



HONORS FIRST YEAR INQUIRY SERIES

EXCITING FALL 2022 COURSE OFFERINGS FOR FIRST YEAR HONORS STUDENTS

HONR1310-01: Of Princes and Utopias: The Foundations of Modern Political Thought

Robert Cross, Department of History, CSSH

Times: Mon, Thur / 11:45am-1:25pm | CRN: 13962 | NUpath: IC

Is there such a thing as an ideal society, and if so, of what does it consist? What form of government is the most just, and is it achievable in the real world? Are the qualities of a good leader the same as those of a good person? Indeed, are human beings by nature fundamentally good, evil, or somewhere in between? People have been asking these sorts of questions since they first began to write things down, and the answers they have come up with have continued to inform countless debates about society, government, and the human condition to this very day.

This course will focus on a selection of the Western tradition's key thinkers, taking an in-depth look at some of the most influential works in the history of political thought, from ancient Greece through eighteenth-century Europe. Along the way, we will follow two simultaneous paths: one literary/philosophical, and one historical. You will have the opportunity here to read, consider, and discuss a number of history's great books. But you will also come to understand how these works fit in their historical and cultural context. It is not enough simply to read Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Politics, More's Utopia, or Machiavelli's Prince. These texts need to be considered in dialogue with one another, and in the light of subsequent thinkers who read them, adapted them, borrowed from them, copied them, and ultimately established them as the foundation of a "canon" of thought that has been passed down to us over the years. Recent decades have brought a re-evaluation of this canon, questioning its merit in general as well as the makeup of its particulars, which will be a part of our continuing dialogue and analysis. As will the artistic, philosophical, and multicultural milieu that helped develop these ideas, as well as those that developed from them – extending beyond the traditional relationship with the text, to include occasional use of film, music, and art.

HONR1310-02: Twentieth-Century Espionage

Jeffrey Burds, Department of History, CSSH

Times: Mon, Wed, Thurs / 1:35-2:40pm | CRN: 13927

Using case studies, documents, literature and film, we will explore various aspects of the world history of spies in the twentieth century. Themes include the Great Game (Anglo-Russian-French-German rivalries in Central Asia and the Near East); World War I (Mata Hari, Alfred Redl); the Russian Revolution; the interwar era; World War II; and the Cold War. Sub-themes will include women spies, human intelligence versus signals intelligence, double agents and moles, agent recruitment, technology, sexpionage, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Six-Day War (1967), and assassination.



Northeastern University
Honors Program

HONR1310-03: Mathematics, Magic, Games, and Puzzles

Stanley Eigen, Department of Mathematics, COS

Times: Mon, Thurs / 11:45am-1:25pm | CRN: 16325 | NUpath: EI

This is a Service-Learning Honors Course. Topics and mathematical sophistication will vary depending on the ages of the Service Learning Partners and the interests of the students taking the course.

The course will go into depth on the mathematics behind some classic magic tricks, puzzles and games. Mathematical topics may include, but are not limited to, combinatorics, graph theory, group theory, number theory, topology, dynamics, binary arithmetic and coding theory. Connections will be made to a wider range of areas. For example, some magic tricks connect to DNA analysis and coding theory. Some puzzles connect to logic and ethical dilemmas. Some games connect to social skills and economics.

HONR 1310-04: Illusions of Reality

*Ennio Mingolla, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorder,
Bouvé College of Health Sciences*

Times: Tue, Fri / 9:50 -11:30am | CRN: 16326

Can we trust our senses to accurately inform us about our world? Under what conditions can our capacity to attend to our surroundings play tricks on us, leaving our understanding of events at odds with the events themselves? How can we resolve disagreements between individuals about what just happened? This course takes an experiential approach to varieties of illusions. It explores illusions based on capture or misdirection of attention, as in magic performances, and also considers illusions of hearing and “cognitive illusions,” where judgments made by humans vary as a function of the narrative framing of a question. The course surveys the role of illusions in development of philosophical and scientific thought from ancient Greece through the “method of doubt” of René Descartes and into the modern era of psychology and cognitive science. Using software tools or pre-programmed online demonstrations, students can investigate how the strength of various illusions varies as a function of parametric variations in display variables, including images, videos, or narrative “displays.”

HONR 1310-05: Your Eye and AI

*Ennio Mingolla, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
Bouvé College of Health Sciences*

Times: Tue, Fri / 1:35-3:15pm | CRN: 16327

Today's computer vision is as good or better than human vision for some tasks and not as good for others. What makes machines able to "see" certain things well, and what aspects of our visual systems have yet to be emulated by machines? This course offers a nontechnical introduction to the capabilities of today's visual artificial intelligence, including such concepts as convolutional neural networks and deep learning for computer vision. The course also includes an introduction to the neuroscience and behavioral foundations of the study of human visual perception, surveying the remarkable range of human visual capacities. Exploration of such topics as vision for self-driving cars or computer-based facial recognition will include consideration of which visual tasks are appropriate for transitioning in whole or in part to machines. Such decisions depend on relative performance, costs, and ethical considerations. No prior experience with computer programming is expected, and no computer coding is required in the course. Students contemplating any major are welcome.



Northeastern University
Honors Program

HONR1310-06: The North of Ireland: Colonization, Armed Conflict, and the Quest for Peace with Justice

Michael Patrick MacDonald, University Honors Program
Times: Mon, Wed / 2:50-4:30pm | CRN: 14179 | NUpath: DD

On January 30, 1972, British soldiers released 108 rounds of live ammunition, killing 14 unarmed citizens (7 teenagers) who were peacefully marching for civil rights. The day is remembered as “Bloody Sunday.” After 38 years, the British government released The Saville Report, acknowledging that British soldiers’ actions were “unjustified and unjustifiable.” While this is just one of many truth inquiries sought by people in the North of Ireland today, the families of Bloody Sunday’s victims were elated that their loved ones – long labeled IRA “terrorists” by an earlier British Army report – were vindicated. To many, though, this is about something bigger, as one survivor attested:

Just as the civil rights movement of 40 years ago was part of something huge happening all over the world, so the repression that came upon us was the same as is suffered by ordinary people everywhere who dare to stand up against injustice. Sharpeville. Grozny. Tiananmen Square. Darfur, Fallujah, Gaza. Let our truth stand as their truth too.— Tony Doherty (son of slain Civil Rights marcher on Bloody Sunday)

This course examines the colonization of Ireland by Britain, the long struggle (both through constitutional means as well as by armed, physical-force) for an independent republic, the 20th century partition of the island of Ireland and the creation of a “Northern Ireland” statelet remaining within the United Kingdom. The course then focuses on Northern Ireland. We will look at the non-violent Civil Rights Movement (1967-1972) for equality for the Catholic/Nationalist/Irish-identified population in the North (a movement eclipsed by a more militant struggle after the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre by British soldiers), and the armed conflict waged by Irish Republican paramilitaries and a British State which often colluded with Loyalist (Protestant/British-identified) paramilitaries. The bulk of this course will look at the North of Ireland’s journey to a Ceasefire among paramilitaries and the British Army, the peace *process*, the 1998 Good Friday Peace Accords, and the ongoing post-conflict quest for a lasting “peace with justice.” We will examine the very current Brexit crisis in the United Kingdom, its potential impact on the fragile peace achieved on the island of Ireland, and revived calls for a United Ireland independent of the United Kingdom.

HONR 1310-07: Angels and Demons: Study Violence in the 21st Century

Gordana Rabrenovic, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, CSSH
Times: Tue, Fri / 1:35 -3:15pm | CRN: 16548 | NUpath: SI

In this course, we will use the concept of borders and boundaries to explore our understanding of violence in the 21st century. The idea of borders is often used to discuss conflict around land boundaries. These conflicts are often bloody, prolonged and characterized by interpersonal and intergroup violence. However, ethnic, racial and economic disparities — both within and between nations — tend to exasperate territorial conflicts and create new tensions. Political and environmental crises further complicate our understanding of what causes conflict and how best to address it. This course will employ the concept of borders to analyze various examples of contemporary violence. As we explore different instances of conflict, we will also examine innovative ways to intervene, reduce and even prevent violence. Examples will range from Boston to the global arena.



Northeastern University
Honors Program

HONR 1310-08: Humans and Nature: The Psychology of Socio-Ecological Systems

*John Coley, Departments of Psychology and Marine and Environmental Sciences, COS and
Brian Helmuth, Departments of Marine and Environmental Sciences and Public Policy and
Urban Affairs, COS*

Times: Mon, Wed / 2:50-4:30pm | CRN: 19893

Some of the most critical challenges facing our species are environmental, from the climate crisis to biodiversity loss and sustainable living. Meeting these challenges will require widespread changes in human behavior. However, to influence how people behave toward the natural world, we need to understand how people think about the natural world. Cognitive Psychology has documented how humans use powerful intuitive frameworks arising from an interaction of evolved cognitive structures, personal experience, formal education, and culture to understand, explain, and predict the world around us. Environmental Science has recognized that human activity has profound implications for ecological function and ecosystem health, which, in turn, have profound implications for people living as part of a Socio-Ecological System. In this course, we'll weave together themes from both disciplines to examine how people understand the environment and their place in it, how this understanding varies with culture, informal experience, and formal education. We'll also examine relations between environmental cognition, environmental attitudes, values, and norms, and sustainable behavior. This seminar will be team-taught by John Coley (Psychology & Marine and Environmental Sciences) and Brian Helmuth (Marine and Environmental Sciences & Public Policy and Urban Affairs).

HONR 1310-12: Gastronomic Delights: The Chemistry of Food and Cooking

Jude Mathews, Department of Chemistry, COS

Times: Mon, Wed / 1:35-3:15pm | CRN: 19267 | NUPath: ND

This course, designed especially for students who would like an introduction to applied chemistry, will use the science of chemistry to understand what is happening when we cook food and will explore dietary constituents and various cooking processes with particular emphasis on chemical principles. Cooking is a creative and artistic process, but it is based on fundamental chemical and physical principles.

Topics covered will focus on the chemistry and molecular bases of food and their reactivity under various conditions. Topics will include basic nutrition, cooking meats, fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains and breads and the production of chocolate, beer, wine and distilled spirits. Other topics will include the physiological and evolutionary implication of the senses, molecular gastronomy, geographic and cultural influences on food and the impact of modern day mass production of food on humans and the world we live in.

HONR 1310-13: Green Chemistry and Climate Justice

Vaso Lykourinou, Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, COS

Times: Mon, Wed, Thur / 10:30-11:35am | CRN: 19319

The course is based on the UNIDO-Yale & Beyond Benign Curriculum and will provide a brief introduction to key chemical principles such as stoichiometry, molecular structure, chemical and physical properties and periodic trends of chemical behavior by connecting them to central environmental and health issues tied to toxicology to create awareness of these issues and ways they are currently addressed. The course will introduce basic concepts and then tie them to case studies and fundamentals of green chemistry and toxicology.



HONORS INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINARS

EXCITING FALL 2022 COURSE OFFERINGS FOR UPPER-CLASS HONORS STUDENTS

Honors Interdisciplinary Seminars are described on the following pages. These courses are available to Honors students in their second year or higher. To achieve Honors Distinction, students must complete at least one such seminar between their second year and graduation.

HONR 3310-01: Contemporary Issues in Healthcare

Lorna Hayward, Department of Physical Therapy, Bouvé College of Health Sciences

Times: Tue, Fri / 9:50-11:30am | CRN: 16069 | NUpath: SI, EX

This course is a service-learning, interprofessional, Honors seminar that is project-based and involves examination of the complexity of issues related to a community defined health need. We will explore modern health care issues at the individual, local, national, and global levels. The US health care system will be presented historically from 1850 to current day. Health decisions will be discussed from multiple perspectives including: historical, political, ethical, financial, technological, and epidemiological. From there, students will develop an understanding of the complexity of health care concerns and the impact on the participants at their community sites.

HONR 3310-02: The Ethics of Philanthropy: How to Make the World a Better Place for All People

Patricia Illingworth, Department of Philosophy, CSSH

Times: Mon, Thur / 11:45am-1:25pm (Remote Synchronous) | CRN: 16328 | NUpath: SI, ER

Given great global and domestic need, the responsibility to help others falls on all of us. This course considers questions such as: Is everyone morally obligated to give to others? What is the moral foundation underlying our duty to give? Are some charitable purposes morally more compelling than others? Does big philanthropy undermine democracy? Is there such a thing as bad philanthropy? Should nonprofits accept dirty dollars? We will draw on interdisciplinary readings in our effort to answer these questions.



Northeastern University
Honors Program

HONR 3310-04: Non Fiction Writing and Social Justice Issues

Michael Patrick MacDonald, University Honors Program

Times: Mon / 5:00-8:00pm | CRN: 14148

In order to write the most effective non-fiction around social justice issues, a writer might undertake personal reflection on his/her own life to access that “place” that allows for greater empathy. When we write about issues affecting other people’s lives, it is important to engage in a process of contemplation that will lead to more in-depth understanding, and create a unique and passionate “voice” that “brings the reader in.”

This is true, no matter where we come from or our degree of previous exposure to the issues at hand (it is my belief that one does not have to come from poverty to write effectively about poverty, come from domestic violence to write effectively about domestic violence etc.; however, I believe that one would be well served by accessing their own place of vulnerability in order to write empathically about social justice issues). In order to help students find their own writing voice, this seminar will engage students in critical thought and discussion of a wide range of social justice issues as well as grassroots movement for change.

Central unifying themes of the course will be class/poverty and its attendant violence, crime and other social issues, as well as its intersections with racism, gender, sexuality and other identities. We will also look at the intersection of justice-and-healing in grassroots efforts happening in our communities that have been most affected by these issues. In particular, we will approach Social Justice themes through a Restorative and Transformative Justice lens, which calls for shifts in the ways we communicate across perceived differences, rather than adversarial and fundamentalist Good vs Evil approaches that dominate Social Justice discourse (e.g., on social media and in classrooms) today. Therefore, the role of Empathy on and off the page will be our most central unifying theme, and concepts such as mutual aid and solidarity (rather than charity) will be explored.

Ultimately, we will focus on the implications for writers of non-fiction on these topics. This course will present an insider’s view into writing with a greater consciousness of social justice issues (in particular, questions of socio-economic inequality) by starting with some of the instructor’s own work, which includes two memoirs, a third memoir-in-progress and multiple essays. Secondly, the course will move outward to the works of other significant writers of non-fiction, using different writing approaches to related issues, whether through personalized journalism (also called “new journalism”), straight-journalism, or opinion/advocacy journalism or essay.

What makes various approaches work effectively? What works for which audiences? How might the works influence contemporary social problems? Are there policy links to any of these writings? And most importantly for our purposes, how might Restorative or Transformative Justice be applied to the various approaches?

The course will frame a discussion of the many ways to write non-fiction about these central themes: as memoir, non-fiction books, journalism and essays (as well as other forms of dramatic writing, one-person shows, documentary film or other examples of social-issue-writing the class comes across in general popular culture).



Northeastern University
Honors Program

HONR 3310-05: Slam Poetry and Social Justice

Ellen Noonan, Department of English, CSSH

Times: Tues, Fri / 9:50-11:30am | CRN: 16330 | NUpath: IC, EI

The title of the course may seem fairly straightforward: Slam Poetry and Social Justice. Those concepts, though, those “performances,” can be complicated (and I am using “complicated” as both verb and adjective here), and that complicating will be the work of our class. We’ll start with questions: What is Slam Poetry? How is it made, performed? What is Social Justice? How is it made, performed? How do we integrate these so that poetry can work towards social justice, so that social justice might have poetry’s energy, immediacy, and grace? These are my opening questions: we will ask many more questions together, while also reading many kinds of texts, and writing, “performing,” and “workshopping”/responding to our own texts in a collaborative writing and learning space where all voices will be valued and heard.

HONR 3310-06: Hopscotch, Soccer and Broccoli: Implications of Neuroscience for Promoting Children’s Brain Health

*Lauren Raine, Department of Physical Therapy, Movement, & Rehabilitation Sciences,
Bouvé College of Health Sciences*

Times: Wed / 3:30-6:30pm | CRN: 16549 | NUpath: ND

This course assists the learner in answering the question: To what extent does brain health depend on lifestyle choices that are made early in life? This course highlights the implications of lifestyle factors on brain health during childhood and adolescence, with particular focus on factors such as physical activity, diet, obesity, and sleep. Various scientific perspectives and methods for measuring lifestyle factors and brain health will be examined through readings, in class discussions and exercises, and observational opportunities of various Northeastern laboratories. Students will be introduced to emerging methodologies and techniques in the field of neuroscience, including electroencephalogram (EEG), functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and behavioral outcome measures. Students will develop critical thinking and analytic skills as we use the scientific readings and laboratory observations to evaluate the quality of scientific evidence supporting the importance of particular lifestyle factors in promoting brain health. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to integrate knowledge emerging from multiple disciplines, including neuroscience, movement sciences, nutrition, and psychology as it applies to brain health.

HONR 3310-09: Power to the People: How Large Public and Private Institutions and Engage Ethically with Under-served Communities

Ted Landmark, Department of Public Policy and Urban Affairs, CSSH

Times: Wed / 4:35-7:45pm | CRN: 16599

Large governmental entities and private institutions like universities have an obligation to engage ethically with the communities they exist within and serve. Such engagement should not exploit under-privileged communities for research, employment, housing, political, or environmental purposes, should “do no harm,” can contribute toward overcoming racial and economic disparities and contribute toward resilience and sustainability, and should improve the quality of life and social and economic opportunities in those communities. We will examine how public and private sources of power can co-creatively and ethically engage with communities that are traditionally under-served by powerful resources. Students in the course will also participate in the Myra Kraft Open Classroom Series, scheduled for Wednesday evenings throughout the Fall 2022 semester, which will feature a rich variety of talks and discussions on these issues.



Northeastern University Honors Program

HONR 3310-10: Contested Issues in the US Economy

Peter Simon, Department of Economics, CSSH

Times: Mon, Wed, Thurs / 1:35-2:40pm | CRN: 16777 | NUpath: ER, SI

In the large and complex economy of the United States, there is controversy over what goods and services should be produced. Should we legalize drugs or continue to fight the war on drugs? Should there be a limit to our national debt? What is the economic justification for import tariffs? In addition to the topics listed in the title, this course looks at the economic and ethical aspects of other issues such as mandatory vaccination, organ sales, death with dignity, and scalping. To understand the nature, the causes, and the ethical implications of these, and many other current controversial and contested issues, is the objective of this course. Students will work in pairs to conduct their own econometric study on contested issues, which is the objective of this course.

HONR 3310-12: Examining Family Business Through Film

Kimberly Eddleston, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, DMSB

Times: Tue / 5:20-8:45pm | CRN: 16935

Family businesses are the predominant form of business around the world. Yet, because of the inextricable link between the family and business, there is much diversity in their goals, values and how they are managed. Most unique to family businesses is the central role of the family and its influence on the business. An instrumental tool to discover, identify, and evaluate family relationships and family business dynamics is film. In this course, students will learn to critically analyze and evaluate family relationships and family business dynamics through the examination of various television shows and films and how they reflect research and theories. By watching, analyzing and discussing these films, the complexities of family businesses will come to life, offering students a unique glimpse into how family relationships impact the business and in turn, the business affects family relationships. By utilizing television shows and film, students will also have the opportunity to diagnose the roots of family conflicts and see how a 'healthy family' helps to ensure a 'healthy business.'

HONR 3310-14: Representation in Young Adult Literature

Kat Gonso, Department of English, CSSH

Times: Mon, Wed, Thur / 10:30-11:35am | CRN: 19268

Historically, middle grade (MG) and young adult (YA) books have been written by white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied writers. When readership of MG and YA skyrocketed in the 2000s (from the 3,000 titles published annually in the late 1990s to 30,000 annually in 2010), an uptick in diverse published young adult writers and protagonists followed. Regardless, the YA publishing industry still fails to champion diverse experiences and is not reflective of the reality of our communities, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, gender, people with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities.

Representation in Young Adult Literature offers students an opportunity to join a collaborative community of readers to discuss the YA books that have captured modern readers' imaginations. Students will be exposed to a variety of styles (contemporary, dystopian, fantasy, sci-fi, romance, mystery, and graphic novels) and books with writers and/or protagonists that identify as BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, neurodivergence or mental illness, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities, to name a few. We will also discuss intersectionality, the rise and fall of the #OwnVoices movement, the problem with book covers, and YA discourse of Twitter, TikTok, Goodreads, and other social media sites. Students will have the opportunity to speak with professionals in the publishing industry and writers. In short, if you are interested in exploring young adult books with diverse characters and stories, this is the class for you!



Northeastern University
Honors Program

HONR 3310-15: Violence and Non-Violence: Politics, Ethics and Justice

Whitney Kelting, Department of Philosophy and Religion, CSSH
Times: Mon, Wed / 2:50-4:30pm | CRN: 19269 | NUpath: SI, ER

Defining and shaping our thinking about violence and non-violence are ideas drawn from political theory, ethics, religions and specific cases and exemplary individuals. Tracking the threads of state violence, resistance, non-violent movements, civil and uncivil disobedience, ethical and religious responses, and statements of individual commitments, this course will explore the ethical landscape of the discourse and actions associated with violence and non-violence. We will read debates centered around the justifications and rejections of warfare, the responses to state violence and explore contemporary questions through these lenses. The seminar will develop a collective research project based on one of the cases and will share their findings beyond the classroom in a public form like a symposium or public access publication.

HONR 3310-16: Familiar and Strange Freedoms: What is Freedom and Is There a New Way to Think About It?

Matthew Smith, Department of Philosophy and Religion, CSSH
Times: Mon, Wed, Thur / 1:35-2:40pm | CRN: 19270

Freedom! A rallying cry for centuries, a rhetorical tool used to make demands, a theoretical construct at the heart of many contemporary political theories, freedom is never really absent from discourse and struggle. It is hardly obvious, though, what freedom is and why it should matter so much. In this class, we explore several philosophical characterizations of freedom, from ancient to modern. We then explore a novel, almost strange, approach to freedom as almost always collectively realized, at root. The course ends with some applications of this model of freedom.

HONR 3310-17: Misinformation and the Law

Ari Waldman, School of Law
Times: Wed, Fri / 11:45am-1:25pm | CRN: 19320

We live in an age of misinformation, disinformation, "alternative facts", and conspiracy theories. This seminar asks: How is misinformation affecting a legal system supposedly premised on the rule of law? Many cases--particularly those that involve the civil rights of marginalized populations--turn on factual, scientific claims about the world. Is abortion safe or does it cause psychological harm? Do children of same-sex parents turn out as successful and well-adjusted as children of opposite-sex parents? Does conversion therapy harm queer adolescents or does it let them live a life that accords to their religious beliefs? Many of us--not to mention the scientific consensus--know the answers to these questions. But the presence of misinformation in the legal system complicates the impact that science has on law. In this seminar, we will explore the ways misinformation distorts the civil rights of marginalized populations, focusing on LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, affirmative action, and more. We will also consider the causes of the problem, particularly the political economy of misinformation. There will be no final exam. Students will take part in research and real-world projects on misinformation.