AQUINAS SCHOLARS
Honors Seminars
Summer 2022

Date: June 1, 2022
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 or HONR 481. The word "Honors" or an abbreviation of honors, such as "HONR," is at the beginning of the course title.

Please contact Erica Berglund at erica.berglund@stthomas.edu if you have any questions.

Summer 2022 – 1st Session

HONR 480-01 (CRN 30954) – Honors The Art of Structural Design: Engineering, Purpose and Meaning
Summer 2022 – TR 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Location: JRC 246 (In Person)
1st Summer Session – 5/25/22-7/7/22
Faculty: Katherine Acton (Mechanical Engineering)

NOTE: This seminar will NOT appear in Class Finder because registration for a one-professor seminar is controlled by the faculty member. Please contact Katherine Acton directly (kacton@stthomas.edu) if you would like to be enrolled in this seminar.

This course critiques the built environment through technical, visual and social analysis. We will explore structures designed to carry load and symbolic meaning, including the Washington Monument, the Eiffel Tower, and the St. Louis Arch. We will consider forms of railway and suspension bridges within the context of the history of their evolution and purpose. We will critique the works of important designers, including Roebling, Eads, Ammann and Steinman. In this course, we will explore scientific, social, and symbolic themes of the built environment.

HONR 481-L02 (CRN 31106) – Honors Biology and Philosophy – The Big Questions
Summer 2022 – TR 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Location: ~~JRC 414~~ JRC 201 (In Person)
1st Summer Session – 5/25/22-7/7/22
Faculty: Peter Distelzweig (Philosophy) and Jerry Husak (Biology)

The biological sciences, if you stop and think about it, raise some very big questions—some obvious, some not so obvious. All species are related by common ancestry—so what makes them distinct—or are they not? Does evolutionary biology reveal living things to be pointless and purposeless and functional design to be an illusion? What about talk of function in biology, though? And are diseases genuine malfunctions or just ways of functioning that inconvenience us? Are humans "just animals"? And are animals just "meat machines"? What about free will? Does our evolutionary history mean we are basically built to be selfish? What is the relationship between evolution and culture?

There are also some seemingly dogmatic issues that are still contentious among practicing biologists for which philosophy can be informative: what definition(s) of species should scientists use? Does selection really happen at different levels—or is it all ultimately selection on individuals—or on genes? Does everything have an adaptive explanation?

In this class you will join a biologist and a philosopher of science to explore these kinds of questions and more.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

- *Integrations in the Humanities*
- *Writing to Learn (Writing Across the Curriculum)*
