

Honors Seminar Course Descriptions Fall 2016

HON 1515: Freshman Honors Seminars

HON 1515-101: Wolves: Facts and Fictions

TR 11:00-12:15, AH 161

Kristan Cockerill / Alexandra Hellenbrand

Wolves inhabit multiple physical and cultural landscapes. Their real and fantastical lives have long been intertwined with humans. They have been revered, feared, honored, hunted. The facts of wolf biology and the fictions of wolf as cultural icon (beast, hero, hybrid) offer an excellent site for evaluating human interaction with this singular species as a reflection of our own animal reality. This interdisciplinary course will weave information from the biological/ecological study of wolves with wolves as represented in a variety of cultural forms through the ages: ancient myths and medieval legends, fairy tales, pop culture (fantasy, film, and TV).

HON 1515-102: Forests and Sustainability in the American Experience

Date/Time TBA, Location TBA

Catherine Cole

This interdisciplinary course explores the history and ecology of American forests, using the Southern Appalachians as a natural laboratory on our doorstep, and connecting with the theme of sustainability at Appalachian State. Rich forest ecosystems have sustained both natural biodiversity and economic prosperity throughout American history: the rapid rise of the United States as a world power in its early years rested in no small part on an abundant supply of wood appropriate for shelter and heat, naval ships, railroad ties, and much more. At the same time, exploitation of these resources has caused perennial conflict—in clashes between European colonists and Native forest-dwelling peoples, for example, and in ongoing debates over development and preservation that grapple with how humans, in our turn, can sustain forest resources.

This class first introduces forest ecology on a non-specialist level, with local field trips illustrating ecophysiology and taxonomy of native plant species in their interactions with other forest organisms. We will study from a scientific perspective how evolution generates a range of species adapted to specialized niches in a broader system, and go on to address how forest carbon cycling plays a key role in mitigating climate change. We will then situate our own region within a broader American environmental history. In addition to a “practical” history of commercial forest products, land rights, and conservation legislation, we will examine subjective experience of forest landscapes expressed in literature and the arts, including film, considering how aesthetic and cultural values shape public attitudes towards wilderness and land use.

Student work will include regular readings, class discussion, short written essays, and field trips. Each student will also complete a research project on a chosen topic, to be presented in written

and oral form. Although class sessions will focus mostly on North America, students may examine a different world area in their individual projects if desired. The project will strengthen students' skills in identifying quality information resources; using these resources as evidence to build broader arguments; writing an extended paper; and public speaking.

HON 1515-103: Mathematics of Planet Earth

TR 12:30-1:45, WA 105

Katrina Palmer

This project-based class will investigate different planet earth (sustainability) ideas and the mathematics around them. For example, what is climate change? What data can we use to show climate change is (or is not) happening? Students will look at trends across the world and draw their own conclusions. Then they will compare and contrast expert opinions (mathematical models) about global warming. Another project will be based around passive solar house design. After learning about the trigonometry involved in designing the south facing wall, students will create a one-story house design detailing the materials used and window size and locations. Some other topics may include crop rotation using discrete math, invasive species and probability, and measuring the health of the earth using the theory of island biogeography.

HON 1515-104: Disease: Myths, Legends and Facts

MW 5:00-6:15, Location TBA

Susan Edwards

Today the media and the Internet are a wealth of information and shockingly not all of it accurate. So how do we sort through the myriad of information and discern fact from fiction. This course will examine the facts associate with diseases through the ages and explore how they were portrayed in society. The content will be examined using a combination of lectures, readings, presentations and assignments. Active student participation in class is an expectation, as it is a major component of the course.

HON 1515-105: Balanced Brains

Thursdays 5-7:30, AH 161

Andrea McDowell

In this course, we will explore visual, intuitive, right brain intelligence. Through exercises, students will come to understand and condition their own visual and intuitive intelligence, and learn to integrate that with their more commonly exercised verbal, rational, left brain intelligence in order to develop whole-mind cognition. Specifically, students will learn and practice visualization, drawing, photography, meditation, and the analysis of their own dreams and media images. Working from the model presented by Williams and Newton (2007) in *Visual Communication: Integrating Media, Art, and Science*, and with the goal of what Williams labels "omniphasing," students will come to better value, strengthen, and integrate their many forms of

intelligence to be “all in balance.” Students will read and discuss debates forming the foundation for the theory of omniphiasism drawn from anthropology, art, biology, communication, media, neuroscience, and psychology. In addition, global, cross-cultural differences in teaching and learning will be explored and compared to better understand social, structural, and systematic influences over intelligence. The goal of the course is for students to develop more balanced brains. As more creative, better decision makers, it is hoped that students will become more competent problem solvers and, with whole mind synthesis, able to engage with and contribute to society.

HON 1515-106: Justice Theory and Practice

TR 9:30-10:45, AH 162

Matt Robinson

The course examines different theories and approaches to justice. Students would compare and contrast competing conceptions of justice, study public opinion polls to determine level of support for each, and be able to apply these conceptions of justice to contemporary political issues in the United States.

HON 2515: Sophomore Honors Seminars

HON 2515-101: Technology Through the Ages

MW 3:30-4:45, PH 2015

Dawn Medlin

Each student will be assigned a country, and each week the topic would represent a certain time period. The student will research what technology was introduced in their specific country during that time period, and then each week will meet to discuss what was discovered and how it has shaped the future of that country as well as other countries. This will allow students to see how different countries have adopted technology at their individual times, and at what rates.

HON 2515-102: Math and Fairness in Democratic Elections (Chaotic Elections)

MWF 10:00-10:50, AH 161

Rick Klima

Have you ever wondered ...

... how George W. Bush won a U.S. presidential election in which he received more than half a million fewer votes than his main opponent?

... how professional wrestler Jesse "The Body" Ventura was elected governor of Minnesota when two-thirds of the state's population preferred either of his opponents?

... how Tim Tebow finished third in the balloting for the Heisman Trophy despite being preferred as the winner by more voters than any of the other candidates?

... why elections often produce results that seem to be displeasing to many of the voters involved? Would you be surprised to learn that a perfectly fair democratic election can produce an outcome that literally *nobody* likes? When voting, we often think about the candidates in the election, but could it be more important to consider the procedures that we use to express our preferences and arrive at a collective decision?

Take *Math and Fairness in Democratic Elections* to help you discover answers to these and many other questions!

HON 2515-103: MyMedia.MyWorld

MW 2:00-3:15, AH 162

Janice Pope

This course examines multiple perspectives on how collaborative media such as facebook, instagram, twitter, etc., are changing the ways in which people produce and receive information. Drawing on multi-disciplinary theories and readings, students will be challenged to think critically about their personal use of collaborative media, how it informs their world view and frames their experiences. Students will also select a context of individual interest in which to analyze how collaborative media usage is used to create meaning and frame experience in that particular context.

HON 2515-105: The Conflict Between the performance of Sacred and the Secular music in 20th Century Cross-Over Artists Careers (Or, Singing for the Lord while humming for the Devil)

TR 9:30-10:45, AH 187

Louis B Gallien, Jr.

One of the dominant cross roads for “cross over” artists is the space of time that they must ford the streams of conflict between their church performances and their contemporary secular recordings and careers. The conflicts between the sacred and the secular is deep while the similarities in their musical styles is strikingly similar, especially in the historical context of the Civil Rights Movement. However, the amount of personal angst and suffering that occurred among some artists in this group is the plot of many movies and documentaries.

This course will explore the roots of gospel music and the streams that some artists seem to effortlessly navigate from the sacred to the secular, while others have taken their entire careers attempting to spiritually blend the two audiences with tragic personal results. We will examine such artists as: Sam Cooke, Marvin Gaye, Donny Hathaway, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Dolly Parton, Bessie Smith, Whitney Houston, Aretha Franklin and others whose stories are rich in both the traditions of the church and popular culture.

HON 2515-106: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism

TR 11:00-12:15, AH 187

Louis B Gallien, Jr.

This course will examine (through discussions, guest lectures, field trips, films, documentaries, music and other interactive pedagogical processes), the many ways that chattel slavery shaped and formed American capitalism. We will also deconstruct the popular notion that slave ownership and profit was reserved for planters in the Deep South. Their intramural connections will be explored from New Orleans to New York City.

We will also examine slavery from multiple perspectives: from a former slave woman's diary to the music of the field hands. We will also explore our personal family roots in this trade along with a deeper understanding of America's original sin of racism that was rooted and grounded in slavery.

HON 3515: Junior Honors Seminars

HON 3515-101: On Being Human

MW 2:00-3:15, AH 161

William Atkinson

If you're reading this, you are a human being and know what a human being is. By the end of the course, you won't be so sure. What does it take to be human? Some say reason, or speech, or even the ability to deceive. DNA? Or is it perhaps the ability to ask the question in the first place? In the course of the semester, we will try to determine what humans have thought themselves to be at various times and places in the world and what they might be in the future.

The class will be structured around various narrative texts, written and visual, that have focused on the question of being human—such as *Gilgamesh*, Genesis, *The Metamorphoses* (Ovid), *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (Bosch), “The Good Neighbor” (Pu Song-Ling), *Gulliver's Travels* (Swift), “The Lust of the White Serpent” (Akinari), *The Time Machine* (Wells), “A Report to an Academy” (Kafka), *Ex Machina* (Garland). And there will be readings from philosophy, biology, and anthropology to help us clarify some of the issues. These readings, like the fiction, will include texts from the Confucian and Buddhist traditions.

HON 3515-102: H₂O: We are Water

TR 9:30-10:45 AH 161

Kristan Cockerill

10 seats – split with IDS 3010

Water is the principle, or the element of things All things are water. —Plutarch quoting Thales

Water is a focal topic in many disciplines ranging from art to zoology. This interdisciplinary course will look at water and the many places it touches our lives. We will discuss the ways we use it, abuse it, revere it, ignore it, and fight over it. We will cover scientific aspects of water as well as cultural attitudes toward this elemental resource. Our quality of life is entirely dependent on cheap, plentiful, clean water. We use it in vast amounts to produce power, grow food, and

ensure our health. As a group we will explore the historical and contemporary water policy that has created our hydraulic society.

HON 3515-103: The Tycoons

TR 2:00-3:15, PH 3011

Leigh Dunston

The course provides a brief history of American business, learned through the lives of America's most important and dynamic business persons. The course is anchored in the idea that the well-informed person should be familiar with the broad business history of America. The format for the course is to utilize select portions of the biographies of the most impactful persons in American business history. Through those lives and stories the student will learn the principles and history of business as it evolved in America and tangentially in the world from 1770 through 2008. This will be a broad overview focusing on the exploits, successes, failures and the ethical and leadership challenges of persons such as Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Jay Gould, Diamond Jim Brady, J.P. Morgan, Henry Ford, Franklin Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, Paul Volcker, Alan Greenspan, Warren Buffett, Sandy Weill, Bill Gates, Jack Welch, and Steve Jobs in an effort to provide a broad contextual framework within which to begin to know, understand and appreciate the history of the most dynamic business environment in the history of the world.

HON 3515-104: Sports & Politics

MW 2:00-3:15, BH 238

W. Hicks & E. Key

Cross-listed with PS 3510

Politics is frequently portrayed as sport. The most exciting features of democratic elections and lawmaking, after all, are competition and conflict. However, the relationship between politics and sport isn't purely symbolic. Sports directly influence politics, and are themselves influenced by politics. In the first place, sports often serve as an instrument for dealing with, and even solving, issues of political, social, and economic inequality. In the second, sports are a product of politics. For example, many countries have ministries of sport, national regulatory bodies like the NCAA, and international organizations such as FIFA and IOC that govern sports across the globe. This course examines the institutional and social intersections of sports and politics. In so doing we will cover topics of economics, race, gender, sexuality, regulation, scandal, and society's obligation to its athletes. Course materials will include popular commentary and films in addition to academic writings

HON 3515-105: Physiology, Culture and Health

TR 3:30-4:45, 062 HHC

C. Smith & J. Stickford

This course is a discussion-based class which is open to honors students only. Topics to be discussed are in the broad fields of physiology, culture, and health-related issues, and other related topics which are of interest to participating students. Evaluation will be based on class participation and discussion, attendance, and coursework assignments including presentations, written reports, research assignments, and preparing for and leading a class discussion.

HON 3515-106: Anthropology of Media

TR 2:00-3:15, BH 336

Christina Carter

Cross-listed with ANT 3530

How do anthropologists study and think about media and recording technologies? In this course, we will broadly explore anthropological debates on the relationship between culture and media, from media developed in non-Western contexts to emerging social and cultural formations shaped by new media practices. We work at the intersection of anthropology and theoretical treatises on mimetic technologies, seeking to lay bare how histories of the senses (particularly with regard to the desire to record/capture images) are epistemologically founded in colonial pasts and other structures of power. Furthermore, we seek to explore and deconstruct the cultural history that render "magic" and "technology" on opposing poles, and instead work to understand the magical properties that inhere in the human capacity to create works and later machines that can copy the world around them.

HON 3515-107: Medical Anthropology

MW 2:00-3:15, BH 325

Eric Karchmer

Cross-listed with ANT 3660

An examination of health, illness, and the treatment of disease from a cross-cultural perspective. Includes discussion of various theories of illness, types of healers, and the empirical basis for folk medicine and alternative forms of therapy.