

**AQUINAS SCHOLARS**  
**Honors Seminars**  
**Spring 2015**

**Date:** REVISED: January 23, 2015

**Note:** All seminars are two credits.

Honors seminars are all published in the Schedule of Classes under IDSC. Honors seminars all have a course number of IDSC 480. The word "Honors" or an abbreviation of honors, such as "HONR," is at the beginning of the course title.

Please contact Erica Berglund at [berg7582@stthomas.edu](mailto:berg7582@stthomas.edu) if you have any questions.

**Spring 2015**

**IDSC 480-2 (CRN 22556) – Honors God, Suffering and Evil**

Spring 2015 – T 3:25-5:00 PM                      Location: MHC 211

Faculty: Gloria Frost (Philosophy) and Steven McMichael (Theology)

This course analyzes some of the most profound evils of the modern era, and attempts to relate them to traditional and contemporary philosophical and theological discussions of divine and human responsibility. Some of the main questions we will explore include: Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do the innocent suffer? Does the existence of seemingly pointless suffering provide evidence against the existence of God? Are there greater goods gained through suffering which might justify God's permitting it? From the earliest days, the Jewish and Christian traditions have wrestled with such questions. The events of the Twentieth Century, especially genocide, have served to sharpen these questions for many. The course will focus in particular on the Shoah (the Holocaust) and explore how traditional theodicies have been employed in Christian and Jewish responses to it.

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**IDSC 480-3 (CRN 22557) – Honors Darwin Origin Species**

Spring 2015 – T 3:25-5:00 PM                      Location: JRC 222

Faculty: Kenneth Kemp (Philosophy) and Gaston (Chip) Small (Biology)

This course will introduce students to Charles Darwin's three fundamental ideas—the common ancestry of all living things, the differential modification of species by natural selection, and the idea that man is not different in kind from animals. This will be done primarily through a close reading of extensive selections from two of his major works—*The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*—but supplemented by computer-based simulations of some of the natural phenomena that constituted his evidence and a limited amount of reading from other sources. The course will examine both the evidence Darwin marshals and the structure of his argument. It will place Darwin's work in its historical context by looking at William Paley's *Natural Theology* and Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* and will look at ways in which later scientific work such as Mendelian genetics and continental drift have strengthened the case that can be made for common ancestry and natural selection. It will also look briefly at challenges to natural selection that have been raised under the banner of "intelligent design" and, in a little more detail, at an Aristotelian defense of human exceptionalism, the idea that man is different in kind from animals.

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**IDSC 480-4 (CRN 22561) – Honors Willpower**

Spring 2015 – T 9:55-11:35 AM                      Location: JRC 481

Faculty: Gregory Robinson-Riegler (Psychology) and Stephen Laumakis (Philosophy)

This seminar will investigate philosophical and psychological accounts and approaches to the subject of willpower. We will investigate the latest scientific explanations of the processes involved in building what many thinkers consider our greatest virtue and strength—self-control. Through readings from philosophers (from both the East & West) and psychologists we will examine how willpower or self-control works, why it matters, and what we can do to develop and strengthen our self-discipline or willpower.

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**IDSC 480-5 (CRN 22625) – Honors International Film and Music**

Spring 2015 – R 3:25-5:00 PM

Location: BEC LL07

Faculty: Chris Kachian (Music Undergrad) and James Snapko (English)

The purpose of this seminar is to explore the narrative connections between film and music. Films from all over the world will be addressed. The course begins with an introduction to film: its history and practice. Instructors provide the theoretical perspective to film, e.g. the language filmmakers use to create meaning - through editing, cinematography, acting, screenplay - coupled with examining key characteristics of orchestration, and the concept of sound as "interpretation". Some basic questions we will consider are: What do we learn about a filmmaker's creative decision making through the marriage of film and music? How does the film score reinforce, amplify, identify, or fortify the film? What ideas or expressions are presented and prolonged with the music? How does music enhance these ideas? What issues are in conflict or opposition? How are they illuminated or resolved in the music? How does that influence the ongoing story? How does the musical language reflect the time period/setting of the film? How is it characteristic or unique? How does music reinforce, *amplify*, identify, and fortify the film? What film techniques are used to express the ideas and themes in the film without the aid of the music?

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**IDSC 480-06 (CRN 22842) Honors Experimental Seminar – Lincoln, the Civil War, and the Constitution**

Spring 2015 – M W 8:15-9:20

Location: JRC 481

Professor: Michael S. Paulsen

**NOTE:** This seminar **DOES NOT** appear in Class Finder as registration for an experimental seminar is controlled by the faculty member. Please contact Michael S. Paulsen directly if you would like to be enrolled in this seminar.

This seminar examines the most important constitutional issues surrounding Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. The course seminar will involve fairly extensive reading – and student writing – in the areas of *history* and *law*. The course will serve both as a study of history and an introduction (for many) to the exciting field of Constitutional Law. Readings will be drawn from the most respected historical account of the Civil War era, original documents – including Lincoln's most important speeches, writings and wartime proclamations – and historic Supreme Court decisions such as *Dred Scott* and *The Prize Cases*.

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