

AQUINAS SCHOLARS
Honors Seminars
Summer 2015

Date: Updated June 5, 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 if you have any questions.

Summer 2015 – 1st Session

IDSC 480-2 (CRN 30098) – Honors Dogs!

Summer 2015 – MW 1:00-3:00 PM

Location: JRC 481

1st Summer Session – 5/27/15-7/9/15

Faculty: Maria Dahmus (Environmental Studies) and Paul Lai (English)

The relationship between dogs and humans opens up a host of questions about who we are and how we interact with the world around us. Dogs as companion species confront us with questions of what we consider to be nature, wilderness, domestication, and civilization. The increasing attention to dogs' needs in urban planning has led to the construction of dog parks, dog friendly condominiums, boarding facilities, and doggy day cares. In this course, students will explore how communities and local governing bodies mobilize around the establishment of dog parks—both for and against setting aside city land for enclosed, off-leash dog play. We will consider how these re-imagined natural and built environments accommodate and strengthen the human bond with dogs. We will explore these questions through multiple disciplinary lenses, particularly environmental and literary studies. Throughout the course, you will undertake social science research about dog parks, conducting interviews with Twin Cities residents and observing dog park activity.

Summer 2015 – 2nd Session

IDSC 480-1 (CRN 30097) – Honors Evolution & Theology

Summer 2015 – MW 9:00-11:00 AM

Location: MHC 211

2nd Summer Session – 7/13/15-8/20/15

Faculty: Jayna Ditty (Biochemistry) and Philip Rolnick (Catholic Studies)

From beginning to end, this course will be a conversation between biology and theology. We will examine how the theory of evolution and the many discoveries that it has fostered can be understood both biologically and theologically. We will look at some fairly new developments in the "conversation" between evolution and theology, especially in terms of biological fine-tuning for life; and in the new weight being given to Information theory within biology—a development that holds new promise for theological engagement. And we will look at "Intelligent Design" theory and a critique of it.

IDSC 480-3 (CRN 30255) – Honors Food, Faith, & Social Transformation

Summer 2015 – TR 9:00-11:00 AM

Location: MHC 211

2nd Summer Session – 7/13/15-8/20/15

Faculty: Katharine Hill (Social Work) and Amy Levad (Theology)

Our food systems reveal numerous ways in which injustice insinuates itself in our society: people living in poverty cannot access healthful foods, farm workers are poorly paid and exposed to dangerous working conditions, and few of us know where or how our food is produced. This course will use our food systems to explore how and why to transform unjust social structures. Drawing upon the disciplines of theology and social work, the course will consider the nature of social injustice, how Christianity calls us to work for justice, and what skills and resources can effectively bring about social transformation. We will also examine the social service systems and policies that currently are at work within hunger alleviation and food production, in order to increase understanding of the application of Christian and social work ethics in real world settings. We will be working hands-on with agencies and organizations in the Twin Cities to understand how to change our food systems for the health and wellbeing of all members of our communities.
