**The following descriptions are for topics courses that are being offered through the Honors College in the Fall 2014. All other descriptions are listed in the Undergraduate Catalog.**

***COMMUNICATIONS***

**Academic Writing**

**GSW 1120H (3) 9:30-10:20 MWF; Oesch-Minor Course # 77479**

**What is News?**

**An Examination of Sensationalism, Entertainment News and News Commentary in Contrast to Journalism—What Are the Distinctions? Where Are the Lines Drawn? Is Objectivity Attainable? Who Cares?**

News coverage has paved the way for significant social and cultural transformations in the United States of America’s culture, yet many recent shifts toward entertainment news and politically affiliated news channels have blurred the lines between journalism, sensationalism and audience pandering. The shortcomings and successes of FOX, MSNBC, Sirius XM Radio, CNN, NPR and Aljazeera beg the question: what is the role of media in journalism? How does news coverage inform our perspectives? This course will tackle some of these issues and ask students to examine the changing roles of the news media and journalism in American culture using a variety of lenses including historical studies, cultural responses to news events, media coverage of international crisis and current trends toward political-pandering as journalism. Students will consider a variety of news shows, media anchors/commentators and essays representing a broad range of perspectives to challenge and expand ideas about the impacts of journalism and the ethics of modern news coverage. Considering a variety of perspectives will help students construct a sturdy foundation on which to build critical thinking, analysis, research and composition skills, as well as a critical eye for biases in journalism.

**Academic Writing**

**GSW 1120H (3) 4:30-5:45 MW; Jones Course # 76665**

**The Graphic Novel**

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.

***HUMANITIES AND ARTS***

**The Byronic Hero: From the 1800s to “Mad Men”**

**ENG 4170H (3) 1:30-2:20 MWF; Lapinski Course # 77581**

An article in the *New York Magazine* recently claimed that “Don Draper is the true heir to the Byronic vampire”. How does the Byronic hero haunt modernity?—this is the central question this course will grapple with.

The course will look at the way an important trope of Romanticism, the Byronic hero, emerged against the background of the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror, tracing this figure both in the work of Byron and others –for eg. Romantic women writers such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Dacre, as well as Goethe, Schiller, the French Romantics, and the Brontes—and its re-emergence in contemporary texts such as the television show “Mad Men” and Allan Hollinghurst’s Booker prize winning novel about the 1980’s in England, *The Line of Beauty*. The course will explore the way in which the Byronic hero constructs/deconstructs the link between seductive force and political force; between bodies and texts; between life and death, between power, knowledge and history; and how this interrupts discourses of law, the heteronormative family, sovereignty and the State. We’ll also be visited by female versions of the Byronic hero. The latter third of the course will focus on 20th and 21st century re-visions of the Byronic. In addition, we’ll use some theoretical texts to frame our readings.

**Hawthorne and Melville**

**ENG 4310H (3) 11:30-12:45 TR; Emery Course # 75941**

As two of America’s greatest fiction writers, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville are well deserving of a careful look, especially because they were contemporaries of one another and close professional friends. Since both were accomplished short story writers as well as novelists, we’ll be reading both their best short and longer works. The latter will include Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, and *The Blithedale Romance,* and Melville’s *Typee*, *Moby-Dick,* and *The Confidence-Man.* We’ll also read a few of the poems Melville wrote later in his career. Finally, too, we’ll discuss the very different personal lives and career paths of the two authors, as well as the literary milieu in which they wrote and published. Course requirements: three 4-5-page interpretive papers, a take-home final exam, and thoughtful and energetic participation in discussion.

**Topics in English Studies**

**ENG 4800H (3) 4:00-5:15 TR; Albertini Course # 77641**

No description is available at this time.

***SPECIAL SEMINARS***

**Cyberpunk’d or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Real World**

**HNRS 3000 (2); 1:30-2:20 MW; Suver Course # 77582**

Despite focusing on one of science fiction’s subgenres, this would not be a class about science fiction. Cyberpunk, while borrowing from many of sci-fi’s conventions and themes, actually derived from prewar crime fiction, film noir, and the postmodernism movement of the 1980s and 1990s. Cyberpunk is a stalled social platform, a transmedia aesthetic revolution, and a failed future history that, nevertheless, manages to accurately anticipate the twenty-first century. The cyberpunk movement encompassed film, literature, music, videogames, art, architecture, and fashion. This course would look at some of cyberpunk’s more significant manifestos and interrogate its ideologies in an effort to achieve a greater understanding of the social implications of contemporary information-centric and internet dependent culture.

**American Vampire Story**

**HNRS 4000 (2) 9:30-11:15 T; Diehl Course # 71767**

In this course, we will examine select literary and filmic representations of the vampire from the 19th century to the present, focusing most particularly on representations of the vampire in American popular culture from the 1970s to the present.

We will begin our study of literary vampirism with arguably the most widely-known of all “vampire literature”: Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). We will consider how Stoker’s novel establishes certain tropes of vampirism and generic features of “vampire lit” that recur in later works of fiction, as well as how the figure of the vampire crafted in Stoker’s novel influenced and was influenced by the culture of 19th century England and literary Romanticism and the Gothic. Next, we will turn our attention to five contemporary novels and one graphic novel from the American tradition; these works span from 1976 to the present and include both the usual suspects where American vampire lit is concerned (i.e., Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire*; Stephen King’s *‘Salem’s Lot;* Seth Grahame-Smith’s *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*) as well as some more recent additions to the vampire lit canon (e.g., Elizabeth Kostova’s *The Historian;* Royce Prouty’s *Stoker’s Manuscript*; Scott Snyder’s *American Vampire, Vol. 1*). Through our study of these texts, we will not only consider the ways in which the figure of the vampire is modified and altered in the contemporary moment to meet the different demands of an American audience, but also explore how experiments in genre work to re-define our relationship—as readers, as Americans—with the figure of the bloodsucker. At the heart of our inquiry into the genre of American vampire lit will be a consideration (by way of Nina Auerbach’s influential study *Our Vampires, Ourselves*) of how tracking the figure of the vampire in popular culture allows readers to metaphorically trace the anxieties, fears, obsessions, and desires of the people and the cultures from which that figure has emerged. Throughout the term as well we will screen outside of class a series of select and important films in the vampire genre.

**Perspectives on the Art and Practice of Leadership**

**HNRS 4000 (2) 10:30-11:20 MW; Folkins Course # 74961**

This seminar will explore conventional and unconventional ideas about what it takes to be a good leader. It will be of interest to students from all disciplines and with all career objectives, as comparisons will be made about governmental leadership, business leadership, educational leadership, arts leadership, military leadership, and religious leadership. Even if one does not plan to be a leader, the seminar will be of interest as we are all influenced by leaders. In addition to professional perspectives, there are lessons for leading ones family and leading one’s life.

The course will be taught as a seminar and class meetings will center on discussion of assigned readings and student presentations. This course is open to any Honors student regardless of class status.

**The Gothic: From the Eighteenth-Century Page to the Twenty-First Century Screen**

**HNRS 4000 (2) 1:30-3:20 F; Van Buskirk Course # 77661**

When one hears the word “gothic,” what comes to mind? Haunted castles? Abhorrent monsters? Ancient cathedrals? How about gore and violence? Kidnapping and torture? Hidden family secrets? All of the above? None of the above? The Gothic, perhaps more than most literary and cinematic traditions, can be difficult to define succinctly. In this class, we will explore some of the “longings and anxieties” the Gothic has traditionally embodied (religious oppression, the Other, cross-class relations, physical captivity) and the ways in which it continues to haunt us (the fear of becoming one’s parents, fears of terrorism, fears of social immobility) in the twenty-first century.

As we progress from text to text and period to period, we will discover that a comprehensive study of the Gothic not only invites, but demands a multi-perspective approach. The Gothic lends itself to a variety of studies, cultural studies, and psychoanalysis, among others). We will evaluate the usefulness of distinguishing “female gothic” from “male gothic” and “terror” from “horror.” Students will be invited to bring to our discussions the enduring questions and frameworks of their own disciplines in an attempt to understand why so many readers and viewers continue to be drawn to the disturbing, terrifying, and mysterious Gothic.

**Finding Meaning in Life: An Exploratioan of Existential Issues**

**HNRS 4000 (2) 6:00-7:50 R; Vickio Course # 78106**

This seminar will provide students with the opportunity to critically consider the following: What affords them a sense of meaning in life? What is meant by existentialism? According to philosophers and psychologists, what are the basic tenets and key themes associated with existentialism? To what extent does living a “meaningful” life translate into experiencing happiness? What is the relationship between existentialism and critical thinking; the practice of mindfulness; the field of positive psychology; and a focus on core values? What are the implications of students’ insights for their daily lives as well as their future plans?