Honors Fall 2020 Course Descriptions

Note: While we do not expect there to be changes to the course listings, adjustments may be made prior to the time courses are made available to students on LORA.

Social Justice Seminar

Punishment in the US (CRIM H 396 033) - Dr. Kelly Frailing, TR 11:00-12:15
The overall goal of this course is to better understand how the changing approach to punishment in the United States in the last 50 years has served to criminalize people with mental illness and drug users, the outcomes of criminalization and recent, ameliorative steps. Consistent with the overall goal of the course, the objectives of this course are to gain knowledge of deinstitutionalization, the War on Drugs, the effects of these processes on the most marginalized populations and the efficacy of programs and policies meant to reverse the trend of criminalization.

Ethics

Ethics (PHIL H215 033) – Dr. Jonathan Peterson, MW 3:30-4:45
How should I live? This is arguably the fundamental question of morality. It gives rise to a host of related questions. What kind of person should I be? How should I treat the people with whom I live and interact? Do I have responsibilities to nonhuman animals and the natural world? We ask these questions in all kinds of contexts, for moral and non-moral reasons. In this course we will be engaging critically with some of the central ways that philosophers have addressed these questions in moral philosophy. These answers include the following important theories:

- Psychological and Ethical Egoism – a set of skeptical views about morality that argue that humans cannot or perhaps even should not act out of moral concern for the rights and well-being of others.
- Ethical Subjectivism and Cultural Relativism – the view that moral standards are not universal or trans-culturally valid but are determined by individuals or cultural groups.
- Divine Command Theory – the view that morality is rooted in God’s plan and directives for the world.
- Natural Law Theory – the view that morality involves, in some sense, living and acting in accordance with our human nature.
- Consequentialism – the view that moral action should aim to produce the best possible consequences.
- Kantian Perspectives – the view that morality involves fundamental duties or obligations grounded in autonomy and rationality.
- Virtue ethics – the view that moral standards are determined by the acts of a virtuous person.
We will investigate the basic features, strengths, and weaknesses of each of these theoretical approaches to morality and consider how moral reasoning applies to specific moral issues such as abortion, global poverty, and the global market.

Ethics (RELS H215 033) – Fr. Ed Vacek, TR 2:00 – 3:15
This course lays out the foundations of Christian moral living. Grounded in spirituality, it contributes to personal formation. It helps students to understand what goes into making moral decisions. Rooted in the tradition of Catholic Moral Theology, the course responds to current ecumenical, academic, and historical challenges. The course reflects on moral and religious experience, with close attention to affections and reason. It enlists scripture, tradition, and current Christian teaching. The course analyzes the relation of a virtuous, religious character to human acts. It considers faith, love, freedom, fundamental option, virtues, conscience, sin and sins. It touches upon the meaning of natural law, the function of moral norms, methods of making moral decisions, and the place of discernment in one's own life. The course also devotes considerable attention to particular areas of moral concern, including sexuality, sexism, racism, poverty, inequality, education, and the like.

History
American Beginnings (HIST H 295 001) - Dr. Mark Fernandez, TR 11:00-12:15
This course considers the impact of revolutionary change in North America from the time of the Revolution to the end of the War of 1812. The course explores the economic, political, social, and intellectual questions facing Americans from the beginnings of the drive to Independence through the formative years of nationhood. Given the importance of the interpretation of the revolution in the controversial New York Times "1619" project, the course will also explore the contemporary debate between scholars and journalists.

Literature
Narrative Across Media (ENGL H295 033) Dr. Welsh, MWF 2:30-3:20
This course tracks narrative across multiple media forms. It prepares students to analyze and compare the ways narrative gets implemented by different media, as well as chart stories that extend beyond individual media objects. In the process, they will consider narrative's media-specificity even as it seems to transcend media.

Interpreting Airports (ENGL H 295 034) – Dr. Chris Schaberg, TR 9:30-10:45
What kind of places are airports? Where are you when you are in an airport? How are these spaces uniquely predictable, or unpredictable and weird? When do airports become aesthetic or literary places, places that call for wonder, inquiry, and imagination? What about airports can be mind-numbing, terrifying, or just plain bland? In this class we will read a variety of texts about airports, in order to think critically about these modern sites and write about their strange qualities and ordinary aspects.
Philosophy

Philosophy of God (PHIL H295 033 & 034) – Dr. Boyer, TR 9:30-10:45 & TR 11:00-12:15
examines questions surrounding the existence and nature of God, by means of a careful reading of some of the seminal thinkers in Western philosophy, with particular emphasis on the thoughts of Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic philosophical tradition. Among the topics to be examined are: the relationship between faith and reason, arguments for the existence of God, the nature of God, the extent to which God may be known by us, and the problem of religious language.

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Religious Studies

Mediating Hindu Art (RELS H295 033) - Dr. Timothy Cahill, MW 3:30-4:45
The course will explore Hindu ideas on what it means to experience art, and how various media convey emotions. A few Hindu ways of knowing religious art will be the lens used to evaluate films, poems and images from a wide variety of sources.
Spirituality and Environment (RELS H295 033) - Dr. Alvaro Alcazar, MW 3:30-4:45
This course is a reflective-active and interfaith study of Pope Francis' encyclical (Laudato, Si) on the spiritual/moral implications of "listening to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth."

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Creative Arts & Cultures
Postcolonial French Culture (FREN H295 033) – Staff, MWF 9:30-10:20

Music and Creativity (HONS H295) – Dr. Jeffrey Albert, MWF 11:30-12:30

Natural Science
Genetics and Society (BIOL H295 033) – Dr. Patricia Dorn, TR 3:30-4:15
This course addresses applications of genetics in society, and considers controversies surrounding contemporary issues, such as sex determination and genetic manipulation. Topics covered include genetic engineering, medical applications, and population genetics and forensics.

Astronomy (PHYS H234 033) – Dr. Martin McHugh, TR 9:30-10:45
The purpose of this course is to place the participant in one of the cultural mainstreams of mankind’s past, present, and future by making available the rich mines of historical and practical astronomy, as well as modern space age discoveries and theories, in a comprehensive form.

Environmental Policy (ENVA H295 033) - Dr. Robert Thomas, TR 1:00-12:15
Basic study of the concepts, importance, associated components, development, and implementation of environmental policy. Focus will include an overview of the field and case studies and observations of the professor.
Mathematics and Computational Reasoning

Calculus I (MATH H257 033) – Dr. Michael Kelly, TR 9:30-10:45
This is a beginning course in the calculus of one variable and analytic geometry. The concept of limits and their use in differential and integral calculus, max and min values of functions, and solving for areas and volumes are treated.

Intro to Programming I (COSC H211 033 & 034) – Dr. Andrew Wolfe, TR 11:00-12:15 & TR 2:00-3:15
This course is an introduction to concepts and terminology in computer programming. Topics include interface builders and problem solving techniques in various programming environments. Emphasis is placed on the basics of software design and on elementary applications to Mathematics and other disciplines.