

AQUINAS SCHOLARS
Honors Seminars
Fall 2024

REVISED: April 10, 2024

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 Ray Baldwin at bald8138@stthomas.edu if you have any questions.

Fall 2024

HONR 480-L01 (CRN 40963) - Honors Haunted America: Horror Film and the American Unconscious

Fall 2024 - W 3:25 - 5:00PM Location: **BEC LL03** (In-Person)

Faculty: Tim Ketcher (Ethics and Business Law) and Ora Itkin (Music)

In his *Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*, Nietzsche asserts the primacy of the arts as a means for understanding human existence. Nietzsche argued Greek tragedy was an externalization of what was buried deep within the Greek unconscious. Dressed in the refinement of literary presentation and device, Greek tragedy sought to manifest what was repressed beneath a rational, ordered surface of Athenian culture. In short, Greek tragedy initiated Athenians into deep, dark forbidden secrets regarding the state, the family, ritual sacrifice, and the nature of civilization. As a more sublimated form of earlier prehistoric religious rites, Nietzsche understood tragedy as a vehicle for negotiating the dynamic between individuation and obliteration.

In this class, we will use Nietzsche's ideas regarding Greek tragedy and apply them to American horror films. In this way, horror films become music-driven coded psycho-dramas. Consequently, they are akin to Greek tragedies (historically transformed operatic happenings via a marriage of dramatic arts and music), communicating deeply buried, forbidden and uncomfortable truths regarding the State and culture in general. Through the medium of film, however, these truths bubble up from the collective unconscious of the American psyche in the form of horror movies. Understood in this way, horror films become a vehicle by which we can enter into the haunted mind of America and bring to light the injustice and violation of the moral order that gives rise to the monstrous or the demonic in American horror film. In the process, we will decode what these movies are really about, how music helps us to reveal their hidden subtext, and if they provide a clue as to how to "exorcise" the haunted mind of America.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

- **Writing to Learn (Writing Across the Curriculum)**

HONR 481-L02 (CRN 42264) - Honors Fantasy Football and the Good Life

Fall 2024 - T 3:25PM - 5:00PM Location: **OEC 212** (In-Person)

Faculty: Christopher Michaelson (Ethics and Business Law)

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

For more information on the seminar, please watch this [short introductory video](#) by Dr. Michaelson.

This is a course about work and the good life, masquerading as a course about fantasy football. It explores whether there is room in the good life for frivolous pursuits like fantasy football and whether a successful competitor can be a good person. You do not have to have fantasy football experience to take this course. However, you must be willing to learn how to play it while thinking about ethical questions about a pretend sport (fantasy football) that tempts us into exploitation and that is derivative of a real sport (American football) that arguably exploits the incredible athletes who risk their minds and bodies to play it. Class members will form a fantasy football league, joining a \$20 billion market of fantasy sports enthusiasts, many of whom work at mundane jobs on weekdays and play on a fantasy field on weekends and believe that the only thing in common between their work and play is that they are both ethics-free zones. While we play, we will examine, among other concepts, fair trade with someone who knows less than you do; conflicts of interest when your best fantasy option plays for your rival; collusion among competitors; and profiting from another's misfortune. Anyone who wants to be a better fantasy football player, a better person, or both, should take this course.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

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

HONR 480-L03 (CRN 42265) - Honors Did you hear...? Election Season Critical Media Analysis

Fall 2024 - W 1:35PM - 3:10PM Location: **LIB 208** (In-Person)

Faculty: Mike Klein (Justice & Peace Studies) and Roxanne Prichard (Psychology)

Our seminar will explore the changing role of media in society in the context of the 2024 federal, state, and local elections. We will examine traditional forms of news media (television networks, newspapers), as well as contemporary social media sources (Twitter, TikTok), local media (radio stations, magazines), and art to develop a critical media analysis, realizing that the world beyond our direct experience *is always mediated to us*.

Topics will include free speech, the fourth estate, hate speech, censorship, propaganda, fake news, and the search for truth. We will learn about how the brain responds to repeated exposure to stories, and how implicit biases are formed. We will encounter local, alternative, and independent media beyond corporate and mainstream sources. We will struggle together across differences of identity and community to understand the world in which we live, what divides us, and what unites us through the lens of media analysis.

Students will be assessed on discussion participation, short reading reflections, and a 'scrapbook' in which students pick a particular election issue (e.g., sustainability, drug reform, health access, gun safety, Ukraine war, etc.) to track across the semester to illustrate how different media lenses shape how we view the world.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

- ***Writing to Learn (Writing Across the Curriculum)***

HONR 481-L04 (CRN 41428) - Honors Women and Christian Spirituality in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods

Fall 2024 - R 9:55AM - 11:35AM Location: **JRC 246** (In-Person)

Faculty: Jane Tar (Modern and Classical Languages) and Steven McMichael (Theology)

This course explores the role of Christian spirituality in the lives of religious women across Europe in the Medieval and Early Modern periods, concluding with a transatlantic crossing to New Spain (Mexico) in the

late seventeenth century. We will read and discuss a wide range of religious genres, (some of them mystical, prophetic, visionary, or meditative in nature), including letters, spiritual autobiographies, biographical accounts, a humanistic influenced dialogue, and poetry. These selections reflect the developments in medieval and early modern piety among female writers. Students will be given a rich introduction to the lives and religious experiences of the women as a preparation for reading and engaging with their texts.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

- ***Global Perspectives***
- ***Integration in the Humanities***
- ***Writing to Learn (Writing Across the Curriculum)***

HONR 481-L05 (CRN 41426) – Honors Racism and Medical Discrimination in Healthcare

Fall 2024 – T 1:30PM – 3:10PM Location: **BEC 104** (In-Person)

Faculty: Beth Antoine (Dougherty Family College)

NOTE: This seminar will NOT appear in Class Finder because registration for a one-professor seminar is controlled by the faculty member. Please contact Beth Antoine directly (anto5603@stthomas.edu) if you would like to be enrolled in this seminar.

All people should have equal access to medical care without fear of being mistreated or denied services outright. Yet for many, this is not true due to their race, sexual orientation or gender identity. Racism penetrates every aspect of society, including access to and experiences with healthcare. Research shows that blacks and other minority groups in the U.S. experience more illness, worse outcomes, and premature death compared to whites. In addition, stigma, bias and systemic inequalities in health care frequently prevent LGBTQ people from receiving appropriate health care.

From the Tuskegee Experiments to Henrietta Lacks to LGBTQIA+ discrimination, this course will provide in-depth analysis and discussion of racism and medical discrimination in healthcare. Students will begin the course by exploring racism and medical discrimination from a historical perspective. The sociological, psychological, and philosophical effects of racism and medical discrimination will be explored with the help of subject matter experts. Particular attention will be paid to female and LGBTQIA+ medical discrimination and the overreaching effects this injustice has on these populations. Students will examine this controversial topic from a historical, sociological, psychological, and philosophical viewpoint all while examining their own experiences and viewpoints on the healthcare system.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

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

HONR 480-L06 (CRN 42266) – Honors Cosmic Perspectives: Exploring Astronomy through Art

Fall 2024 – R 3:25PM – 5:00PM Location: **OEC 207** (In-Person)

Faculty: Michael Wood (Physics)

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

Astronomy is perhaps the oldest scientific discipline, representing the collective human attempt to understand the inherent beauty of the Universe. It was practiced by the earliest peoples in their quest to discern meaning and divine the future using the night sky, and it continues today with our modern telescopic observations. Astronomical events, with their inherent beauty and perceived importance, have featured consistently and prominently in art; therefore, art provides a unique avenue through which we can study astronomical phenomena. In this seminar, we will explore a variety of astronomical concepts through

an artistic lens, using art and history to encourage exploration and motivate discussion. A wide range of art forms will be considered that demonstrate our evolving understanding of astronomical objects and place that understanding into a historical context. Students will have opportunities to view astronomical objects by eye, and will engage directly in the creative process by producing several original, small-scale art pieces. The overarching goals of this seminar are to gain a basic understanding of various astronomical phenomena, explore the intersection of art and science, and gain a broader appreciation for the wonders of the cosmos.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

- **Writing to Learn (Writing Across the Curriculum)**

HONR 480-07 (CRN 42267) - Honors Race and Place

Fall 2024 - R 1:30PM - 3:10PM Location: **MHC 205** (In-Person)

Faculty: Rita Lederle (Civil Engineering) and Aura Wharton-Beck (School of Education)

This course studies the history of infrastructures and housing in the United States and provides a critical lens to analyze the multi-dimensional factors related to race, class, and economics. This class will use bridges and highways as metaphors set the stage for examining infrastructure, housing and their impact on the culture of established communities in the United States. Archival data, historical films, art, and engineering case studies such as St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood will help students understand how the construction of highways dramatically altered the lives and communities of many. Students will explore how engineering concepts provide challenges and opportunities for addressing disparity in transportation and housing today. The efforts to preserve the historical memory of displaced residents offers a new chapter in the narrative of what it means to call a place home.

This seminar counts toward the following core requirements:

- **Diversity, Inclusion, & Social Justice**

HONR 480-08 (CRN 42880) - Honors Leadership Through Faculty Partnerships

Fall 2024 - M 1:35PM - 3:10PM Location: **BEC 101** (In-Person)

Faculty: Hugh Smeltekop (College of Arts and Sciences) and Mary Elmstrand (Theology)

Are you interested in developing your leadership and communication skills by exploring how teaching and learning happens with a professor in their classroom? With support from the course instructors, you will be matched with a faculty member to develop a pedagogical partnership. Additionally, we will explore theories of teaching/learning and theories and practices of pedagogical partnership and reflect on your experiences of student-faculty partnerships.