



WAGNER COLLEGE

BE PART OF THE CITY

HONORS PROGRAM

Course Schedule

Spring 2014



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D = Diversity

I = International

W = Writing Intensive

ILC = Intermediate Learning Community



MISSION STATEMENT OF THE HONORS PROGRAM

The Wagner College Honors Program has the following goals:

- to operate in harmony with the College's mission statement;
- to work closely with the Admissions Office to identify incoming students who have the potential for exceptional scholarly work and recruit them into the Program;
- to recruit students from the whole student body who have special intellectual ability, but who may not reflect this in standard ways;
- to retain students who have been admitted into the Program by providing students with special courses, colloquia and independent study opportunities that are more challenging than regular courses;
- to provide students with extensive support and counseling in the pursuit of their academic and pre-professional goals;
- to develop a faculty identified with the Program who offer one-time seminars on topics of special interest to them and their students;
- to function as a source of innovation and curricular experimentation on campus;
- to utilize to the fullest the educational opportunities offered by information technology;
- to contribute to the overall enhancement of intellectual life on campus;
- to provide students with leadership opportunities by appointing them to an Honors Student Advisory Committee to work with the program's faculty Advisory Council in developing the aims of the program;
- to regularly submit the Program to self-study and revision in response to the changing nature of the student body and the College as a whole;
- to encourage students to participate in regional and national meetings of honors students and other forms of experiential education;
- to promulgate students' written and other works that are products of their work in the Program; and
- to provide opportunities for social gatherings among students in the Program.

The Wagner College Honors Program is a member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC).



WELCOME

Welcome to the spring semester of 2014! This semester begins on the 22nd of October 2013 with the registration for spring semester courses. The 14 courses offered in the Honors Program represent an excellent selection of academic topics, and they are taught by outstanding professors. The courses represent many academic fields at Wagner College and give all of you good opportunities to expand your academic experiences. Two team taught ILCs and one Expand Your Horizons are also included.

On the following page you find a course schedule. On first sight it may appear somewhat confusing, but I believe it is still a good tool to quickly see which courses overlap in time and cannot be taken simultaneously.

Behind the course schedule you will find course descriptions. Some of the course descriptions are accompanied by comments of the instructors that may help you in your decisions.

At the end you find three articles. One is about the design of honors courses from the website of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). The other is about some reasons for students why to join an Honors Program from NextStepU. The last is a very interesting article about learning –Is there a Genius in all of us?– from the BBC News Magazine.

Already now I would like to remind the juniors to get in contact with potential advisors for their honors thesis. A proposal about your thesis must be submitted to me in April 2014.

Finally, let me wish all of you a successful semester!

Dr. Horst Onken
Director of the Honors Program
Professor of Zoology and Physiology
Science Building, Room 411
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COURSE SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2014

The course schedule below should allow to easily determining which courses overlap in their timing and which courses can be taken together with which other honors course.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9					
10	EN 342	AS 108	EN 342	AS 108	
	CH 112		CH 112		CH 112
11					
		HI 347		HI 347	
12					
13	BI 125 EN 111		BI 125 EN 111	AR 105	
14					
15	GOV 356	AH 326/EN/FR 310 ILC	GOV 356	AH 326/EN/FR 310 ILC	
16					
	EC 305		EC 305	HI 236 PS 291 ILC	
17					
18					
			RE/PS 209		
19					
			GOV 272		
20					



AH 326 (I) Morowitz
EN/FR 310 (I) Urbanc

Cities and Perversities: Art and Literature in Fin-de-Siècle Paris, Vienna, Berlin

Days/Times: T + R 2:40 – 4:10pm

Team-taught ILC

lmorowit@wagner.edu

Phone: 3151

kurbanc@wagner.edu

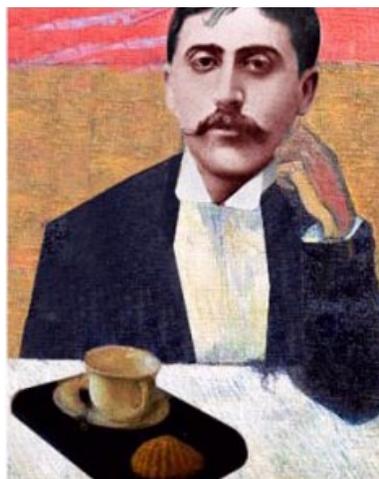
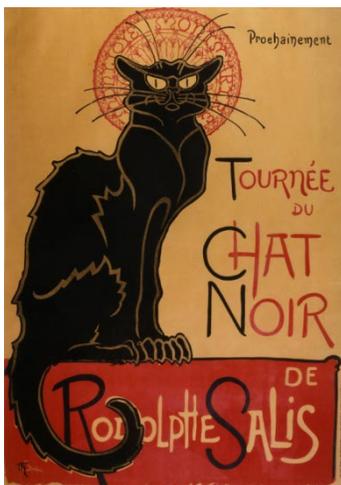
Phone: 3368

Course Description: This team-taught ILC focuses on the art and literature in the fin-de-siècle in three major European centers: Paris, Vienna and Berlin. The works of the period are studied in relation to issues of national identity, as a response to the shock of metropolitan life, sexuality, the impact of psychoanalysis, escapism and withdrawal to the interior. We will undertake a detailed reading of some of the major literary works of the period by authors such as Marcel Proust, Lou-Andreas Salomé, Thomas Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke and Arthur Rimbaud. Artistic movements studied include Symbolism, Expressionism, Art Nouveau and Jugendstil. The course attempts to understand the shared visual and literary language of turn-of-the-century Europe, while illuminating the special contributions of each city. Students will enjoy museum visits, film viewings, special lectures and shared readings and assignments.



A comment from the instructor:

Have you ever wondered what it was like to live in turn-of-the-century Paris, Berlin or Vienna? This ILC immerses you in the art, poetry, novels, films, architecture, design, fashion, language and food of these vibrant cities at the dawn of modernism. You will become acquainted with the incredible past of these capitals through the eyes of artists and writers as you embark on a creative and intellectual journey alongside them.



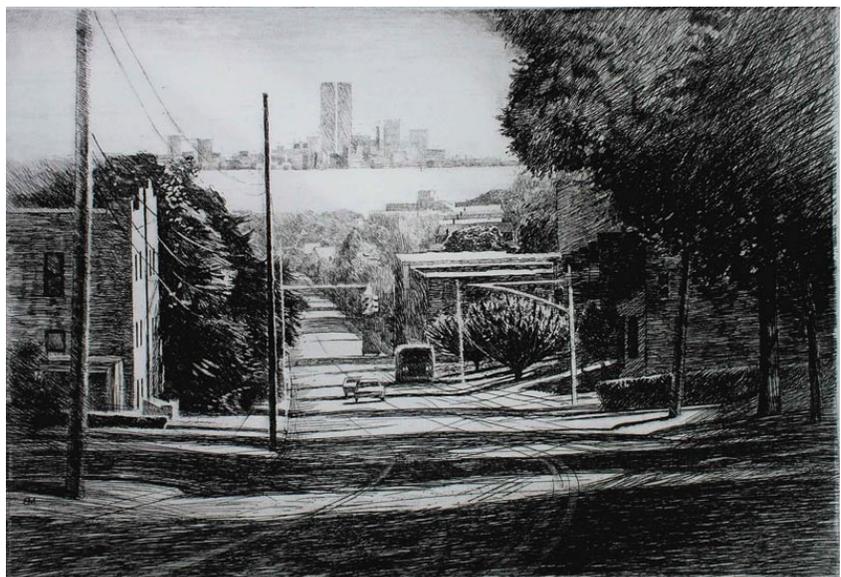
AR 105**Murphy****Drawing I****Days/Times: W 1 – 4pm**bmurphy@wagner.edu

Phone: 3152

Course Description: The development of skills in the representation of objects and the figure in terms of line, space, composition, and value. Emphasis is placed on basic drawing techniques and interpretative qualities of various media.

A comment from the instructor:

Although it is a class designed for absolute beginners, the Honors section of Drawing I attempts to challenge the student by assigning a writing component where the student reflects on how the class topics are utilized by both contemporary artists and artists of the past. We will include field trips to view art to help facilitate this process.

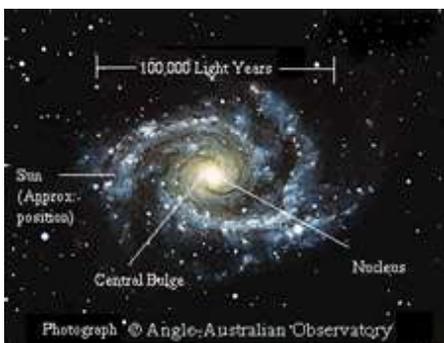


AS 108

Kozak

Astronomy: Stars and Galaxies**Days/Times: T +R 9:40 – 11:10am**hkozak@wagner.edu

Phone: 3394



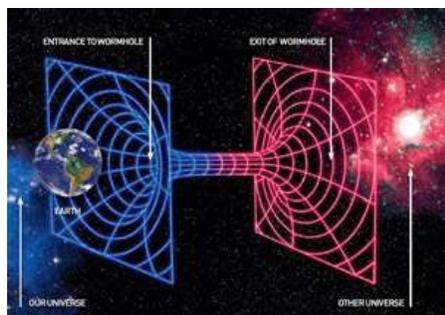
Course Description: This course in astronomy is given for both science and non-science majors, and is multidisciplinary. One aspect deals with astrobiology-the evolution of our solar system, the formation of the earth, and the sequence of events leading up to the evolution of our own species. These topics serve as a model in the quest for discovering extrasolar planets, as well as extraterrestrial life.

Another aspect of the course deals with astrophysics- the application of the theories of Newton and Einstein in studying the life cycle of stars, as well as the formation of galaxies. Included will be a discussion of black holes and the future possibility of time travel.

The final aspect of this course will deal with cosmology- the big bang theory of how the universe began, as well as the possibility of a multiverse consisting of an infinite number of universes existing in space-time. The most recent research with high-speed particle accelerators and the possible existence of the Higgs boson will be explored as well.

Lectures will be supplemented by slides, science and science fiction film clips, and recent articles from newspapers and magazines.

Students will be required to do research at the Rose Planetarium of the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan.

A comment from the instructor:

This honors course differs from the non-honors section because students in this course will be required to select either a science book, science fiction novel, or a periodical from a selected bibliography given by the instructor. This assignment will count as a lecture exam, giving the honor student an enriched experience with the possibility of earning a higher course grade than if the student were not enrolled in the honors section. In addition, the instructor, currently serving his ninth year as a Solar System Ambassador for NASA, will supplement all lectures with the most up to date information on stars and galaxies.

I have taught this course for several semesters and find it just as exciting and interesting as the students taking the course.



BI 125

TBA

Genes to Genomics**Days/Times: M + W 1:00 – 2:30pm**

Phone: 3103 (Bio Dept.)

Course Description: This course is designed for non-science majors interested in the problems and promises associated with modern-day genetics. Discoveries and technological advances in genetics are taught with an emphasis on the social, moral, ethical issues facing society today.

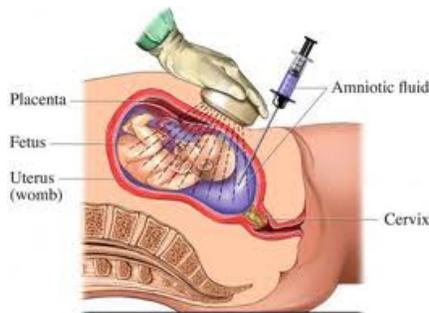
A comment from the instructor:

With the advances that are happening in Biotechnology, the field of Genetics is going through a scientific revolution. Things that were only dreamed about or perceived as mere fiction are becoming realities. This course is an exploration of some of these scientific discoveries and applications and their impact on our lives. Major objectives of this Honor Course are: 1. Teach basic Human Genetics, Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, 2. Encourage active participation of students in class discussions, 3. Explore the legal and social issues related to Biotechnology, 4. Debate whether the Eugenics movement is still with us and 5. Explore the impact of human genome research on society.

Topics Covered in the Course include 1. Evolution, Social Darwinism and Eugenics, 2. Genetics and The Human Genome Project, 3. Reproductive Technologies, Cloning, Stem Cell Research and Bioethics, 4. Genetic Screening, Genetic Testing, Gene Therapy and Gene Doping, 5. Criminology and DNA Forensics, 6. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and Genetic Patents and 7. Race and Genography and Genetic Discrimination

Some special and unique Honor course requirements for this course are: Students taking this course are required to finish all their assigned readings before coming to class and submit hand written definitions with proper citations from their readings of all new terminology and words that they encountered in their readings for 10% of their grades (Instructor does provide a “Word Listing” for definitions). Students not only have to understand the basic scientific material, but also need to understand the implications (Ethical, Legal Social and Religious) that arise from the applications of Biotechnology. To this end students shall take opposite sides on various issues and have a healthy and amicable debate. In addition to this all students are expected to write a comprehensive research paper on a specific topic. The paper is very unique in that it is a kind of an Intellectual Civic Engagement exercise on specific issues and their Ethical, Legal and Social fallouts.

The research paper shall include clearly stated issues that arise from the Biotechnology application, context and technical overview, Scientific, Legal, Ethical and Social considerations, and Logical Analysis. In addition students have to provide an action plan to resolve the issues based on literature search-based specific action steps. Anticipated outcomes of the proposed resolution and near-term and far-term implications must also be explained in the paper. The paper must be presented to the entire class in a Power Point format. This type of a format is chosen to make the student body *informed consumers* of Biotechnology in that they not only understand the science behind the applications but also are trained to look at the potential issues and have the knowledge and capabilities to propose ideas to resolve some of these issues.



CH 112 Richardson General Chemistry**Days/Times: M, W +F 10:10 – 11:10am**nrichard@wagner.edu

Phone: 4124

Course Description: A study of the basic theories and laws of chemistry and of the properties of the more common elements.

A comment from the instructor:

The pace at which material will be covered in this class will be significantly faster than in a regular section of general chemistry, as it will be assumed that students are capable of performing simple calculations and deducing relationships between topics presented. The increased pace allows for greater depth of analysis of the topics being covered.

Every week, a challenging problem set containing multiple questions will be handed-out. Instructions will be included with each problem set, and each student (or group of students) will be expected to complete the problem set by the end of the week. The Friday class will be devoted to a discussion and presentation of solutions to these problems, and each student should be prepared to present their work to the entire class as well as participate in any discussions. A fraction of the course grade is based upon these presentations and participation. Students will be selected at random at the start of each Friday class to make the presentation. It is vital that you are ready each week to make a presentation.



CH 540 (I)

Alauddin

Environmental Pollution and Health**Days/Times: Contact Dr. Alauddin (see below)**malauddi@wagner.edu

Phone: 3127

Course Description: This course will address water and air pollution in third world countries with special focus to Bangladesh, where the worst mass poisoning the world has ever witnessed due to natural contamination of ground water by arsenic is unfolding. Students will make field visits to affected areas to see the arsenic contaminated wells, water purification systems, life in rural Bangladesh. In addition, the course will cover household energy, indoor air pollution in rural households and its impact on child and mother health in developing nations.

The total cost of the travel will be approximately \$3,100; this includes Wagner program fee, airfare, hotel/lodging, daily meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), local guides, transportation, along with travel insurance. All students should have a serious interest in the subject matter.

Prerequisite: None, open to Science and non Science majors, instructor permission required

EYH 2014: Travel to Bangladesh: January, 2014

Cost: Approximate course fee is \$3100

A comment from the instructor:

For more information contact Dr. Mohammad Alauddin, Department of Chemistry and Physics, malauddi@wagner.edu, Tel: (718) 390-3127



EC 305

Leacy

International Trade**Days/Times: M + W 4:20 – 5:50pm**Course Description:mleacy@wagner.edu

Phone: 3289

This course will explore modern trade theory with a major emphasis on developing and using economic modeling to explain the rationale and direction of modern trade flows. A discussion of changes in current practices of commercial policy in the context of new information technology and geo-economic structures will be included as well as the new European Economic Community. Prerequisites: Economics 101 or 102 or permission by the instructor.

A comment from the instructors:



EN 111 (W, D) Hurleyahurley@wagner.edu

Phone: 3363

World Literature: Introduction to Culture for the World Traveler**Days/Times: M + W 1:00 – 2:30pm**Course Description:

This course is designed for the student who intends to wander the world, either informally through the desire for exploration or formally as a start to a career in business, government, education, or international service. Literature, as an important cultural asset, can be an essential traveling companion. Accordingly, we will circumnavigate the globe through reading novels, poems, short stories, and essays, from the Middle East, to the Far East, to Africa, South America, the Caribbean and just about everywhere except Antarctica (unless penguin lit is suddenly discovered).

A comment from the instructor:

Expect to be engaged and challenged!



EN 342 (W, D) Arant

alison.arant@wagner.edu
Phone: 3370

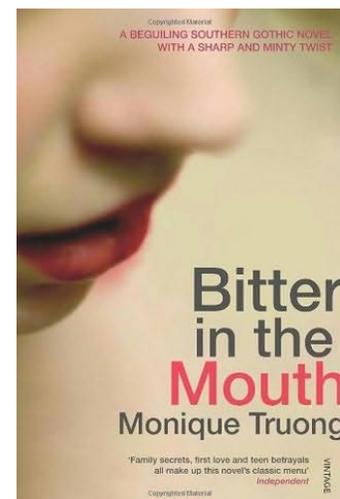
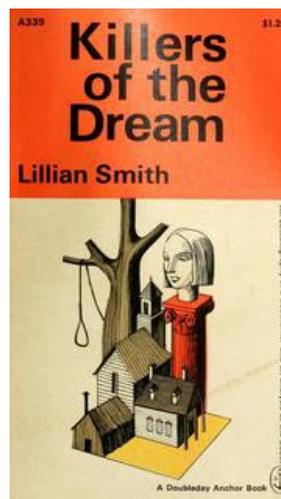
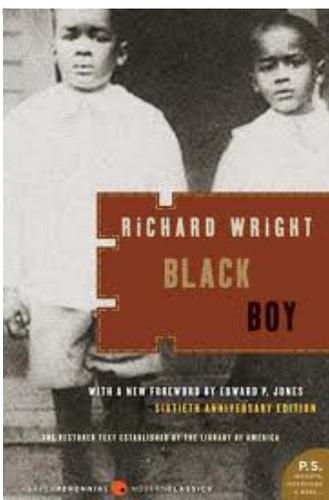
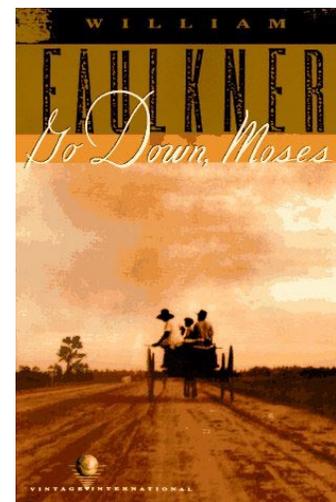
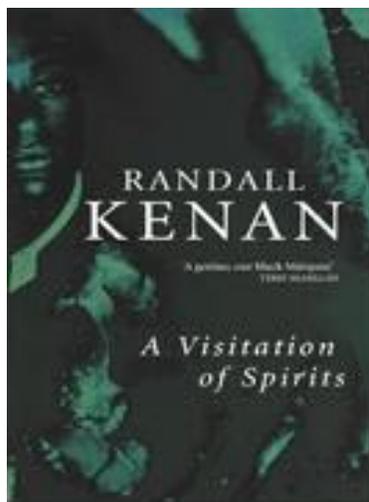
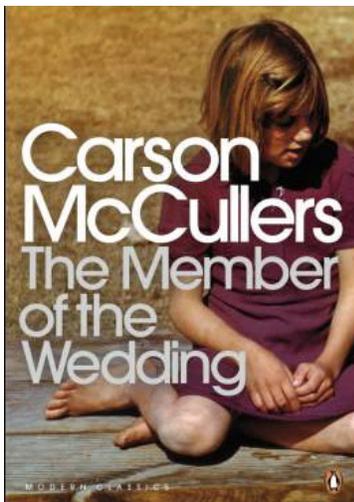
“Growin’ up in Dixie”

Days/Times: M + W 9:40 – 11:10am

Course Description:

Childhood is often described as a state of innocence, as though kids exist free from the awareness, experiences, and desires that can make adulthood burdensome. Using works of fiction, non-fiction, and autobiography, this class will explore how Southern writers represent childhood, the coming-of-age process, and the regional stakes of innocence and guilt. Writers will include William Faulkner, Randall Kenan, Carson McCullers, Flannery O’Connor, Lillian Smith, Monique Truong, Alice Walker, Richard Wright, and others.

A comment from the instructor:



GOV 272 Moynagh Feminist Political Thought
Days/Times: W 6 – 9pm

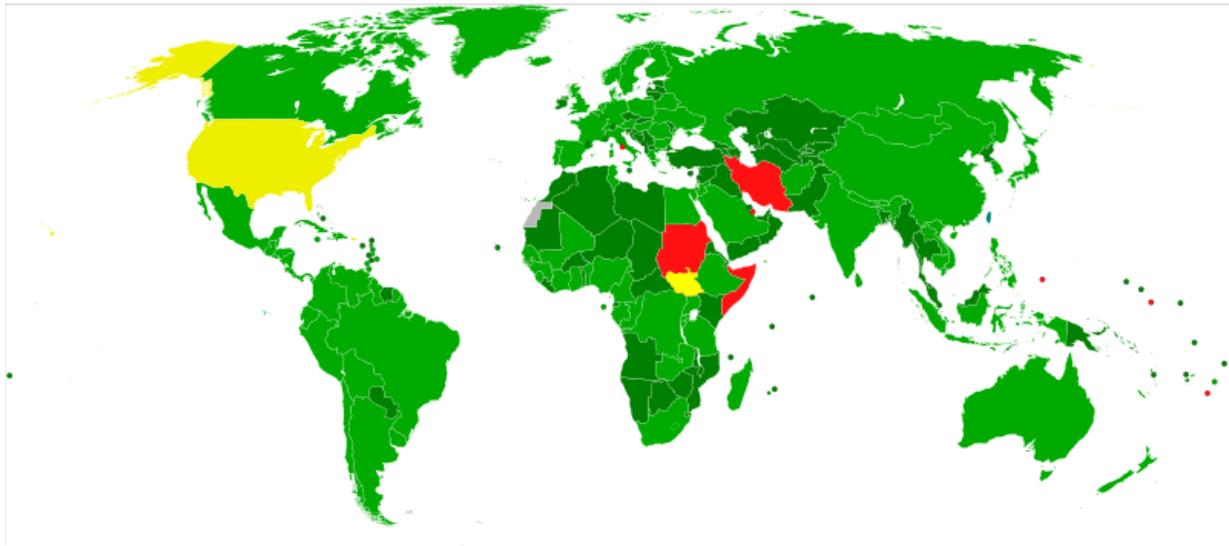
patricia.moynagh@wagner.edu
 Phone: 4492

Course Description:

Introduction to major concepts in modern and contemporary feminist political theory. Critical analysis of key texts that address feminist topics from a variety of perspectives. Examines many issues raised by African-American, Third world, postcolonial, poststructuralist, and transnational thought.

A comment from the instructor:

This course examines some of the founding ideas of “second-wave” feminism, along with the many issues raised by African-American, postcolonial, and poststructuralist thought. It also addresses issues raised by the developing world and studies women's political movements around the globe and throughout history.



Participation in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Legend

- Signed and ratified
- Acceded or succeeded
- Unrecognized state, abiding by treaty
- Only signed
- Non-signatory



GOV 356 (I) Hu

US-China Relations

Days/Times: M + W 2:40 – 4:10pm

shu@wagner.edu

Phone: 3312

Course Description:

This course approaches the evolving relationship between China and the United States from historical and theoretical perspectives. Focusing on the relationship during and after the Cold War, it explores major issues, including security, economic relations, mutual perception, and Taiwan.

A comment from the instructor:



From: [The Economist, UK](#)



**HI 236 (D)
PS 291**

**McNair
Reynolds**

**Civil Rights
Days/Times: W 4:20 – 7:20pm**

Course Description:

This honors ILC will examine the key events, figures, philosophies, tactics, and consequences of the modern civil rights movement in the United States from a historical perspective and explore the psychological and social meaning of racial prejudice and the role it played in the denial of rights to African Americans in the Jim Crow South from Reconstruction to 1970s.

Team taught ILC

lily.mcnair@wagner.edu

Phone: 3211

rita.reynolds@wagner.edu

Phone: 3491

A comment from the instructor:

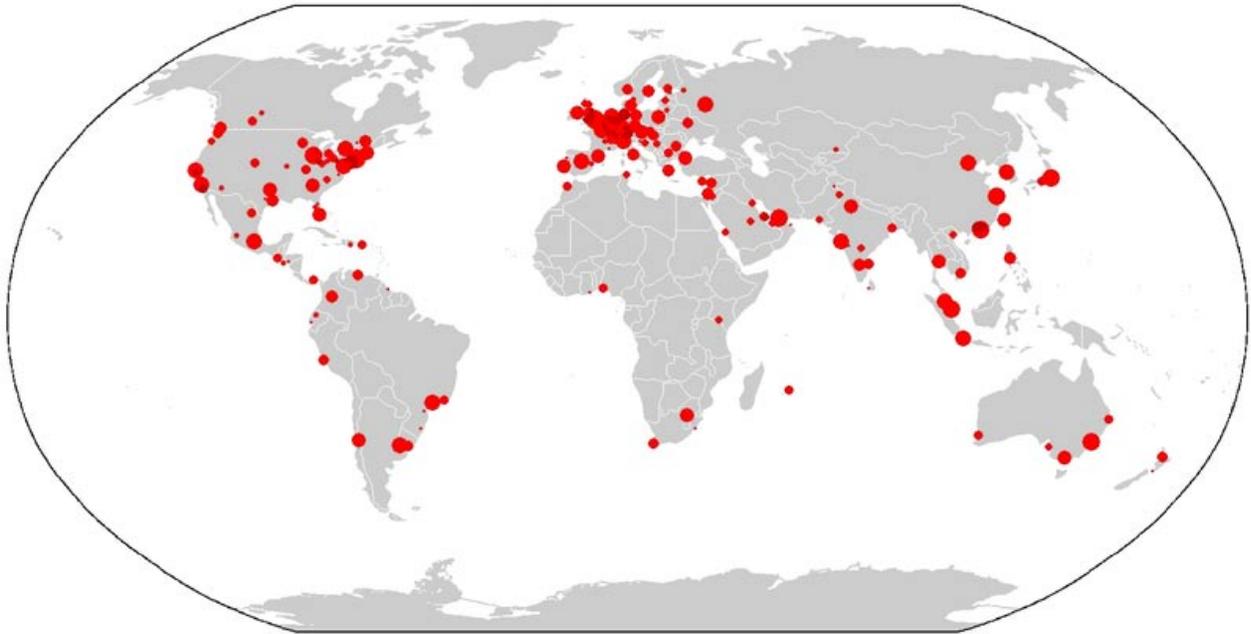


HI 347**Traore****Global Cities****Days/Times: T + Th 11:20am – 12:50pm**makhroufi.traore@wagner.edu

Phone: 4520

Course Description:

Global cities in the world such as New York, London, Tokyo and Bombay are the epicenters of the phenomena of globalization. These global cities act as transnational connectivity nodes in terms of flow finance capital and cultural media such as film and art. The migration of labor from different continents and cultures add a distinct flavor to these cities, while posing new challenges in terms of reconstituting the meaning and scope of metropolis. This course attempts to understand the way in which global cities accommodate the flow of citizens from different cultures and continents. This course attempts to recapture the city space through the lens of cinema and literary texts.

A comment from the instructor:

Map showing the world cities as ranked by Globalization and World Cities Research Network (2010)



RE/PS 209**Kaelber****Is Religion Man-made?****Days/Times: W 6 – 9pm**wkaelber@wagner.edu

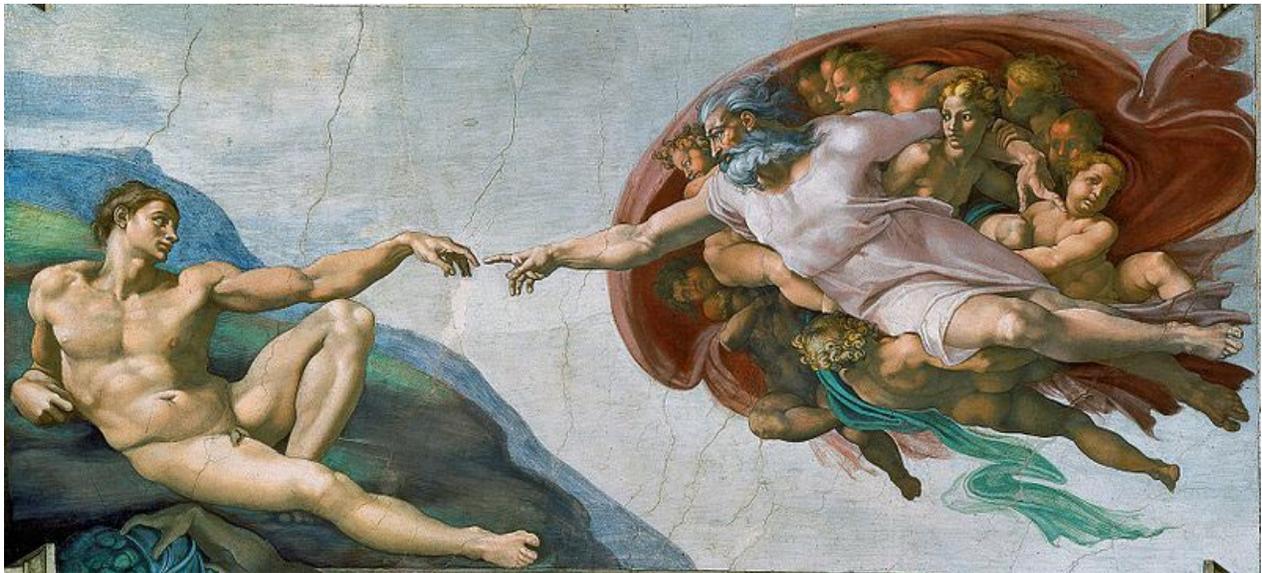
Phone: 3373

Course Description: Are religious “truths” divinely given or are they created by human beings? We will unravel this issue by approaching the question from various perspectives. We will consider, for example, the psychological approach of Sigmund Freud as well as the materialistic approach of Karl Marx. We will also consider the way in which Christian beliefs, in particular, are conditioned by cultural and political circumstances.

We begin by examining religious predictions regarding the “end of the world” and why people continue to hold these beliefs even when they are proven to be untrue. We conclude with the powerful play “*Equus*” about a teenage boy who creates his own religion.

A comment from the instructor:

This course is cross-listed as RE 209 and PS 209. Depending on your registration, you get credit for Religion or for Psychology.



Who made whom?



DESIGN OF AN HONORS COURSE

(From the web site of the National Collegiate Honors Council)

Every Honors instructor is different and every Honors course is different. Still, there do seem to be some characteristics that are common to many, if not most, Honors courses. Below are some guidelines that you may find helpful. In the words of one Honors faculty member, the finest instructors are those who are "willing to share the responsibility for teaching and learning with their students. The key to a successful Honors program is not the intelligence of the student or the subject matter of the course, but the attitude and approach of the instructor."

Objectives

Most Honors courses will have the following five objectives, or some variation:

1. To help students develop effective written communication skills (including the ability to make effective use of the information and ideas they learn);
2. To help students develop effective oral communication skills (while recognizing that not all students are comfortable talking a lot in class);
3. To help students develop their ability to analyze and synthesize a broad range of material;
4. To help students understand how scholars think about problems, formulate hypotheses, research those problems, and draw conclusions about them; and to help students understand how creative artists approach the creative process and produce an original work;
5. To help students become more independent and critical thinkers, demonstrating the ability to use knowledge and logic when discussing an issue or an idea, while considering the consequences of their ideas, for themselves, for others, and for society.

Let us consider each of these briefly.

Developing written communication skills

Discussion and writing are the hallmarks of Honors classes. Students become better writers (Objective 1) by using writing, both in class and out, as a means to express their ideas. Therefore, Honors courses should emphasize papers and essays, not multiple-choice exams, and emphasize ideas and active learning over information and lectures.

How Honors faculty choose to help students develop written communication skills will depend on the discipline and on the instructor's individual views about teaching and learning. Instructors can help students develop written skills through traditional writing assignments or through other methods such as journals, creative writing, reports, critiques, reviews, in-class writing, or the use of writing as a preliminary to discussion of issues. (In fact, the latter works extremely well to stimulate discussion. Students who have written something ahead of time are more willing to share their ideas and are less likely to talk off the top their heads in class.)

Developing oral communication skills



Students become better speakers (Objective 2) by participating in class discussion and, where appropriate, by leading class discussion. Therefore, Honors program courses should be discussion-oriented rather than lectures. Students benefit most from discussion when they are given the topic several days in advance and are asked to prepare their responses in writing ahead of time. The instructor might wish to provide some background to inform the discussion, which can then be used as a springboard to other ideas.

Developing the ability to analyze, to synthesize, and to understand scholarly work

Students develop the ability to think about a broad range of ideas (Objective 3) and come to understand how scholars and artists work (Objective 4) by reading and responding to primary source material, by exploring issues and problems in depth rather than quickly and superficially, and by being carefully exposed to and guided through the methods of many disciplines. Therefore, Honors courses should try to explore with students the questions and methods common to all intellectual endeavors and those that differentiate the disciplines, to give students real-world, hands-on problems to explore, and to help them understand the place of intellectual pursuit in the greater society.

The use of primary sources allows students to develop their own interpretations instead of relying on someone else's. Cross-disciplinary readings are especially valuable, in that they give students the opportunity to synthesize ideas. But primary sources are not necessarily limited to published texts or original documents. They can, for example, be the students' own experiences, the results of surveys or questionnaires, works of art or music, films, videos, and the like. What is important is that students have an opportunity to be engaged by primary material.

Exploring issues and problems in depth may mean that the course covers less material than conventional courses. In many courses, the amount of material covered is less important than the way the material is handled. Students need to learn to see the broad implications of each issue, as well as learning to analyze and synthesize the material. In this way, students will be able to apply what they have learned to other situations.

Helping students become independent and critical thinkers

Students become independent thinkers and critical thinkers (Objective 5) by working independently, yet under the guidance of responsive teachers. Therefore, an Honors course should give students a great deal of opportunity to think, write, and produce on their own (and in collaboration with their classmates) - as with papers and projects - and should give their work on-going feedback and encouragement. Honors courses should help students learn how to utilize their ideas in a broader social context - by helping them understand the origins, consequences, and principles underlying their ideas.

Honors courses should also create a classroom environment that is open to many perspectives and points of view, where students are encouraged to take intellectual risks and feel safe doing so, where they learn to respect each other (although not necessarily each others' ideas), and where they are taught to consider both the immediate and long term consequences of their own ideas.



When students become active learners through direct involvement with an issue, they develop attitudes and habits which may make them more active in the intellectual and cultural life of the community. It also makes them more aware of the political and social realities of that community.

But for students to become truly active participants in their learning, they must become intellectual risk-takers. Therefore, Honors instructors themselves should be willing to take risks - to teach in a different manner, to be open to challenges from students, to be willing to let the classroom discussion roam freely yet fruitfully.

While Honors courses need to help students develop intellectually, instructors also need to hold them responsible for meeting the course requirements. Honors students may be brighter than the average student - more intellectually skeptical and (usually) highly motivated - but they are not necessarily better organized, better informed, or better prepared for their classes. Just like other students, they need to learn good work habits. Still, it would be unfair to hold them to a higher standard in this regard; most are, after all, 18 to 21 years old. Also, when designing an Honors course, it is important to remember that Honors courses are not meant to have more work for the sake of more work or harder work for the sake of harder work. The amount of work and its difficulty should serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose.



FIVE REASONS TO JOIN AN HONORS PROGRAM

(From the web site of NextStepU)

You have the grades, a high SAT or ACT score and the motivation to work hard in your classes. So it's no surprise that you're looking at honors colleges and programs at the schools you're considering.

Should you enroll? Here are five reasons why you should at least consider an honors program.

It prepares you for grad school

When Kelly Ross starts her graduate degree in psychology at the University of Alabama-Birmingham, the Gonzaga University (gonzaga.edu) honors program grad will already have experience writing a thesis, presenting on a research topic and working closely with an adviser.

Those weren't little projects, either. Her thesis presentation was an hour and a half long, the paper required to be at least 40 pages.

"Going into graduate school, I feel much more prepared for the work I'll be doing there," Ross says.

Honors students get perks

Priority registration is a big perk for Mansfield University's (mansfield.edu) honors students.

"The minute registration opens, they get first crack at everything," says Dr. Sharon Carrish, who was director of the honors program there for six years.

Honors students are also considered for special scholarships, receive a notation on their transcripts and get to participate in day trips and other social activities. And did we mention the special study abroad options? At Mansfield, two honors students earn a most-expenses-paid trip overseas. Last year, it was to China.

Honors students also have something to tell potential employers.

"It shows, 'I was not the typical student; I went above and beyond,'" Carrish says. "You're going to have a heck of an opener in the interview."

You'll experience a different kind of teaching

Alex Scott, director of admissions at Felician College (felician.edu), says that small, lively classes and social activities are great reasons to join an honors program.

"But the biggest reason," he says, "is the support of a group of people who are highly interested in learning."

Honors professors know they're teaching the college's top students. So their classes are often discussion-based, seminar-style classes instead of lectures.

"The professors assumed you already did the reading," Ross says. "They might clarify a couple of things, but it's about taking the lessons a step further."

Instant community

Honors students at the University of Denver take some of the university's required classes in small, honors-only courses.

"This gives students the chance to meet and mingle with their peers in the classroom, and take classes that are perhaps a little more challenging," says Eric Gould, professor of English and director of the University Honors Program there.

At Gonzaga, Ross took classes with just 17 students.

"Your professor and classmates know you really well, so you can't blow it off," Ross says.



It's different—not necessarily more—work

“They don’t take additional classes; they take other classes,” says Carrish of students in Mansfield’s honors program. “A typical student would need six hours in humanities; a typical honors student would take six hours of honors humanities.”

“Technically, the classes that we’re taking have the same names as the classes other students are taking,” Ross says.

At the University of Denver, the honors sequence partially fulfills the university’s general education requirements and includes classes in writing, social and natural sciences and the humanities.

Honors students who are looking to earn a distinction in their major must also take 12 to 16 hours of coursework and complete a thesis.

“These 12 to 16 hours are usually required for the major anyway,” Gould says.

Your next step

“Honors means such different things at different colleges,” Ross says. “Find out as much as you can. If you’re really considering it, visiting the college and talking to students is huge. ... You don’t want to be in a program where people are just trying to be the smartest. You want people to be able to respect what you have to say.”



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Is there a genius in all of us?



Those who think geniuses are born and not made should think again, says author David Shenk. Where do athletic and artistic abilities come from? With phrases like "gifted musician", "natural athlete" and "innate intelligence", we have long assumed that talent is a genetic thing some of us have and others don't.

But new science suggests the source of abilities is much more interesting and improvisational. It turns out that everything we are is a developmental process and this includes what we get from our genes.

A century ago, geneticists saw genes as robot actors, always uttering the same lines in exactly the same way, and much of the public is still stuck with this old idea. In recent years, though, scientists have seen a dramatic upgrade in their understanding of heredity.

They now know that genes interact with their surroundings, getting turned on and off all the time. In effect, the same genes have different effects depending on who they are talking to.

Malleable

"There are no genetic factors that can be studied independently of the environment," says Michael Meaney, a professor at McGill University in Canada.



"It would be folly to suggest that anyone can literally do or become anything. But the new science tells us that it's equally foolish to think that mediocrity is built into most of us"

Quote David Shenk Author of *The Genius in All of Us*



"And there are no environmental factors that function independently of the genome. [A trait] emerges only from the interaction of gene and environment."

This means that everything about us - our personalities, our intelligence, our abilities - are actually determined by the lives we lead. The very notion of "innate" no longer holds together.

"In each case the individual animal starts its life with the capacity to develop in a number of distinctly different ways," says Patrick Bateson, a biologist at Cambridge University.

"The individual animal starts its life with the capacity to develop in a number of distinctly different ways. Like a jukebox, the individual has the potential to play a number of different developmental tunes. The particular developmental tune it does play is selected by [the environment] in which the individual is growing up."

Is it that genes don't matter? Of course not. We're all different and have different theoretical potentials from one another. There was never any chance of me being Cristiano Ronaldo. Only tiny Cristiano Ronaldo had a chance of being the Cristiano Ronaldo we know now.

But we also have to understand that he could have turned out to be quite a different person, with different abilities. His future football magnificence was not carved in genetic stone.

Doomed

This new developmental paradigm is a big idea to swallow, considering how much effort has gone into persuading us that each of us inherits a fixed amount of intelligence, and that most of us are doomed to be mediocre.

The notion of a fixed IQ has been with us for almost a century. Yet the original inventor of the IQ test, Alfred Binet, had quite the opposite opinion, and the science turns out to favour Binet.

"Intelligence represents a set of competencies in development," said Robert Sternberg from Tufts University in the US in 2005, after many decades of study.

Talent researchers Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Kevin Rathunde and Samuel Whalen agree.

"High academic achievers are not necessarily born 'smarter' than others," they write in their book *Talented Teenagers*, "but work harder and develop more self-discipline."

James Flynn of the University of Otago in New Zealand has documented how IQ scores themselves have steadily risen over the century - which, after careful analysis, he ascribes to increased cultural sophistication. In other words, we've all gotten smarter as our culture has sharpened us.

Most profoundly, Carol Dweck from Stanford University in the US, has demonstrated that students who understand intelligence is malleable rather than fixed are much more intellectually ambitious and successful.

The same dynamic applies to talent. This explains why today's top runners, swimmers, bicyclists, chess players, violinists and on and on, are so much more skilful than in previous generations.

All of these abilities are dependent on a slow, incremental process which various micro-cultures have figured out how to improve. Until recently, the nature of this improvement was merely intuitive and all but invisible to scientists and other observers.

Soft and sculptable

But in recent years, a whole new field of "expertise studies", led by Florida State University psychologist Anders Ericsson, has emerged which is cleverly documenting the sources and methods of such tiny, incremental improvements.





Born to be a footballer?

Bit by bit, they're gathering a better and better understanding of how different attitudes, teaching styles and precise types of practice and exercise push people along very different pathways.

Does your child have the potential to develop into a world-class athlete, a virtuoso musician, or a brilliant Nobel-winning scientist?

It would be folly to suggest that anyone can literally do or become anything. But the new science tells us that it's equally foolish to think that mediocrity is built into most of us, or that any of us can know our true limits before we've applied enormous resources and invested vast amounts of time.

Our abilities are not set in genetic stone. They are soft and sculptable, far into adulthood. With humility, with hope, and with extraordinary determination, greatness is something to which any kid - of any age - can aspire.

David Shenk is the author of *The Genius in All of Us*.

How a London cabbie's brain grows



London cabbies famously navigate one of the most complex cities in the world.

In 1999, neurologist Eleanor Maguire conducted MRI scans on their brains and compared them with the brain scans of others.

In contrast with non-cabbies, experienced taxi drivers had a greatly enlarged posterior hippocampus - that part of the brain that specialises in recalling spatial representations.

What's more, the size of cabbies' hippocampi correlated directly with each driver's experience: the longer the driving career, the larger the posterior hippocampus.

That showed that spatial tasks were actively changing cabbies' brains. This was perfectly consistent with studies of violinists, Braille readers, meditation practitioners, and recovering stroke victims.

Our brains adapt in response to the demands we put on them.

