

AQUINAS SCHOLARS
Honors Seminars
Spring 2013

Updated: January 24, 2013

Note: All seminars are two credits.

Spring 2013

IDSC 480-01 (CRN 23191) Honors Nature & Spirituality

Spring 2013 – T 9:55-11:35 JRC 481

Professors: Stephen Laumakis (Philosophy) and Mark Neuzil (Communications and Journalism)

From ancient texts to the present day, writers have been interested in the intersection of nature and spirituality. This course looks at works from Eastern (Buddhism, Daoism) and Western (primarily Christianity) traditions and compares and contrasts them.

IDSC 480-02 (CRN 23184) Honors Eating

Spring 2013 – T 1:30-3:10 OEC 210

Professors: Britain Scott (Psychology) and Christina Meyers-Jax (Registered dietitian)

“What? An Aquinas Scholars honors seminar on eating? Hello, that’s something I’ve known how to do since I was born! What could I possibly learn in a course on eating?!”

“I know, right?”

Or do you know?

This seminar will tackle the timely and relevant topics of why, how, and what we eat. Instructors’ expertise in the domains of psychology, nutrition, and environmental sustainability complement readings and films as we explore the following topics:

1. the diet industry and our disordered relationships with food
2. environmental, economic, social, and personal health implications of our food choices
3. American eating in a global context
4. the food industry, “food deserts,” and the link between energy resources and food
5. Restoring our connection to our food: mindful eating, the slow food movement, gardening, and foraging for wild foods

In this seminar we utilize a combination of scholarly discussion and experiential activities that may include visiting a farmer’s market, preparing a slow food meal (and eating it!), going on a foraging expedition (on campus!), and creating a personal eating plan. For more information, contact Britain Scott (Psychology & Environmental Studies) at bascott@stthomas.edu or Christina Meyer-Jax (Health & Human Performance) at mey5568@stthomas.edu.

IDSC 480-03 (CRN 23552) Honors Eating

Spring 2013 – T 3:25-5:00 OEC 210

Professors: Britain Scott (Psychology) and Christina Meyers-Jax (Registered dietitian)

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IDSC 480-05 (CRN 21863) Honors World Music & Culture

Spring 2013 – M 3:25-5:00 OEC 313

Professors: Chris Kachian (Music Undergrad) and Bob Werner (Geography)

This course will analyze how the histories and cultures of various societies in the world use music in their cultural contexts or as rituals, and contrast it with the Western perspective of music as a cultural product, or as entertainment.

In this course, you will learn how to connect music with the culture that produces it. What is the function and context of a culture’s music? On what occasions do people play it? What religion or ideology or history does their music express? Do the materials they use in their instruments reflect the physical surroundings in which they live? Who participates in the music? Are gender roles different? Is the music accompanied by other activities like dance, dress, or ceremony?

For example, consider the music of the Andes. It is traditionally played by all village men and older boys on instruments made of local materials, including armadillo shells, cane, wood, bone, and animal skin. It is much more important that all men and boys play, rather than playing the “right” notes. It is a communal activity that bonds people together, so is played at carnivals, weddings, and funerals. Women dance modestly to the side, in regalia woven from two of the four camelid animals who live there (llamas or alpacas) in colors that represent their local village. The music can be sad, lamenting the loss of land and culture at the hands of the conquistadors; it often expresses their heartfelt bonds to Pachamama; or can simply pine for a girl away at college.

The teachers will model this inquiry in the first six weeks of the course, relating music and culture in five case studies: Native American plains Indians, Jamaica, West Africa, the Hmong, and the Asmat of western New Guinea. During this time, you will chose a culture and plan your own such synthesis through a prospectus discussed in and evaluated by the class. Thereafter, you will individually investigate the music and culture you chose, culminating in a paper you present to the class. This presentation should teach your peers, and include clips of representative music, and use of graphics to show the music’s context.

IDSC 480-06 (CRN 21328) Honors Foreign Experience

Spring 2013 – R 5:15-6:45 MHC 211

Professors: Lon Otto (English Undergrad) and Amy Muse (English)

This seminar—which students take both before they depart for study abroad and upon their return—gives Aquinas Scholars who study abroad the opportunity to 1) examine ways of approaching, understanding, and articulating the impact of foreign experience; 2) practice the techniques of observation, exploration, and self-reflection exemplified in the materials studied; and 3) communicate the particular discoveries that resulted from their experience abroad.

Please note: You must begin your work in the seminar before going abroad, and you must reserve the Thursday 5:15–6:45 class times both before and after your study abroad semester or year. The Spring 2012 meetings of the Foreign Experience Seminar will be determined in the near future. However, you don’t *register* for The Foreign Experience seminar until you register for other courses to be taken the semester you *return* to St. Thomas. *Just show up to the first meeting.* Questions? Contact Lon Otto l9otto@stthomas.edu or Amy Muse ammuse@stthomas.edu.

IDSC 480-07 (CRN 21874) Honors Law & Literature

Spring 2013 – W 3:25-5:00 MHC 211

Professors: Richard Kunkel (Law) and Michael Scham (Modern & Classical Languages)

Can a human person be owned? Can one person be the private property of another? What is the relationship between revenge and justice? Between law and morality? Is someone who refuses to abide by social customs "guilty?" These are themes have been explored in literature and debated in the law for centuries. Sometimes literature explores the human drama that comes about as the result of unjust legal systems, sometimes the law itself provides the drama in harrowing courtroom scenes.

We will explore these questions consider through a fascinating selection of novels, plays and films dealing with such contentious topics as: religion, delinquency, sex (consensual and not), killing as a form of justice, and property rights! The course will explore basic issues of jurisprudence for those with an interest in further legal study, although no prior knowledge of law is necessary. We invite you to join us for this exploration of the dramatic aspects of the tension between individual freedom and social cohesion.

Selected list of course materials:Sophocles, *Antigone*Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*Camus, *The Stranger*Lee, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*

Films: "The Sea Within"; "The Castle"

IDSC 480-08 (CRN 21327) Honors Aquinas on Law

Spring 2013 – R 9:00-9:40 MHC 211

Professors: Kenneth Kemp (Philosophy) and Marguerite Spencer (Theology)

The ideas St. Thomas develops in his *Treatise on Law* (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2æ, QQ. 90-108) are relevant to a variety of contemporary theoretical and practical issues in philosophy, theology, law & government. In this inter-disciplinary course, we carefully explore St. Thomas' four types of law, placing them squarely in our current intellectual and political context. Topics may include: the definition and kinds of law; evaluating traditional and modern natural law theory, including critiques by legal positivism; making laws, including an examination of religion in the public square; interpreting laws, including judicial review; and obedience to the law, including conscientious objection and civil disobedience.

IDSC 480-09 (CRN 23210) Honors Feeding the World

Spring 2013 – W 3:40-5:15 JRC 481

Professor: Jonathan Seltzer (Business) and Chester Wilson (Biology)

The combination of a growing human population and rising mean consumption rates (standards of living) are increasing demands upon our ability to produce and distribute food, fuel, and fiber across the globe. This course examines botanical, biological, business and social aspects of this situation. We will consider the benefits, costs, and consequences of past successes at meeting human needs (e. g., the Green Revolution), current proposals for improving our ability to meet these needs (e. g., genetic modification of crops), and related policy discussions (e. g., relative investment in agricultural production of food, fuel, and fiber; constraints upon continued population growth; health of individuals and the role of individual choice). Cases will focus on examples drawn from a variety of cultures and economic systems.