

Fall 2021 Honors College Special Topics Courses



UHC 397-991-51483; Colloquium: Perspectives on World War II-HONR; Prof. Kenneth Elkins; MWF 3:35-4:25, Strong 401

Nearly 75 years have passed since the end of WWII. The Great Generation fought the war and made the peace but also found themselves drawn into the Cold War. Later their children, who carried with them many of the lessons of WWII, would serve in SE Asia in the earliest of our limited wars. What lessons does WWII, the largest, most destructive but also the most important war in human history, offer to students today? We will also consider many of the interpretive debates about the causes of the war, its major events, its leaders, and its results as well as the misery and devastation wrought by the persecution and genocide of millions of innocents largely hidden by the unprecedented level of destruction during the war.

Pre-requisite: 50 credits hours

UHC 397-996-51071; Colloquium: Dystopia & Gender-HONR; Dr. Shannon Wooden; TR 11:00-12:15, Pummill 203

*The New Yorker recently described Margaret Atwood as “the prophet of dystopia,” a writer whose “fiction has imagined societies riddled with misogyny, oppressions, and environmental havoc” (April 14, 2017). Like the protagonist of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, many of Atwood’s protagonists endure subjugation and deprivation under extremely oppressive social and political systems. In imagining dystopian worlds, Atwood not only asks readers “Could it happen here?” but also “Has it has already happened here?” In this course we will examine how Atwood deploys the characteristics of dystopian literature to encourage readers to consider social norms, economic systems, and political trends.*

Pre-requisite: completion of 50 credit hours.

UHC 397-997-57278; Colloquium: Education & Modern Culture-HONR; Dr. Steven Jones; TR 11:00-12:15, Pummill 101

This course examines the purposes and processes of education in the context of modern culture that makes powerful and seductive demands. It examines how the goals and purposes of education—from kindergarten through the university experience—are shaped and often distorted by modern culture. That is, the course investigates what in our social world seems to beckon toward education—enticing students to desire certain things and not others and commanding or encouraging schools to serve its purposes. The course describes how educational institutions respond to those social forces and it

explores what we gain and lose in responding to the demands of modern culture. The course examines social contexts that limit, interfere with, or deform the "self-making" of students as they engage in learning experiences. In particular, the course examines the effect of modern culture on the liberal arts.

Pre-requisite: completion of 50 credit hours.

UHC 397-999-47043; Colloquium: Missouri's Civil War-HONR; Dr. Jeremy Neely; TR 11:00-12:15, Glass 434

No place suffered a civil war as brutal as the bloody struggle that consumed Missouri in the middle of the nineteenth century. Torn by the sectional crisis that pitted North against South, this western border state was a violent flashpoint and microcosm of the divisions over race, freedom, and state power that roiled the entire nation. This course surveys Missouri's extraordinary history during the Civil War era and introduces students to pathbreaking scholarship on slavery, guerrilla violence, politics, gender, and memory. A focus on primary sources will give students the first-hand opportunity to understand Missouri's Civil War as experienced by women and men of all backgrounds and to evaluate how the issues that it raised continue to shape our world today.

Pre-requisite: completion of 50 credit hours.

UHC 410-997-51338; Seminar: Truth & the Autobiographical Impulse-HONR; Prof. Michael Frizell; TR 9:30-10:45, Strong 401

Autobiographical writing is a form of expression that connects personal stories with narratives demonstrating broader social structures, such as the impact of patriarchy and colonialism, on the individual. This class will explore the space between the personal and political by tasking students to reflect on the "ordinary" person's life affected by public events. We will read the autobiographical works of people who felt compelled to write and publish their memoirs, diaries, essays, poetry, and drama, even though they had yet to achieve fame. We will also explore social structure theories and the interface between personal experience and political agency.

Recommended for students with 75 or more credit hours.

UHC 410-998-51313; Seminar: Language & Power-HONR; Dr. Jonathan Newman; TR 2:00-3:15, Sicleuff 127

Language is central to human culture and society. It shapes our assumptions and beliefs, and it supports and reflects structures of power and privilege. This Honors Seminar offers students the opportunity to explore language and its relationship to power-- individual, social, and political-- from an interdisciplinary perspective. We will look at language not just as communication, but as a means to exert and resist power and as a sign of group identity and status. With readings from ancient and modern thinkers, we will explore fundamental questions: Who does language belong to? How do ethical (and unethical) leaders understand and use language? What is the value of speech in a democratic

society? The class will bring to language and power a variety of ideas and approaches from linguistics, philosophy, and critical theory and engage with present-day controversies over free speech, civility, and inclusiveness.

Recommended for students with 75 or more credit hours

UHC 410-999-47044; Seminar: History of Piracy in the Americas-HONR; Dr. John Chuchiak; INET

This course examines the history of piracy in the Americas from the point of European contact to the latter eighteenth century, a period historians roughly designate as the “early modern.” The early modern period was an age marked by new ideas in science, medicine, and religion, by advances in shipbuilding, mining, and artillery manufacture, but also a time of endemic religious conflicts, expansive empires, and wars. In terms of overseas trade and conquest, Spain and Portugal were at the forefront throughout much of this period, and their successes in the Americas and elsewhere led their northern neighbors, particularly the French, English, and Dutch, to cast covetous eyes upon slow-moving, inbound treasure ships. These predators and the prey they seized upon are the primary subject of this course. The course will cover the social history of pirate bands as well as the history of the Transatlantic Treasure fleets and the Spanish Empire’s defensive networks. A final examination of the course will focus on the long-term consequences, economic and otherwise, that piracy entailed for its mostly Spanish victims.

Recommended for students with 75 or more credit hours.