

The following descriptions are for topics courses that are being offered through the Honors College in the Fall 2017. All other descriptions are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Academic Writing**

**GSW 1110H (3) 10:30-11:20 MWF; Burroughs**

**Course # 73466**

Learning how to read and write is personal. We all have memories of how we obtained literacy, but it is easy to overlook the early process of learning how to read and write. The process of becoming literate is also complex. We make associations with books and the people reading them to us when we were young, we make associations with books and the people who write them, and we make associations with books and people who teach us subjects and academic literacies. This course investigates the ways we perceive, respond to, and create writing. We first investigate our literacies: how is writing impacted by our own experiences? We then analyze the individual self in a community: how does writing help people get things done? We will also examine the use of rhetoric: how is meaning constructed in context? In all, we will examine our literacies by integrating a variety of perspectives into our research-based writing. The course relies on interdisciplinary approaches from diverse fields, including but not limited to, psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, communication, rhetoric and writing, and English literature. The course will utilize an inquiry-based approach. It is a reading- and writing-intensive course designed to invite students to explore questions and think of themselves as writers, constructing answers rhetorically in academic and community contexts. An important part of this course is students' acquisition of specific skills: deep inquiry, close reading, analytical writing, cogent speaking, attentive listening, critical thinking, and reflective writing.

### **Academic Writing**

**GSW 1120H (3) 10:30pm-5:45pm MW; Jones**

**Course # 73465**

**Special Topic: Graphic Novels**

In 1992, Art Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize for his cat and mouse tale of the holocaust, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, a complex personal account of trauma, grief, history, and war, told in a book length comic book form known as a "graphic novel." At about the same time, Alan Moore deconstructed the classic super-hero narrative in his landmark graphic novel *The Watchmen*. Later in the decade, Japanese manga exploded into the American literary marketplace, so that today, graphic novels are both hugely popular and increasingly studied as high art. This special Honors section of GSW 1120 aims to examine the history of the genre through a series of readings and argumentative synthesis essays. We will utilize the growing body of academic research into what sets graphic novels apart from other literary forms—how they represent a sort of "middle ground" between pure graphic art and traditional written texts, and we will apply this research in student essays on topics such as how graphic novels intersect with question of gender, race, and identity, how their influence on Hollywood has changed the media landscape, and their credibility as primary texts in history classrooms, to name a few potential directions.

## **Academic Writing**

**GSW 1120H (3) 9:30am-10:20am MWF ; Jordan**

**Course # 74237**

### **Special Topic: Slouching Towards the Matrix**

As the pace of technological change has quickened over the past few decades, researchers into artificial intelligence have begun speaking of when, not if, automated machines will begin taking over many human tasks. Novels and movies have explored this territory for years, yet now the engineers and scientists have begun to suggest that many of these changes may be just around the corner. What will this mean for human culture? This special section of Academic Writing will investigate topics related to the rise of machines in the digital age. How will this impact our democracies, our education, our entertainment, and our job prospects? We will consider both fictional and non-fictional explorations of this theme, and students will use the topic as they develop their critical reading, thinking, and writing skills necessary to succeed as college level writers.

## **Honors Seminars:**

### **Finding Meaning in Life: An Exploration of Existential Issues**

**HNRS 4000 (2) 6:00pm-7:50pm M; Vickio**

**Course # 74818**

I invite you to consider spending a couple hours each Monday with me exploring some of the "big questions" in life. These questions involve what existential psychologists and philosophers call "ultimate concerns" and include the following:

- What makes life most meaningful and worthwhile?
- How do I contend with mortality?
- What did Sartre mean when he said that we are "condemned to be free"?
- Is it possible (or even desirable) to experience lasting happiness?
- To what degree can I ever truly "know" another person?

Such questions--and others like them--will be the focus of a Fall 2017 honors seminar entitled, "Finding Meaning in Life: An Exploration of Existential Issues." This seminar will be heavily discussion-based. To help fuel our class discussions, we will make use of film, music, and literature along with scholarly work from the fields of psychology and philosophy. I intend to routinely present students with controversial ideas to consider as well as apparent contradictions or paradoxes in life. My hope is that this seminar will prove to be much more than an intellectual exercise and will have serious implications for how you experience life.

### **Reading Dystopian Fiction/Living in the New America**

**HNRS 4000 (2) 9:30-11:15 T; Diehl**

**Course # 74915**

In this Special Topic Honors Seminar, we will read a range of dystopian literature that spans the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and we will grapple with some of the most fundamental ideas that we, as twenty-first-century Americans, have about citizenship, politics, social order, liberty, and human rights. Through a careful study of texts like Stephen King's *Running Man*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Talents*, we will seek to gain a deepened understanding of the politics, laws, customs, and conditions that give shape to twenty-first-century America.

## **Alexander Hamilton**

**HNRS 3000 (1) 3:30pm-5:20pm T (8 weeks); Herndon**

**Course # 73967**

This course will focus on the American “founding father” Alexander Hamilton, taking advantage of the popularity of “Hamilton: An American Musical” to help students think historically. The goals are for students to place Hamilton in historical context and assess how he has been “used” throughout American history to promote popular ideas of “city on a hill”, “American Dream”, and “American exceptionalism”.

## **Online Identity and Social Media Literacy**

**HNRS 3000 (1) TBA; DePasquale**

**Course # 74917**

This course critically examines with the ways in which people get their information about politics and social justice issues, and how they find or form communities in online spaces. This course gives students a brief overview of viral campaigns circulating in online spaces, “Slacktivism,” file-sharing sites, piracy and downloading, and the reasons why we must be given the tools and resources to interrogate the news stories we share on social media for bias and accuracy. Students will emerge from the course with an interdisciplinary understanding of media production, internet culture, and the ways in which online spaces are sites of political organization, protest, and resistance. Reading analyses of media representation, technology, and the democratization of the internet, each week we will discuss a variety of perspectives from blog posts to excerpts from: *The Politics of Internet Communication* by Robert J. Klotz, *Tweeting to Power: The Social Media Revolution in American Politics* by Jason Gainous and Kevin M. Wagner, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* by Jose van Dijck, *The Cyber Effect* by Mary Aiken.

## **Special Topics in English**

### **Shakespeare & Adaptation**

**ENG 4010H (3) 1:30pm-2:20pm MWF; Gearhart**

**Course # 76334**

Since the early seventeenth century, countless artists have adapted William Shakespeare’s work in order to suit the aesthetic tastes and social sensibilities of their cultures. During Shakespeare’s lifetime, playwright John Fletcher composed *The Woman’s Prize; or, The Tamer Tamed* in response to *The Taming of the Shrew*. Long after the Bard’s death and following the Restoration, Nahum Tate devised a version of *King Lear* that included a happy ending and proved wildly popular well into the nineteenth century. In the early 1800s, Charles and Mary Lamb adapted Shakespeare’s plays for young readers, though by 1900 these tales were in need of an update, as Edith Nesbit’s *The Children’s Shakespeare* suggests. By the mid-twentieth century, America was introduced to Broadway musicals *Kiss Me, Kate* and *West Side Story* while half a world away, Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa was directing *Throne of Blood* and *The Bad Sleep Well*. Elsewhere around the globe, Spanish poet, Federico García Lorca adapted *Romeo and Juliet* as *El público*, German playwright Heiner Müller staged his *Hamletmachine*, and Africa’s Welcome Msomi composed a Zulu version of *Macbeth*. Before the millennium came to an end, novelist Jane Smiley published *A Thousand Acres*, her best selling adaptation of *King Lear*, Disney introduced children to *Hamlet* with its film *The Lion King*, and Gil Junger’s *10 Things I Hate About You* enticed teens to movie theatres with the promise of seeing Julia Styles and Heath Ledger in this updated version of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Why, we might wonder, have so many authors chosen to rework Shakespeare’s plays, many of which are adaptations themselves? What are the most fruitful theoretical models to turn to when discussing the relationship between the so-

called “original” Shakespearean text and adaptations of it? Treating adaptations both as intimately linked to the “original” Shakespearean plays and as works in their own right, in English 4010 we will examine how adaptations from the seventeenth century to the present have critiqued the Bard’s work and addressed contemporary issues. The course readings will include plays by Shakespeare and adaptations of those plays that span a wide range of time, genres, and cultures. To aid us in our study of adaptation, we will also read the works of theorists Linda Hutcheon and Mark Fortier along with others. Ultimately, we will seek to develop a working definition of the term ‘adaptation’ and ask questions such as: Are prequels and sequels adaptations? How is the notion of the “original” or “source” text complicated by Shakespearean adaptations? Is the belief that the Bard’s work is “universal” confirmed or challenged by adaptations? And, how does Shakespeare’s high culture status affect responses to adaptations of his work?

**American Renaissance**

**ENG 4310H (3) 2:30pm-3:45pm TR; Emery**

**Course # 74773**

**Description Coming Soon**