Seminars for Spring 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.

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

HONR 494-001 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Monday/Wednesday, 10:00 - 11:50 am
Place: Quad F, 105
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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Design Thinking for Our Community

**HONR 494-002 (4 credits)**
**Prerequisites:** UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
**Time:** Monday/Wednesday, 10:00-11:50 am
**Place:** Monday/Quad F, 1; Wednesday/CHVR 102
**Instructors:** Professors Amanda Rutherford, Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering and Brad Stanton, Department of Industrial and Management Systems Engineering

**Course Description:**

In this upper division seminar course, we explore the process of design thinking in our multidisciplinary class through solving real world problems in our community. In Spring 2017, we will be applying the design thinking process to complex problems facing our MSU community and beyond. Examples of past projects are widely varied ranging from re-designing Move-In day on campus (see [http://www.montana.edu/news/16319/honors-college-students-design-plan-to-improve-move-in-day](http://www.montana.edu/news/16319/honors-college-students-design-plan-to-improve-move-in-day)) to assisting community non-profits like GVLT, CHP and the Community Cafe to solve tough problems facing their organizations. While the course is open to all honors students, we are especially seeking those students in humanities, basic science, arts and architecture and business majors. The seminar is capped at 16 and no more than 50% of its students will be from any given college.

*Mandy is a full time instructor and a graduate of the MSU Honors program (2001). Currently, she teaches Multidisciplinary Engineering Design in the College of Engineering and is the faculty point of contact for the newly launched MSU Makerspace. Prior to MSU, she was a Technical Staff Member at Los Alamos National Laboratory.*

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Critical Perspectives in Leadership

**HONR 494-003 (4 credits)**
**Prerequisites:** UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
**Time:** Tuesday/Thursday, 2:10 – 4:00 pm
**Place:** Quad F, 1
**Instructor:** Professor Richard Broome, Jake Jabs College of Business & Entrepreneurship

From local news to world events, leadership issues permeate every aspect of our daily lives. The purpose of this course is to encourage students to develop and exercise critical thinking skills as they discuss and examine the many significant, and diverse issues and realities that impact leadership in the 21st century. Student will explore:

--Historical and contemporary theories of leadership
--Current technological advances and their impacts on leadership
--Recent societal changes that impact leaders
--New definitions of power within a cyber world
--The impact of evolving values and ethics on leadership decision-making
--Gender, race and the cultural intelligence aspects of leadership
--The looming leadership takeover by the Millennial Generation
During this course, students will be encouraged to embrace the belief that their generation does have the potential to transform the world via their understanding of the leadership issues they face.

Professor Broome teaches courses about leadership, management, entrepreneurship and professionalism and has almost 19 years of significant leadership experience with Fortune 500 companies, holding leadership positions at NASDAQ OMX, Computer Sciences Corporation and Booz Allen Hamilton. He also served in the U.S. Army for 27 years retiring as a full Colonel. He was asked by 2 Presidents to be on their White House staff at the National Security Council where he served on each President’s crisis management team during major international crises. He has a B.S. degree in Psychology from Utah State University, an M.S. degree in Systems Management from the University of Southern California, and an additional M.S. degree in Information Systems from the Naval Postgraduate School. He is a prolific writer with two suspense novels and over 60 published articles and major industry conference presentations to his credit.

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Studies in World Building

HONR 494-004 (4 credits)
Prerequisites:  UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time:  Tuesday/Thursday 3:10 – 5:00 pm
Place:  Quad F, 105
Instructor:  Professor Kent Davis, Honors College

Course Description:

Students will explore the design and analysis of fictional worlds for narrative media, such as novels, films, graphic novels, and plays. Through collaborative examination of these narrative works the class will delve into the incorporation of cross-disciplinary elements—including mythology, history, anthropology, ethics, politics, biology, economics, geography, and technology—in the construction of fictional settings, as well as to scrutinize their impact on our own world.

In the current professional and academic climate, where the abilities to creatively problem-solve and initiate innovative content are increasingly primary indicators of success, much can be learned from an active examination of the constructs of other innovative thinkers. An equally large amount can be learned by honing one’s own creative processes.

The final benefit of such a study is that it can open student architects, scientists, teachers, engineers, and yes, even writers, to the possibility that the way the world is, is not necessarily the way that it could be.

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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The Science of Poem

HONR 494IA-001 (4 credits)
**Prerequisites:** UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
**Time:** Monday/Wednesday, 7:10 – 9:00 pm
**Place:** Quad F, 105
**Instructor:** Dr. Ben Leubner, English

**Course Description:**

Have you ever felt that you just didn't get poetry? That you couldn't read it, that it didn't make sense? That it seemed like it was unnecessarily... difficult? Chances are good, then, that you were simply never taught to actually read it as poetry. If we approach poetry as if it were prose, the results are undoubtedly going to be mixed, and probably frustrating. But if we study the science of the poem, if we study meter, rhyme, structure, and so on, we'll find ourselves suddenly able to read poetry as such, and the results will be astounding. In this class we'll approach poetry not only on its own terms, but also from the angle of every other major field of study offered at MSU, including architecture, engineering, chemistry, art, philosophy, physics, and more.

Ben Leubner received his Ph.D. in English from Northeastern University in 2009, specializing in literature of the 20th century, especially poetry. He's been teaching in the English Department at Montana State since then. His current research focuses on the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop, James Merrill, and Derek Walcott, and the writings of David Foster Wallace.

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Human Nature

HONR 494IH-001 (4 Credits)
**Prerequisites:** UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
**Time:** Wednesday, 3:10 – 6:00 pm
**Place:** Wilson Hall, Room 1139
**Instructor(s):** Professors Robert Rydell, John Miller and Distinguished Guests

**Course Description:**

What exactly is human nature and why do answers to that question matter so much? This seminar examines the problem of human nature from multiple perspectives in the sciences, the humanities, the social sciences and the arts with a view towards encouraging students to “dive deeper” (the phrase is from Moby Dick) into issues that have been fundamental to thinking of ourselves—and our future—as human beings. To what extent do we have free will? How important is “nurture” to understanding our “nature” and vice versa? How do ideas about human nature inform thinking about government and society? Why do ideas about human nature change? Does human nature itself change?

Professor Rydell is a historian who specializes in the study of American thought and culture. He is especially interested in understanding the intersections between science, the arts, and the humanities and the questions these areas of inquiry raise about the human prospect. Foundational to understanding the human prospect is trying to understand human nature—that is, our complex biological and cultural identities and our capacities to change ourselves and our world for the better or otherwise.
Science of Mind and Body

HONR 494IS-001 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 7:10 – 9:00 pm
Place: Quad F, Room 105
Instructor: Dr. Monica Skewes, Psychology

Course Description:

The Science of Mind and Body will take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the mind/body connection from multiple perspectives and challenging the notion of mind/body dualism. This class will emphasize theories, models, and methods used by social and health scientists to systematically study biopsychosocial risk and protective factors for disease in humans, including genetic predispositions, adversity in childhood, stress and coping, thoughts and emotions, and sociocultural factors. Topics will include community based participatory research methods for health.

Dr. Monica Skewes is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Montana State University and is a project leader with the Center for American Indian and Rural Health Equity (CAIRHE). She is a health psychologist who studies substance abuse and resilience among ethnic minority populations.

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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: Monday/Wednesday, 2:10 – 4:00 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.
Religion, War and Memory

HONR 494IH-02 (4 credits)
Prerequisites: UH/HONR 201 & UH/HONR 202, or UH/HONR 301
Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 5:10 – 7:00 pm
Place: Wilson 2105
Instructor: Dr. Amanda Hendrix-Komoto, Department of History

Course Description:

In November 2015, the U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders described the war in the Middle East as “a war for the soul of Islam.” He argued that Islamic countries needed to devote their resources to ending Islamic militarism. The Iraq war is not the first war in American history to be portrayed as a religious crisis. Throughout American history, the experience of war has raised questions about human nature, the meaning of life, the necessity of sacrifice, and the ethics of killing. What did the mass carnage of the American Civil War and the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan mean for people’s understandings of God? In what ways did institutions morph as they dealt with individual and communal grief? Finally, how have these wars been memorialized in American and European popular culture? Our exploration of these wars will provide a backdrop for our discussions of contemporary wars. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, religious institutions both challenged and supported governments as they went to war. Christian apocalypticism and Zionism both contributed to American interactions with the Middle East. Understanding the role of religion in public life today means understanding how religion, war, and public memory have intersected in the past.