

**AQUINAS SCHOLARS**  
**Honors Seminars**  
**Spring 2017**

**Date:** Updated November 10, 2016

**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.

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**Spring 2017**

**IDSC 480-1 (CRN 21726) – Honors Willpower**

Spring 2017 – T 9:55-11:35 AM      Location: MHC 211

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 480-2 (CRN 21414) – Honors Are We Happy Yet?**

Spring 2017 – R 9:55-11:35 AM      Location: MHC 211

Faculty: Charles Gray (Finance – Business Economics) and Robin Cooper (Counseling Psychology)

"Are we happy yet?" This frequent comedic query takes on new meaning as we learn more about the "science of happiness," whereby psychologists, economists, and other social scientists try to understand why highly-taxed Danes are the happiest peoples, why the wealthiest are no happier than the rest of us, and why donating to others seems to make us happier than acquiring possessions. This course will dig beneath the surface to explore what we have learned so far about differential happiness levels, how to interpret the aforementioned conundrums, how happiness measures may come to influence public policy (gross national happiness?), and how we might enhance our own life satisfaction.

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**IDSC 480-3 (CRN 21415) – Honors Law and Literature**

Spring 2017 – R 3:25-5:00 PM      Location: MHC 211

Faculty: Susan Stabile (Office for Spirituality)

**NOTE:** This seminar **DOES NOT** appear in Class Finder as registration for a one-professor seminar is controlled by the faculty member. Please contact Susan Stabile ([sjstabile@stthomas.edu](mailto:sjstabile@stthomas.edu), 651-962-6562) directly if you would like to be enrolled in this seminar.

From Sophocles' *Antigone*, written four centuries before the birth of Christ, to the works of Twentieth Century writers such as Langston Hughes and Truman Capote, literature has always provided a vehicle for reflecting on the moral and ethical dimensions of the law, the law's connection to the fate of individuals, and the unjust social and political structures within which law sometimes operates. In this course we will explore some of the timeless themes of law and society that have been illuminated by fiction and nonfiction writers, such as the relationship between law and equity and between law and morality, the role of custom in shaping law and politics, and the effect of our countries' racial history on the operation of law. Our readings will include both fiction from a variety of genres and non-fiction. The course does not presume or require any prior knowledge of the law.

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**IDSC 480-4 (CRN 21419) – Honors Art for Social Justice**

Spring 2017 – W 3:25-5:00 PM                      Location: MHC 211  
Faculty: Michael Klein (Justice & Peace Studies)

**NOTE:** This seminar **DOES NOT** appear in Class Finder as registration for a one-professor seminar is controlled by the faculty member. Please contact Michael Klein ([mcklein@stthomas.edu](mailto:mcklein@stthomas.edu), 651-962-5378) directly if you would like to be enrolled in this seminar.

Students will explore the intersections of art and social justice with a focus on visual arts in the Twin Cities. Topics of study will include: community-based murals and public art, protest art, expression and censorship, issues of art access and accessibility, social movement theory, aesthetic theory, and the Twin Cities as a unique space for social practice art. Theoretical readings will be complemented by auto/biographies of artists, art manifestos, films, guest speakers, making art with In the Heart of the Beast, and tours of community murals in Minneapolis and St. Paul public art. We will meet and interact with artists and explore big ideas and practical implications of art for social justice.

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**IDSC 480-5 (CRN 21444) – Honors Memory and the Law**

Spring 2017 – T 5:30-7:15 PM                      Location: MCH 108  
Faculty: Gregory Robinson-Riegler (Psychology) and David Bateson (School of Law)

“Memory” has always been important in courts of law. Verdicts in many criminal and civil cases hinge in great part on witnesses’ ability to recount the events surrounding the alleged offense or breach of duty. Over the past 20 years, overwhelming evidence supports the characterization of memory as reconstructive, not reproductive. Memory can be fragile – it is not like a videocamera, recording all events in detail for later “playback.” On the contrary, it is more like a storyteller – recounting “tales” as well as memory will allow. This course will examine the impact of memory in the legal system. We will consider whether the law, the rules of evidence and trial procedure adequately account for the recent developments in memory research and what changes, if any, should be considered.

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**IDSC 480-6 (CRN 21728) – Honors Feeding the World**

Spring 2017 – T 3:25-5:00 PM                      Location: MHC 211  
Faculty: Chester Wilson (Biology) and Jonathan Seltzer (Marketing)

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.

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**IDSC 480-7 (CRN 21729) – Honors Exploring the Disciplines**

Spring 2017 – M 1:35-3:10 PM                      Location: JRC 481  
Faculty: Peter Distelzweig (Philosophy)

Just what is art history? What is neuroscience? Is there a neuroscience of art? How are scientists represented in art? How are artists represented in literature? Why is there a division between the sciences and the humanities? Why are they called the humanities anyway? Why a College of Arts and Sciences? And why “liberal arts”? And – what?! – astronomy and geometry were originally among the liberal arts? Why go interdisciplinary? Is that different from multi-disciplinary? Or trans-disciplinary? In this seminar we will explore the nature, point, history, and interrelations among academic disciplines. We will do this mainly by interacting with guest faculty from a wide range of departments and programs at the University of St. Thomas in interdisciplinary discussions and asking what they do, why, and how their work relates to other disciplines.

Still figuring out your majors and minors? This is a Seminar for you! Want to step back from your majors and minors for a moment to wonder how it all fits together? This is a Seminar for you! Want to meet interesting faculty from across St. Thomas? This is the Seminar for you!

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