a portion of a language--either your own, or one you are studying. This class will appeal to anyone interested in languages. You do not need to speak or be studying a non-English language, although that certainly would make the class interesting, and no specific computer skills are required, although optional projects will be available for computer science students. Cross-listed as LING 390-01.



### **HONR 300-04: Robots and Society**

Instructor: Susan Hoban, Goddard Earth Sciences and Technology Center

Robots are becoming an increasingly ubiquitous part of modern society, though ideas about robots date back to at least the era of da Vinci. The objective of this course is to introduce students to concepts related to the use of robots in society. We will delve in technical, ethical, legal and creative ideas surrounding the increasing role of robots in our lives. Students will try their hands at building an extremely simple robot to help them understand some of the realities of robotics and dispel certain misconceptions about how robots make decisions and act on those decisions.



### **HONR 300-03: The Language of Chivalry**

Instructor: Gail Orgelfinger, English

This course surveys the historical, cultural, religious, and literary contexts for the concept, ideal, and artistic manifestations of “chivalry.” Chivalry (derived from Old French *chevalerie*, from the Latin for “horse”) is a broader concept than that of aristocratic behavior, and is also very difficult to define. What appear to be strict hierarchical categories in the Middle Ages’ feudal context, divisions in society between “those who fight, those who work, and those who pray” quickly overlap in practice. Noblemen reinvented themselves as desirable but unattainable inspirations for deeds of prowess (to which the Church objected), which led to elaborate codes of conduct and rituals and ceremonies that publicly affirmed allegiance to a lady as often as to a king. Poets early on grasped the appeal of the drama and inherent contradictions of such codes, creating epics, romances, and lyrics that variously praised, mocked, or complicated them. In this course, we will understand how literature, history, and theology simultaneously contributed to the rise, development, and manifestation of “chivalry,” chiefly in England, France, and to a lesser extent, the US, through a reading of primary and secondary materials.

### **HONR 300-06: Honors Writing By & About Artists**

Instructor: Ellen Handler Spitz, Honors College Professor of Visual Arts

Art, in our time, has become a phenomenon that one is expected not merely look at but to think and talk about, and even to write about, especially if one is an artist! Today’s successful artists not only create works but also often present them to the public—both orally and in written form. In this seminar, we shall study different ways in which art (and visual culture more generally) has been responded to and represented not only by visual artists but by critics, novelists, poets, and film makers. The goal of the seminar is to encourage students to think deeply about what art has been and is today (both for artists and viewers) and about how art works, art-making processes, art movements, and aesthetic experiences can be described, interpreted, and explained. Above all, this seminar is devoted to asking what sorts of relations obtain between the two great sign systems of words and images. In that sense, our inquiry is fundamentally philosophical.

**Prerequisite: ART 323 or permission of the instructor.**

**This course is also listed as ART425 and ART720-01.**

