

AQUINAS SCHOLARS
Honors Seminars
Summer 2018

Date: April 24, 2018

Note: All seminars are two credits.

Honors seminars are all published in the Schedule of Classes under HONR. Honors seminars all have a course number of HONR 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 2018 - 1st Session

HONR 480-01 (CRN 30248) - Honors Dogs! Environment, Society, and Representation

Summer 2018 - TR 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Location: MHC 211

1st Summer Session - 5/23/18-7/5/18

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. Popular characters like Lassie and Snoopy encourage us to think about the limits and possibilities of human characteristics such as friendship, loyalty, happiness, grief, and patience. But more broadly, how do we understand and represent the bond between dogs and humans? What do dogs teach us about ourselves? Dogs as companion species also 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. How have we reimagined the natural and built environments around us to accommodate and strengthen our bond with dogs? In this course, we will explore these questions through environmental and literary studies. You will have the chance to explore the human/dog bond through fieldwork, literary analysis, discussions with classmates, and conversations with people who work with dogs and communities.

HONR 480-02 (CRN 30249) - Honors Dissecting the War on Drugs

Summer 2018 - TR 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Location: MHC 211

1st Summer Session - 5/23/18-7/5/18

Faculty: Jessica Hodge (Sociology and Criminal Justice) and Jessica Siegel (Neuroscience)

For almost 50 years, the United States has officially been fighting the War on Drugs. The War on Drugs is being fought across the country by law enforcement, politicians, scientists, and public health professionals. Although this war has been in place for nearly five decades, the country is no closer to ending the War on Drugs or achieving the goals of this war.

This course will be offered by a criminologist and a neuroscientist. We will examine the War on Drugs through a historical and contemporary lens. We will first examine how drugs affect the brain and behavior, and explore the science behind drug use and abuse. We will explore the history of the War on Drugs by examining the politics surrounding its inception, how specific drugs have been targeted throughout the years, and how both drug sellers and users have been managed within the criminal justice system and treated by society. We will also explore contemporary issues such the effects of mass incarceration on various communities, the movement towards the legalization of marijuana, and the changing political and legal attitudes toward the War on Drugs with the changing political administrations.

Students will not be expected to be trained in either criminology or neuroscience; this course will be presented in way that motivated and inquisitive students, even if not familiar with neuroscience or the

criminal justice system, will be able to understand and engage in the material. Our goal is not for students to become knowledge experts in the fields of criminology and neuroscience, but for students to be critical thinkers of the complexities surrounding the topic. More specifically, students will leave this course with the ability to dissect information related to the War on Drugs.

Summer 2018 - 2nd Session

HONR 480-03 (CRN 30250) - Honors Concussion and Sport: The Gray Area

Summer 2018 - TR 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Location: MHC 211

2nd Summer Session - 7/9/18-8/16/18

Faculty: Sarah Heimovics (Biology) and Paul Mellick (Health and Human Performance)

Over the last 10 years, the impacts of concussions and head injuries on athletes has garnered more and more attention from the media, the athletes themselves, and concerned helicopter parents. This has led to increased debate regarding the safety of participation in football, soccer, hockey, and other impact sports. While the fields of neurobiology and sports performance view this issue through different lenses, a more complete appreciation for the complexities of concussion in sport requires an interdisciplinary approach. Thus, this course will explore the societal, epidemiological, behavioral, and physiological components of traumatic brain injury including concussion and chronic traumatic encephalopathy. Class discussion on these topics will be based on a combination of readings from peer-reviewed literature and popular science writing as well as documentary and feature-length films.

HONR 480-04 (CRN 30251) - Honors Are We Happy Yet?

Summer 2018 - MW 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Location: MHC 211

2nd Summer Session - 7/9/18-8/16/18

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

"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.

HONR 480-05 (CRN 30252) - Honors Cultural Evolution of Happiness

Summer 2018 - TR 3:00 PM -5:00 PM Location: JRC 481

2nd Summer Session (July 9 - August 16)

Faculty: Ryan Bremner (Psychology)

NOTE: Students will NOT be able to register themselves for this seminar, as registration for a one-professor seminar is controlled by the faculty member. Please contact Ryan Bremner (brem0559@stthomas.edu, 651-962-5023) for authorization to enroll in this seminar.

Our current conceptions of happiness are not natural. In fact, they are cultural inventions that have a history. This course will explore that history as an example of the relatively new field of cultural evolution, which focuses on the function that ideas have in human life, as opposed to whether they are true or false. Cultural evolution integrates insights from psychology, philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology, and other related fields in order to better understand how the differences between cultures have arisen, how cultures have grown and changed over time, and how these cultural changes affect people's everyday lives. After covering these fundamentals, we will apply them to the evolution of conceptions of happiness in the Europe and the Americas, including the current dominant conception of happiness in the United

States. We will also explore the impact of this conception of happiness (in some cases quite negative) on individual human lives and decisions.
