Spring 2019 Honors College Course Offerings

HONR 105: Honors Inquiry II. 3 cr. This is the second of a two-semester course sequence focusing on a theme chosen by the Course Coordinator and approved by the Honors College. The theme for Spring 2019 is “Voyages, Migrations, and Journeys” and the world area focus is the Middle East. Faculty from throughout the University will consider how that theme relates to their particular areas of research and expertise. Required "plenary" sessions will augment lectures and discussion. The course is intended to be taken in the student's freshman year though other arrangements may be made for students whose courses of study do not permit this. This course is required for all Honors College students.

Some HONR 105 faculty have offered descriptions for their individual sections:

- **Prof. Jeffery Lambert – 01: Philosophy as Communal Political Action.** Philosophy has the reputation of being a reclusive discipline, the worth of which seems purely academic rather than central to our lives. However, thinkers like Baruch Spinoza consider communal philosophical work to be the very thing which provides us the most freedom and understanding in our world. Considering this, our class will not only work to become a philosophical community, but we will also work to engage our community philosophically. To do this we will read varying texts from thinkers like bell hooks, Chantal Mouffe, Cornel West, and others in order to better understand how to foster democratic communication and activity. Most importantly, though, this course will focus heavily on volunteer work and/or community activism. What kind of volunteer work and/or community activism to pursue is largely up to you, but it’s aim should be to practice the critical theories that we will be reading in class.

- **Dr. Stuart Kurland – 02: Shakespeare and Medicine.** Building on medical theories regarding human physiology and psychology going back to classical times, particularly Hippocrates and Galen, and informed by modern health care practices and biomedical research, this section of Honors Inquiry II will explore selected plays by William Shakespeare from the perspective of medicine. We will be particularly attuned to Shakespeare’s metaphorical use of terms and concepts related to the body and mind. Topics for discussion, presentations, and essays will depend primarily on student interests. Possible topics may include ideas of the human, natural and unnatural, sex and gender, human development and decline, life and death, wellness and disease, normality and deformity, and race and identity—as well as more specialized topics like sexual desire, madness, hallucination, memory, and venereal disease. This class is not intended specifically for students in the College of Liberal Arts; the issues we will address may be of interest to students from other schools, particularly Bayer, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Rangos. No specific prior knowledge of Shakespeare or earlier English literature is assumed.

- **Dr. Danielle St. Hilaire – 04: The Mystery in the Story.** In this course, we will explore various types of mystery stories in order to question the connection between the known and the unknown, between order and chaos, and between sanity and “madness.” From the straightforward “whodunit” to the morally ambiguous hard-boiled story to uncertain tales of the uncanny, we will explore the ways in which characters and audiences come to know (and
sometimes to not know), and what that knowing (or not knowing) means. In the process, you
yourself will take on the role of the detective, as you learn to gather data, to make and test
hypotheses, to assemble evidence, and ultimately to make solid, well-written arguments which
discuss your thoughts and ideas about the texts.

- **Dr. Sarah Wright – 05: Medieval Monsters.** Literary critic Jeffrey Cohen writes, “The monstrous
body is pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read.” This
course will consider how Cohen’s thesis manifests in literature and media of the Middle Ages,
when monsters were very much a part of the cultural imagination. We will read about
werewolves, dragons, and giants, and consider narratives that identify monstrosity along
religious, racial, and gendered lines. Sources will include medieval mappaemundi, natural
histories, travel narratives, and poetry, with separate units dedicated to (1) Man vs. Beast, (2)
The Monstrous “Other”, and (3) Beowulf, one of the first and foremost monster narratives.

- **Dr. Kathleen Glenister Roberts – 06: Travels in the Middle East.** Through the centuries and
across continents, some of the most valuable literature we have for understanding cultural
biases is within the “travel narrative” genre. Though not fully popularized until the eighteenth
century in the Western hemisphere, travel narratives offer unique insight into intercultural
dynamics. Often funny, sometimes sensationalist, and always ethnocentric, travel narratives are
fascinating studies in how persons of privilege encounter “the Other.” In this class we will read
a few of the earliest travel accounts to the Middle East, but most of our books will be from the
second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Special emphasis will be placed
on relating the material in the course to your own major course of study. Strong participation in
seminar discussions is expected of all students.

- **Dr. Jeff McCurry – 61 (taught on Tuesday evenings): Self, Culture, and Story: Memory and
Revision in Neuroscience and Philosophy.** Every person tells a story about themselves to help
them make sense of their life and identity. And the same is true of every culture or civilization.
A story of a self involves the history, values, ideals, hopes, fears, tools, and meanings that make
the self the specific self it is. And it is much the same when we speak of the story of a culture of
civilization.

Furthermore, part of being a self that knows itself through a story is the retelling and revising of
the story or stories that have made us. We know ourselves by saying things like “Once I
was…but now I am…” or “Once I loved doing…but now I love doing…” or “I used to think I was
that sort of person…but now I think I am this sort of person…” And, again, it is the same with
cultural understanding. This IHP seminar will investigate the ways that the story of the western
self and the story of western culture have been profoundly told by being profoundly revised by
the philosophical movement of phenomenology and the scientific movement of neuroscience.
Both phenomenology and neuroscience give us new ways to revise our understanding of our
present and our past, as selves and as a culture, to help us flourish better as individuals and as a civilization.
No previous understanding of phenomenology or neuroscience is needed, only a curiosity about both.

- **Prof. Harris-Gershon - 62 (taught on Wednesday evenings): Storytelling vs. Reality – A Voyage through Creative Nonfiction in Search of the Truth.** Tim O'Brien once wrote that storytelling is "for getting at the truth when the truth isn't sufficient." Can storytelling truth be truer than reality? And what does it mean for something to be true in the first place? In this class, we'll explore the inherent tension between storytelling and truth as we analyze works of creative nonfiction about personal journeys—memoirs, personal essays, and long-form journalism. Along the way, we may end up creating some stories of our own.

**HONR 132: Honors Philosophy. 3 cr.** Philosophy, the love of wisdom, is a discipline for discussing basic questions about ourselves and our world. Students read and discuss selected works by major figures throughout the history of philosophy; they are encouraged to think critically and to formulate their own answers to perennial philosophical questions. This course is required for all Honors College students. Lecture. CPHI.

- **Dr. Paul Zipfel - 01: Introduction to Collaborative Research in the Humanities.** The goal of the course is to teach students the practical skill of research as done in the humanities with a special emphasis on the social and collaborative nature of this research. While research in the humanities is normally thought of as a solitary task based on the close reading of texts and the writing of papers, this class will focus on the collaborative aspect of such research. As researchers, we will help each other understand the text and the complex issues with which they grapple, and in doing so, we will deepen our own understanding of these issues. We will go through close readings of classic texts in the Western philosophical tradition (Plato, Descartes, and Nietzsche), and of course there will be papers to write, but the close readings will be the basis for small groups to write collaborative wiki entries on the concepts and arguments found in those texts. Students will use the collective research might of the class gathered in the wiki to write papers explaining various aspects of the text that we cover. These papers will be shared with your colleagues for anonymous peer review so that together we improve both our understanding and presentation of the ideas contained in the text. At the end of the semester, we will have a colloquium where students present synopses of their final research papers, and hopefully in the process answer some of life’s big questions: How do we know things? Does God exist? Should we fear death? What is truth? And most importantly, can we have class outside?

- **Dr. Paul Zipfel - 02: Introduction to Collaborative Research in the Humanities.** The goal of the course is to teach students the practical skill of research as done in the humanities with a special emphasis on the social and collaborative nature of this research. While research in the
humanities is normally thought of as a solitary task based on the close reading of texts and the writing of papers, this class will focus on the collaborative aspect of such research. As researchers, we will help each other understand the text and the complex issues with which they grapple, and in doing so, we will deepen our own understanding of these issues. We will go through close readings of classic texts in the Western philosophical tradition (Plato, Descartes, and Nietzsche), and of course there will be papers to write, but the close readings will be the basis for small groups to write collaborative wiki entries on the concepts and arguments found in those texts. Students will use the collective research might of the class gathered in the wiki to write papers explaining various aspects of the text that we cover. These papers will be shared with your colleagues for anonymous peer review so that together we improve both our understanding and presentation of the ideas contained in the text. At the end of the semester, we will have a colloquium where students present synopses of their final research papers, and hopefully in the process answer some of life’s big questions: How do we know things? Does God exist? Should we fear death? What is truth? And most importantly, can we have class outside?

- **Dr. Zach Slanger - 03**: In this course, our primary concern will be the relationship between philosophy and human lived experience. Some questions we will consider include: What is philosophy? What is the relationship between philosophy and lived experience? Can a philosophy emerging from lived experience be universalized? In order to embark on what will hopefully be a lifelong journey in pursuit of answers to these questions, we will read texts from the history of philosophy, discuss these texts in class, and develop our own ideas and tentative solutions to philosophical problems through spoken and written discourse. Students will write several short reflection papers in which they connect their own lived experience to the texts we read and discuss in class as well as a philosophical memoir in which they attempt to emulate the philosophical-autobiographical style of the course texts while telling the story of their own life. We will begin by reading Plato and considering the question of what philosophy is before spending the bulk of the semester reading and analyzing works by three philosophers who are particularly concerned with the connection between philosophy and lived experience: Augustine, Rousseau, and Freud. We will end the semester by questioning the universality of such connections between philosophy and lived experience through readings of philosophers writing from minority/underrepresented perspectives and dealing with issues like race, gender, and ability. The texts range in time from around 400 BCE to the twenty-first century, granting us some variety in philosophical concerns and positions. Many of the texts are narrative in form and highly enjoyable to read and discuss. My hope is that this class will be an engaging forum for the articulation of your own ideas as well as a serious meditation on questions at the core of human existence.

- **Dr. Tom Eyers - 04**
HONR 145: Honors Theology. 3 cr. Theology faculty offer classes each term based upon the faculty member's particular area of expertise and research interest. This course is required for all Honors College students and is only open to them. Lecture.

- **Fr. Radu Bordeianu – 01: Jesus Through the Centuries.** We will attempt an investigation into the identity of Jesus the Christ. We will insist on his Jewish, human, and divine identities as portrayed in the Bible, as well as visual representations of Jesus in various historical, geographical, and socio-political contexts by focusing on works of art through the centuries.

- **Dr. Bogdan Bucur-02: Early Christianity: History, Doctrines, and Practices.** The first five centuries represent, arguably, the most fertile era in the history of Christianity. Although it started as an insignificant Jewish sect, was plagued by divisions within and confronted with a hostile and powerful political, social and cultural establishment, the Christian movement managed to survive and to thrive. It eventually engulfed the Empire, irreversibly shaped the language and mentalities of Antiquity, creatively altered the best that Greek philosophy had to offer, built institutions that endure to this day, created a rich material and spiritual culture, and marked a major turning point in human history.

  In this course we examine the way in which early Christians articulated their theological claims by reworking doctrines, imagery, and exegetical, ascetical, and liturgical practices inherited from the rich and complex matrix of Second Temple Judaism; the creative adoption and adaptation of Greek philosophy and Roman jurisprudence; the effort to define doctrinal orthodoxy in opposition to heresy (especially dualistic and modalistic conceptions of the divinity); the gradual crystallization of a “holistic” view of self, the world, and God, in which biblical exegesis, doctrine, liturgy, and the inner life mirror, sustain, and determine each other.

- **Dr. Anna Scheid - 03: Christianity and Political Activism in the U.S. Context.** Course Description: We are living in a time of increased political activism across the globe. Around the nation and around the world, ordinary people are engaged in democratic movements and nonviolent resistance. This course will explore how Christian theology and ethics relate to political activism in the U.S. What is the history of political resistance in American Christianity? How have Christian theological perspectives influenced social movements from the Revolutionary period to slave revolts, from the Civil Rights Movement, to the modern right to life movement, from Black Lives Matter, to #metoo? What are the principles and practices of activism, and how effective is it really? This course will use both traditional (lectures, classroom discussion, etc.) and project-based learning methods of instruction.

- **Dr. Kevin Mongrain - 04: Honors World Religions. What is a “religion”?** What are the major religions in the world? How do we understand them according to their own perspectives and historical experiences? These are some of the core questions we will answer in this course. The
focus of the course is on introducing students to the major religions of human history (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and giving them the resources to continue reading, observing, and learning about the world’s religions for the rest of their lives. The aims of the course are: (a) develop a sophisticated understanding of the questions that arise when contemporary people discuss world religions; (b) form an appreciative contextual understanding of how different religions developed and how they understand the meaning of life and their role in history; and (c) begin thinking about the possible relevance of understanding world religions for living in this contemporary world of class struggle in a high technology economy, war, terrorism, global warming, and other the 21st century issues.

HONR 199: Honors Symposium – Tutorial. 0 cr. With participation in the Undergraduate Research Symposium in April, honors students are permitted to receive honors credit for non-honors courses. This course is limited in enrollment and requires consultation and approval of the Honors College Director.

HONR 201: Honors Seminar in Faith and Reason. 3 cr.

- Prof. Jeffery Lambert- 01: Faith and Reason. Faith and reason are sometimes understood as opposites; in this understanding, faith is often viewed as inferior to reason - Why take something on faith when reason provides certainty? However, this view significantly undercuts the value of faith and overestimates reason’s ability to consistently provide certainty. Thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard seem to praise the value of faith such that it exceeds reason. Despite this, faith seems to be almost entirely ineffective compared to reason when it comes to working through the problems of politics, physics, and metaphysics. However, this class intends to investigate the relationship between faith and reason rather than compare and contrast their value. This class hopes to understand how faith and reason function collaboratively in our lives.

- Dr. Kathleen Glenister Roberts - 55: What is Time? This Faith and Reason course is taught at the 200-level because of its tutorial format. The class will be divided into smaller groups which will spend some class times preparing readings and discussion questions, and then meet in small discussion sessions with the instructor. We will take a multidisciplinary approach to the question “What is Time?” Course materials will represent perspectives from the natural sciences, philosophy, theology, anthropology and other cultural studies, and rhetoric. Students are evaluated on their contributions to tutorial sessions, a creative project, group presentation, and final exam. This course is not open to freshmen. This course fulfills the university core curriculum theme area in Faith and Reason (TAFR).
HONR 202: Honors Seminar in Global Diversity. 3 cr.

- Dr. Eduardo Ruiz – 01: Honors Seminar in Global Diversity - Mexican American/Chicano Literature (taught by Dr. Eduardo Ruiz). The focus of this course is the analysis of history, culture, and literature of the Latin@/Chican@ experience in the United States. Issues of gender, race, national origin, and social class act together to shape marginalized groups in constant struggle to adapt and, at the same time, to preserve their cultural traits. The observed pattern of strategies of assimilation and resistance characterizes these communities as they negotiate their place in new cultural and linguistic environments.

HONR 203: Honors Seminar in Social Justice. 3 cr.

- Dr. Eric Garrett - 01:
- Dr. K Allen and President Gormley - 02: Presidents.

- Dr. Will Adams – 61 (taught on Tuesday evenings): Psychology & Nature. Our collaborative work in this “Psychology & Nature” Honor’s course will focus on understanding and enhancing humankind’s relationship with the rest of nature, both for the well-being of humans and for the rest of nature. In particular, we will consider the psycho-spiritual benefits of conscious contact with Earth’s beings and presences and, conversely, the suffering that results from losing such relational contact. We will see how a renewed understanding of and relationship with the natural world may foster the mutual flourishing of humankind and the rest of nature. Exploring these issues in multi-dimensional ways will reveal how a collaboration between psychology and theology will enable us to reinterpret the human condition and cultivate compassion for the Earth and all those who inhabit it. This is the “great work” of our time, as Thomas Berry so powerfully put it. It is also a special opportunity and responsibility for college age citizens like each of you. Our course will explore the psychological dimensions of humankind’s relationship with the rest of nature, and the ecological dimensions of human psychology. Well-being and justice for humankind and for the rest of nature co-arise in concert, in a mutually dependent relationship; so too the lack of well-being and justice. Psychologists often emphasize that our relations with others may bring forth health or suffering, for both oneself and others. This is also true in our relations within the shared earth community. While we often forget it, we all know that contact with nature enhances our health. Remember how wonderful it feels to be blessed with a fresh breath of air, to see a deer bound through the woods, to enjoy a fun day at the beach, and to taste a delicious bite of salmon. In contrast, contact with a ravaged world is immensely painful in obvious and not so obvious ways. Mass extinction of species, climate disruption, water shortages, poisoned air and water: These devastating phenomena are evident in our home towns and around the world. Also evident is detrimental impact on our physical health, for example, with cancers coming from environmental toxins and asthma from polluted air. Less evident, but equally perilous, is the psycho-spiritual trauma of losing our conscious contact with earth’s glorious beings and presences, those who have been our relational partners throughout
the ages. Clearly, our ecological crisis is not only a biological crisis, but more deeply an ethical crisis of consciousness, culture, and relationship – all key area of psychology’s expertise. Thus, the relatively new field of ecopsychology (or ecological psychology) is now contributing to an interdisciplinary “psycho-cultural therapy” devoted to the mutual well-being of humans and the rest of nature. This profound ethical calling is the context for the recent emergence of ecopsychology, and for the present course.

While social justice should be fostered for all, concerns about injustice are often rightly focused on groups that are particularly oppressed, exploited, and/or discriminated against. Psychologists have demonstrated that those we deem “other” – that is to say, other than “me” or “us” – are often seen through fearfully prejudiced eyes, and thereby treated unjustly. The non-human natural world is one of the most egregiously exploited “others” in contemporary life, to the mutual impoverishment of both humankind and the rest of nature. Compounding this problem is the fact that far more ecological destruction and deprivation occurs in underprivileged communities as compared to those with privilege and power. In light of these interrelated perspectives, this course is oriented to address issues of social/ecological justice.

Indeed, our guiding theme will be an exploration of the inseparable relationship between personal, interpersonal, socio-cultural, and ecological well being (or the lack thereof). Our community engaged activities with the Environmental Justice Committee of the Thomas Merton Center will support your learning and growth in each of these key dimensions.

This course serves as a Social Justice Theme Area Course in the University Core Curriculum and as a Foundational Community-Engaged Learning Course. An essential aim of the present course is to help students develop a reflective, inquiring, and critically thoughtful attitude about the psychology of humankind’s relationship with the rest of nature. Students will come to appreciate the profound intertwining of psyche and earth; understand the reciprocal interrelationship between psychopathology (broadly defined) and ecological degradation; cultivate a sense of how (eco)psychological practice may foster the mutual well-being of humankind and the natural world together; learn the value of engaged work for social/ecological justice in the community; and realize the potential for a generative collaboration between ecopsychology and clinical practice, socially engaged research, spirituality, and engaged action for social/ecological justice. Most importantly, students will develop a depthful understanding of the material from this course as it is relates to their personal lives, to their chosen or anticipated academic major, and to the lives of others (both human and more-than-human).

Teaching/Learning Procedures- This course will explore ecological psychology by way of interactive lecture/discussion, textual study, films, experiential activities (in and out of class), and collaboration with community partners at Pittsburgh’s Thomas Merton Center.

**HONR 204: Honors Seminar in Creative Arts. 3 cr.**

- Dr. Daniel Selcer- 02: Thinking Through Art. What is art, and what does it do to or for us? A philosophical approach to these questions offers a useful battery of tools for thinking through
art in relation to sensation, thought, judgment, and criticism, as well as image, sound, and concept. We’ll consider traditional aesthetic questions such as the nature of beauty, the meaning of aesthetic judgment, and the definition of art, but we’ll will also engage more recent critiques or complications of aesthetic theory: the fraught relationship between art and money; the explosion of possibilities for aesthetic communication offered by new media technologies and platforms; the intensification of issues connected to imitation, appropriation, and originality. Since the Carnegie International art exhibition will be in full swing for most of the spring 2019 semester, we’ll make several visits the Carnegie Museum of Art and directly connect the work there to the issues we discuss in class.

- **Dr. Edward Kocher – 03: - Enjoyment of Music – Pittsburgh LIVE.** This course leads to an understanding of how music’s basic elements, melody, harmony, rhythm and form, are used to communicate the composer’s expressive intent. The Enjoyment of Music: Pittsburgh Live is an experiential class. We will listen to a wide variety of music, and we will attend live performances on and off campus. There are four evening performances that meet outside of class time.

- **Dr. Judith Bowman- 55: - Music, Lang, & the Brain.** This online course investigates how we make sense of, and gain meaning from, music and language. It includes relevant concepts from the fields of music, music psychology, linguistics, cognitive neuroscience, and aesthetics. Readings and discussions focus on themes common to music and language, and highlight commonalities and differences. Themes include sound, rhythm, and melody; symbol systems and meaning; music and language in the brain; and communication in music and in speech.

**HONR 205: Honors International Study Abroad I. 0 cr.** Honors College students are strongly encouraged to study abroad. This online course structures reflection about the transformational nature of international study and how to effectively translate this transformation to future graduate school and employment opportunities. Concurrent enrollment required for Honors College students pursuing Honors College credit for one course during Study Abroad.

**HONR 206: Honors International Study Abroad II. 0 cr.** Honors College students are strongly encouraged to study abroad. This online course structures reflection about the transformational nature of international study and how to effectively translate this transformation to future graduate school and employment opportunities. Concurrent enrollment required for Honors College students pursuing Honors College credit for a second course during Study Abroad.

**HONR 275: Advanced Honors I. 0 cr.** This course allows students to earn IHP credits for non-honors courses with the completion of independent projects, culminating in a portfolio of work.

**HONR 295: Honors Research. 0 cr.** Prereq: Permission of Honors College Director. This course allows students to earn IHP credits for non-honors courses with the completion of independent projects, virtually always in the context of their Honors Fellowship.
**HONR 300: Honors Directed Readings. 1-9 cr.** Students engage in independent study and research with a faculty mentor. Permission from the Honors College director required. May be repeated for up to 9 hours credit. **Readings.**

**HONR 375: Advanced Honors II. 0 cr.** This course allows students to earn IHP credits for non-honors courses with the completion of independent projects, culminating in a portfolio of work.

**HONR 395: Honors Fellowship. 0 cr.** Prereq: Permission of Honors College Director. This course attaches to non-honors courses to designate honors credits resulting from reasonable progress toward an independent Honors Fellows project.

**HONR 450: Honors Senior Project. 3 cr.** This course is an independent study, under the direction of a faculty member, within the student's major field of concentration or other area of personal interest. The Senior Honors Project produces a work of significant scholarship or creativity, as defined by the discipline in which the study is pursued. The components of the Honors Senior Project include: -A research paper or creative work -A reflective paper, commenting on the main paper or work and the experience of preparing it -A discussion of theoretical context which may appear in either the research paper or the reflective paper -An oral presentation or defense of the main paper or work Students will present or defend honors projects before a faculty/student committee; and will submit an electronic copy of the final product of the Honors Senior Project to the Honors College office.

**HONR 475: Honors Portfolio. 0 cr.** This course allows post matriculation honors students to earn IHP credits for non-honors courses with the completion of independent projects, culminating in a portfolio of work.

**HONR 495: Advanced Honors Symposium. 0 cr.** Prereq: Permission of Honors College Director. This course attaches to non-honors courses to designate honors credits resulting from completion of an independent Honors Fellows project. Students enrolled in this course are required to present their finished research at a research symposium, either at Duquesne University or at a professional academic meeting off-campus.