

## Previous HON 3260 Course Descriptions

---

HON 3260

Three credit hours

### ***“The Gods Will Not Save You:” American Urbanism through HBO’s The Wire***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Dr. Jean-Paul Addie, Urban Studies Institute**

In this course, we will examine the American urban experience through a deep engagement with the seminal HBO series, *The Wire* (2002-2008). Set and produced in Baltimore, the show interrogates the governance and experience of the modern American city through dramatizing institutions and social structures including the drug trade, street gangs, deindustrialization, urban politics, education, policing, and media representation. While *The Wire* is a work of fiction, rather than a documentary, we will approach *The Wire* Series 1 as a text that provides a visceral depiction of urban inequality; the social structures that produce, legitimize, and perpetuate inequality and the complex lived experience of those living in, and policing, deprived U.S. cities. As such, the show provides a central object of analysis which will enable us to discuss and mobilize key concepts, theories, and cases in urban studies from interdisciplinary perspectives including sociology, geography, criminology, history, critical race studies, and public policy. Assigned readings will complement our view of the show to develop a rigorous examination of inequality and the factors shaping the lived experiences of those sociologist William Julius Wilson called ‘the truly disadvantaged’. Lessons learned from narratives presented in *The Wire* will further set the foundation to explore other cities, including Atlanta, and the changing urban landscape following the 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis. In doing so, the course strongly supports GSU’s strategic interest in addressing complex urban challenges.

### ***Authoritarianism in the Global Age***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Dr. Maria Repnikova, Communication**

The recent wave of right-wing populism in Europe and the United States, combined with a growing geopolitical influence of China and Russia, and a reversal of nascent democratization trends in much of the Middle East, has sparked a renewed interest in authoritarianism. The wide and ambivalent application of this label, however, has watered down its theoretical significance, as authoritarianism is now being loosely applied to anything from describing a leadership characteristic, to regimes, to cultural norms.

This course aims at recapturing and critically engaging with authoritarianism, understood as a non-democratic form of governance that relies as much on soft power and co-optation as it does on coercion and control. We will examine authoritarianism as a socio-political phenomenon, as well as a cultural construct that has penetrated and redefined the global political order, as evident in glaring vulnerabilities of Western democratic systems. The purpose of this interdisciplinary seminar is to interrogate the origins of authoritarian systems, their key governance and cultural characteristics, the modes of global diffusion of authoritarian norms and values, as well as the contesting forces that push against and redefine authoritarian trends. Special emphasis will be placed on grasping authoritarianism as a dynamic phenomenon that is shaped by multiple actors, including the media, civil society, entrepreneurs and the state, amongst others. Specifically, we will look at people’s identities, mechanisms of political (de)mobilization, and public opinion formation under authoritarian rule. That is, how people live with, push against, and adapt to authoritarian governments; and how irony, cynicism, and apathy work as a means of political expression.

## ***Photography and Psychology: Connecting with the Atlanta Community***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Dr. Laura McKee, Psychology**

Photography and Psychology: Connecting with the Atlanta Community offers a signature learning experience by introducing students to 1) photography and basic dark room skills, 2) perspectives from documentary photography, fine art, psychology, and public health on photography as a reflective practice, as narcissism (the “selfie” movement), and as social justice, and 3) community engagement and participatory action with marginalized communities in Atlanta. In brief, students would engage in an intense, compressed workshop to learn the basics of photographic seeing and the mechanics of a simple film camera (e.g., Holga) and darkroom processing as they are also absorbing the literature on how photography has been used as a psychological intervention and as a tool for research, community engagement, and social change. In the later stages of the course, students and faculty collaborate with community members to create a space for interaction and expression through the photographic medium (i.e., GSU students teaching community members how to use the cameras as well as workshoping each others’ photos), culminating in an exhibit. We consider the delicate balance of whose interests are being served (GSU students, community members, both?) and the ethics of engaging potentially vulnerable populations in Atlanta (Whose voice(s) is(are) being privileged? What is our commitment to a community once the class is over? How can we carefully manage expectations?). Drawing from pioneering work of Wendy Ewald and Photovoice, students use photography to engage across difference and are encouraged to consider their own experiences of marginalization, oppression, and privilege.

## ***Authors We Read in School: Who's Out and Why?***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Dr. Cathy Amanti, Early Childhood and Elementary Education**

Do you see yourself and people like you reflected in the curriculum? In 2006, Glenn Aikenhead wrote, “Teaching materials must fit into the meaningful cultural context of the local community; otherwise, many students will find the science curriculum inaccessible.” With this in mind, in this forum, students will explore and critique texts used in K-20 classrooms from a variety of perspectives, including the manner in which texts are produced and selected, the accuracy of the content, inclusions and exclusions of the histories and experiences of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and the way K-20 curricular materials privilege Western ways of knowing. Students will reflect on the curricular materials they were provided in their K-12 education as well as the representativeness of the authors they are currently reading in their college coursework. In addition, students will conduct a community study and develop a text that integrates local knowledge, culture, and language with the development of early literacy and/or numeracy skills.

## ***Do Global Corporate Ethics Matter?***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Dr. Laura Anne Hastings, Political Science and Global Studies**

Global Corporate Ethics explores the ethical, legal and political impacts of contemporary multinational corporate behavior on developing countries. The course begins with a brief overview of global political economy concepts, including the foreign direct investment and international development. We then explore how different investment sectors such as mining or manufacturing impact MNC actions in developing countries. We begin to work through the range of moral considerations for MNC behaviors. Through short writing assignments, in-class debates and group presentations, students will evaluate competing perspectives and think critically about how corporate interactions with governments and workers may be regulated by formal global regimes. What are the responsibilities of multinational corporations beyond making money? What, if any, are their impacts on political democracy? Two or three field trips to the Center for Civil and Human Rights and to one or two Atlanta-based multinational corporations will provide real life examples for these ethical questions.

## ***Docupoetics: Intersections of Poetry and Journalism***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Andrea Jurjevic, English**

Journalism is rooted in the verifiable world of facts and detached observation, while poetry, we are told, traffics in subjective, personal emotion. Yet these seemingly opposite modes of writing both bear witness to history, to the human experience, and they often attempt to reveal the truth that is not immediately apparent. Good journalism—which goes beyond who, what, when, where, why, and how—frequently employs the poetic angle. And dynamic poetry is not only informed by the history of the moment but informs and chronicles that moment as well. This seminar looks at the intersections of journalism and poetry, and specifically at the poet as a journalist, a historian, an activist, and one who, at times, employs documentary materials (newspapers, public testimony, etc.) to wed the political with the personal.

## ***How We Think: The integration of Technology, Pedagogy and Philosophy***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Dr. Matthew Grober, Biology**

The topic of the course is how organisms and societies turn information into knowledge in the process of constructing a worldview. The goal is to help students understand and develop useful approaches to sorting through the huge volumes of 'information' available and integrating the 'useful' information with their previous knowledge and with the knowledge of others, to construct a productive world view. This process is examined at a variety of levels of analysis, from the level of how neurons or sensory systems filter incoming information to the role that interacting with others has on modifying one's own views. For example, social conventions or institutions can push the consensus view away from rational approaches to understanding the world, as was the case when the Catholic Church rejected heliocentrism. By examining this process at multiple levels of analysis, students can begin to understand how divergence from objective reality occurs and why denial, for example, is so common in humans, but very rare in other life forms. This content is well integrated with both our pedagogy and with our technological approach.