Seminars for Fall 2016

*Please know that the following criteria will be considered for registration for all Honors Seminars:

1. Seniors will be given priority to register for Honors seminars.
2. We will consider the student’s progress towards the completion of their Honors Baccalaureate (i.e. number of Honors credits taken, second language fulfillment status, and a cumulative GPA of 3.5 and above).
3. The seminar is advantageous towards the student’s field/s of study and/or future career plans.

Honors Read

HONR 494-001 (4 Credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Monday/Wednesday, 4:10 – 6:00 pm
Place: Quad F, Room 105
Instructor: Professor Kent Davis, Honors College

Course Description:

This seminar will offer students the opportunity to contribute to the selection of texts for "Hike and Read," as well as "Texts and Critics: Imagination and Knowledge", respectively. Seminar participants will each identify and champion a text for possible inclusion in the Honors curriculum for the upcoming academic year. Through vigorous research and debate, students will collaboratively create guidelines for selecting the texts. Seminar goals: the synthesis of new and unexpected texts, real-world exploration of the intersection between pedagogy and pragmatism, and engaging a community of enthusiastic, diverse, upper-division students; who are excited about challenging and inspiring their fellow Honors students.

Kent Davis has taught in the Honors College since 2009, and has spent most of his life making stories as a writer, actor, and game designer. His novel for kids, A RIDDLE IN RUBY is slated for release by HarperCollins’ Greenwillow Books in September, 2015. He holds a B.A. in English from the University of Pennsylvania and an MFA in Theater from UC, San Diego.

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Dark Romanticism: The Nocturnal Side of the Human

HONR 494-002 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Monday/Thursday, 7:10 – 9:00 pm
Place: Wilson Hall, Room 1128
Instructor: Professor Steve Kirchhoff, Department of English

How much of our world are we not permitted to see, when we look at things reasonably? This seminar starts with the assumption that imaginative works enlarge our perception of reality by including emotional and psychological experiences that often escape and confound reason. Dark Romanticism focuses on imaginative works that reveal the “nocturnal side of the human”—that is, the dark, irrational aspects of human creativity. Dark Romanticism investigates a variety of genres, including visual art, music, literature, film, Japanese manga, and cartoon journalism, with selected works from Francisco de Goya, Emily Dickinson, Marilyn Manson, Kanye West, Sigmund Freud, Salvador Dali, Sylvia
Plath, Frida Kahlo, Franz Kafka, Nine Inch Nails, and F. W. Murnau, among others. Confronting these works can allow us to see that much of our deepest experience is emotional and irrational, and that our very knowledge about such experiences might only be expressed through fantastical images that often evade our complete understanding. Students may appreciate that the focus on monsters and the “supernatural,” on the uncanny and strange, on the frightening, alienating, violent, and insane dimensions of creativity can provide a means, possibly, for a more integrated experience of self and world.

A native of Bozeman, Professor Kirchhoff has been a teacher for 25 years, the last 18 at Montana State University, where he instructs courses in composition and political science, in addition to seminars in the Honors College. He also served as the Mayor of Bozeman during the first of two terms (1999-2007) as an elected official on the Bozeman City Commission. Interesting fact: Steve has never texted; he loves nature, poetry, and culture.

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The Science of Happiness

HONR 494-003 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Monday/Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:50 am
Place: Quad F, Room 105
Instructor: Dr. Sarah Allen, Health and Human Development and Honors College

Course Description:

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Is happiness an important part of your life? Do you want to be happier? Are you skeptical of popular self-help models? Then the Science of Happiness course is for you! This course explores the habits of happy people and the roots of a fulfilling, flourishing, and meaningful life. You will engage with some of the most provocative and practical lessons from this interdisciplinary science informed by the fields of psychology, biology, neuroscience, philosophy, and more. You will also discover how cutting-edge academic research can be applied to your own life through a series of self-directed weekly happiness projects designed to improve your own happiness. Topics explored include gratitude, empathy, forgiveness, spirituality, volunteering, self-discipline, grit, finding flow, meditation, optimism, and curiosity. Come join MSU’s first ever Science of Happiness Course!

Dr. Allen graduated from the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario Canada with a degree in Family Relations and Applied Nutrition. She has taught Family Law and Public Policy and Race, Class and Family Diversity in the Health and Human Development Department, as well as Texts and Critics in the Honors College. Her research interests are broadly captured under the goal of enriching human well-being in social, intellectual, economic, emotional, and physical dimensions.
Shakespeare in Performance

HONR 494IA-001 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 4:10 – 6:00 pm
Place: Quad F, Room 1
Instructor: Professor Joel Jahnke, former Artistic Director of Shakespeare in the Parks

Course Description:

"Discovering Shakespeare". This seminar will focus on the great works of William Shakespeare. Not only will these pieces be dissected from an academic and literary standpoint, but they will be analyzed in the way the Bard intended them to be, through performance. Led by Joel Jahnke, former artistic director of Montana's Shakespeare in the Parks for over thirty years, this seminar will analyze the works of Shakespeare from all facets including dramaturgical analysis, analysis from the actor’s perspective, including verse work and choices of interpretation, and directorial interpretation of the plays. Shakespeare's intent was never to have his plays read, but to rather be shared through performance. This course will therefore culminate in an end of the semester performance.

Joel Jahnke is a Professor Emeritus in Theatre Arts at MSU and is a past recipient of the Phi Kappa Phi Fridley Teacher of Distinction Award as well as being honored with the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce Award of Excellence in Teaching numerous times. He served as the Artistic Director of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks from 1980 until his retirement and has extensive experience in both professional and academic theatre having acted in, directed and/or designed well over 300 productions.

Food Politics and Culture in the Media

HONR 494IH-001 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Monday/Wednesday, 1:10 – 3:00 pm
Place: Cheever Hall, Room 131
Instructor: Professor Jaime Jacobsen, MFA

Course Description:

How do Americans relate to food in contemporary society? How do food politics, food production techniques, and consumption habits affect our environment, our health, and our pocketbooks? What values and ideologies does our food system embody, and how have these shifted over time as our food system has evolved? What visions might we have for the future of our food system, and what challenges do we face?

In order to explore these questions, this seminar examines contemporary American food culture from an interdisciplinary perspective by examining food as both a cultural construct and an element of nature. We will start the semester by exploring food’s role in the history of humanity, focusing on “how food came to be, how it came to be cooked, how it came to taste good, and how it became metaphor, discourse and ultimately culture” through the writings of food literary historians Massimo Montanari and Felipe Fernanadez-Armesto. From there we will launch into reading a number of seminal texts by contemporary journalists and food writers, such as Upton Sinclair, Michael Pollan, Raj Patel, and Liz
Carlisle, and cultural historians like Wendell Berry, in order to examine modern agriculture and meat production in United States and fast food’s role in American culture.

Professor Jacobsen is an independent filmmaker whose creative interests explore the intersection of cultural identity, empowerment and social change. Her most recent documentary, Finding Traction (2014), premiered at the Banff Mountain Film Festival and won four international awards. She also won an Emmy Award for her work as a Field Producer on Indian Relay (2013), which aired on PBS’ Independent Lens and screened at the Smithsonian. Previously Professor Jacobsen taught as a Faculty Fellow in the Honors College from 2010-2011, and as an Assistant Professor of Media Studies at Notre Dame University-Louaize in Beirut, Lebanon, from 2013-2016. She is a graduate of Montana State University’s MFA program in Science and Natural History Filmmaking.

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Radical Creativity

HONR 494RA/RN-001 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Friday, 1:10 – 4:40 pm
Place: Haynes 227
Instructors: Associate Professor Sara Mast/Art, Assistant Professor Nicolas Yunes/Physics, Adjunct Instructor Jessica Jellison/Architecture

Course Description:

This unique, interdisciplinary honors seminar, co-taught by professors in Physics, Art and Architecture, is aimed at students from multiple disciplines with an emphasis in the sciences and the arts. The goal of the course is to enable students to explore and enhance their creativity through the artistic communication of complex and abstract scientific concepts. Explorations through readings, videos, live-performances and discussions will spark the development of self-generated problems within small, interdisciplinary groups. Each group will then collaborate in the creation of an immersive artsience installation that will address the self-generated problem. Each installation will then be exhibited in a public venue on campus or in the Bozeman community. A conceptual and methodological example of this is the Black (W)hole installation (www.blackwhole.montana.edu) that the faculty proposing this course created as a part of the larger Celebrating Einstein event of 2013. Students that successfully complete the course will acquire a range of collaborative skills and the ability to self-ignite their creativity and focus it to communicate complex ideas in innovative ways.

All applicants must complete an application. The application will consist of a 1 page (single-spaced, font size 12) document that indicates the student’s major/s, academic interests, and the reason why they wish to take this course. The short essay must be submitted to Dawn Major by April 15th, 2016.

Associate Professor Sara Mast is a visual artist and her paintings are included in both public and private collections in the United States and abroad. Her work is included in several publications that include Encaustic Painting: Contemporary Expression in the Ancient Medium of Pigmented Wax, by Joanne Mattera [Watson-Guptill, NY, 2001] and Art & Science Now, by Stephen Wilson (Thames & Hudson, NY, 2010) and Encaustic Art in the 21st Century, by Ashley Rooney (Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2016). A recent collaborative project with The Einstein Collective, Black (W)hole, is currently featured in an article and on the cover of the MIT Press journal Leonardo, February 2016.
Assistant Professor Nicolas Yunes specializes in Einstein’s theory of General Relativity, black holes and neutron stars. With over 100 publications and the recipient of numerous awards, his studies have laid the foundations that allow for tests of Einstein’s theory with gravitational wave and electromagnetic observations of compact objects. Yunes is also very involved in science communication through the creation of innovative events that transcend the boundaries between art and science, such as the Celebrating Einstein Science Festival and Rhythms of the Universe.

Adjunct Instructor Jessica Jellison is a licensed architect registered in Montana and Idaho, operating her private practice out of Bozeman. Jellison has instructed part-time at MSU School of Architecture teaching Architectural Design and Architectural Graphics for the last 7 years, and she was a Research Associate for the Creative Research Lab formerly within the College of Arts and Architecture coordinating applied research and creative projects that were interdisciplinary and collaborative. Jessica is one of eight individuals of The Einstein Collective working collaboratively on artscience immersive installations, allowing her to combine her love for art and science and her architectural expertise designing space.