Seminars for Fall 2017

*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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Death Becomes Us: The Mystery of Mortality and the Need for Meaning

HONR 494-002 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: T/R 12:10 – 2:00 pm
Place: CHVR 131
Instructor: Dr. Thomas P. Donovan, Honors College

Course Description:
This seminar seeks to critically explore the role of mortality awareness in the creation of cultural meaning systems. We will explore how our beliefs and values provide a crucial antidote in the face of mortality and against feelings of insignificance and meaninglessness, while also contributing to creating "made-up minds" in the face of uncertainty. We will also explore how challenges to our systems of belief often inspire defensive and aggressive responses to this perceived mortal threat and the implications for our present global reality. This course will examine how humans across cultures manage the enormity of our awareness of finitude and the efforts to give meaning to our temporary existence.

Thomas Patrick Donovan has been teaching graduate and undergraduate students since 2004, and has served as a Faculty Fellow in the Honors College at Montana State University since 2011. He holds a doctorate in Psychology and is particularly interested in the existential questions regarding living a meaningful life that inform the human condition the world over.

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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:
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.

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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.

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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 Fernandez-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.
The Art and Science of Medicine

HONR 494RH-01 or 494RS-01 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time:  Tuesday/Thursday, 3:10 – 5:00 pm
Place:  Quad F, Room 105
Instructor:  Professor Don Demetriades, Department of History and Philosophy and University Honors

Course Description:

Designed for students from all academic disciplines, this seminar will focus on just how broadly and profoundly contemporary medicine touches all of our lives. It will examine the underlying principles of medicine through the lens of literature, science, art and related fields. The why of suffering and disease, the how of healing, and the role both patient and physician play in individual health will be explored. Medical professionals will be invited to visit the seminar.

Professor Demetriades is the past coordinator of the humanities curriculum for the Inteflex Program (Integrated Pre-med/Med Program) at the University of Michigan. He currently serves as an Assistant Teaching Professor for the MSU Honors College (nine years) and the History and Philosophy Dept. (fifteen years). He holds a BA in Philosophy and Classics (Michigan), an MA in Philosophy (Michigan), and was a Doctoral Candidate in Philosophy (Michigan). He is also a veteran of thirty-six marathons and twenty ultra-marathons.

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