



## Honors Upper Division Interdisciplinary Seminars

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FALL 2021

*Three credit hours*

### ***Art and Citizenship in Divided Societies***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Thursday, 12:45-3:15 Course** CRN 81931

**Daniel Holmes, English**

What is the artist's responsibility to society? In this interdisciplinary seminar, students will discuss and debate the contributions of writers, painters, musicians, and intellectuals whose work offers perspective on the ways societies negotiate internal divisions. By engaging with the work, biographies, and historical contexts of artists as varied as Shakespeare, Frida Kahlo, and Toni Morrison, students will be asked to think critically about how individuals might discern the best means to labor authentically in service to their societies. Our readings and discussions will be aimed at considering the following questions: What factors drive artists' aesthetic responses to the world around them? How might fidelity to a creative vision constitute the fulfillment of a civic duty? At what point does an inward turn toward iconoclastic originality equate to an abandonment of one's social and political obligations? How do discourse communities (artistic, academic, and otherwise) attempt to navigate and mediate disputes? By considering a broad range of artists working in diverse contexts, students will read, look, listen, and reflect on their own evolving sense of responsibility to self and to society—a process that will culminate in the creation of their own socially-conscious artistic expression in the medium of their choice.

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

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Monday, 9:30 – 12:00** CRN 86721

**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, artists and the state, amongst others. 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. This course will also reflect on how we can work towards preserving democracy, especially in post-elections United States

## ***Education as a Human and Civil Right: A Means and an End***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Wednesday 12:30 – 3:00** CRN 82797

**Dr. Caroline Sullivan, Middle and Secondary Education**

This course focuses on the examination of historical and contemporary conceptions of education as a human and civil right as both a means and an end towards social justice and equity within the United States and across the globe. Students will undertake an interdisciplinary analysis of historical, sociocultural, and policy-related factors involved in developing and maintaining an educated citizenry. Students will consider ways in which education is promoted or inhibited as foundational for a civil and democratic society.

## ***Extreme Motivations: Understanding Violent Extremist and Terrorist Groups***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Tuesday 9:30 – 12:00** CRN 84528

**Dr. Anthony Lemieux, Communication**

This advanced seminar examines motivations for terrorism from an interdisciplinary perspective. Specific focus on a communication / political / applied social psychological perspective will be emphasized over the course. Topics include (but are not limited to) defining terrorism, preconditions, recruitment, domestic and international terrorism, as well as case studies and analysis of terrorist organizations. We will examine a variety of sources drawn from multiple disciplines. Through a combination of critical discussions, films & media analysis, short lectures, analysis of current events, and participatory exercises, students will develop a core base of knowledge about violent extremism and terrorism.

## ***Us vs Them: Polarization and Democratic Erosion Around the World***

*Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar (HON 3260)*

**Thursday, 9:30 – 12:00** CRN 83834

**Dr. Jennifer McCoy, Political Science**

Anxieties about democratic resilience is growing as even some of the oldest democracies in the world experience deep divisions in the society, government paralysis and gridlock, and democratic erosion – the gradual decline of democratic norms and principles. In this course, we will explore the causes of democratic erosion in countries around the world and analyze the current state of democracy in the United States.

We will consider the role of polarization – when societies and political actors divide into Us vs Them camps and communication and cooperation become impeded. We will examine biological, psychological, economic, and political sources of polarization, and their consequences for democracy.

This will be very interactive course and counts as an Experiential Class. We are part of a cross-university collaboration to analyze democratic erosion. Each semester, faculty at nearly 20 universities teach elements from the same syllabus at roughly the same time. Students at all participating universities will contribute to a shared blog space and will be expected to comment not only on their own classmates' blogs, but on blogs written by students at other universities as well. We will also engage in What's App chats with students from other universities in the U.S. and a university abroad as part of a Virtual Exchange, and role-play in a simulation on a country in a crisis of democracy.

## ***Homelessness Policy***

*Honors Service Learning (HON 3280)*

**Monday, 12:30 – 3:00** CRN 89269

**Dr. Rusty Tchernis, Economics**

The primary purpose of this course is to help students understand the economic, institutional, and societal determinants of homelessness with a focus towards domestic homelessness policy. Students will gain skills needed to understand and evaluate complex homelessness issues through a combination of classroom and service-based learning. The skills taught in this course will prove valuable in both research, governmental, and private industry settings focused on homeless policymaking and direct interventions. The course will cover the state and history of homelessness in the United States, the causes of homelessness, and homelessness prevention and intervention policy. The class is taught through a combination of public service, lectures, in-class discussion, homework, and final project presentation.

## ***Can We Eradicate Human Disease?***

*Honors Enduring Questions (HON 4500)*

**Monday, Wednesday 11:00 – 12:15** CRN 94927

**Dr. Chip Zimmerman, Respiratory Therapy**

This course will study the history and evolution of human disease in an effort to answer the enduring question of whether or not disease as a whole can ever truly be eradicated. In lieu of a traditional text, the course will utilize a free podcast titled "This Podcast Will Kill You," that is produced by two doctorally-prepared epidemiologists and covers a wide array of disease topics. Genetic, contagious, mental, waterborne, diet-related, and sexually transmitted diseases will be covered to foster discussion on the differences in treatment and whether eradication is possible. Students will be taught to analyze the barriers and opportunities associated with the treatment and prevention of communicable disease in the human population. We will work as a team to create solutions aimed at combating contagious disease. We will also connect outcomes from modern, peer-reviewed literature and best practices to support claims for or against the eradication of disease. These objectives will work to prepare students for study in health professions

## ***What is Sexuality?***

*Honors Enduring Questions (HON 4500)*

**Tuesday, Thursday 2:15 – 3:30** CRN 94928

**Dr. Louis Ruprecht, Anthropology**

This course focuses on a single distinction, which we will pursue historically: sex is something that human beings do; sexuality, by contrast, involves what human beings believe themselves to be. The distinction between being and doing has a long history in ancient philosophy. The idea that sex involves what people are, rather than what they do, emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century when Psychology developed the idea of "sexual identity." Sexual activity has always been regulated to one degree or another by cultural and social norms, as well as by legal regimes. The stakes of regulating sexuality are increased when they are believed to impinge upon who you are, rather than what you are permitted or forbidden to do. These new urgencies characterize the nature of moral debate about human sexuality today. The first half of this course will be devoted to materials on Greek and Roman sexual matters, in part because these hyperliterate cultures have left us with a great deal of material to consult, and in part because they have left a lasting imprint on "western" culture. It is also noteworthy that Freud's attempt to construct a modern theory of sexuality, and Foucault's critique of modern psychological theories of sexuality, were both developed by staging re-readings of these same Greek and Roman materials. The course will conclude by examining the moral and political landscape after Foucault, including attention to Queer Theory, Transgender identity, and Theories of Desire.