



Interdisciplinary Honors Seminars 2009-2010

Summer 2009

HNR U302 Topics in Research and Inquiry: Focus on Analysis

A History of Espionage

Summer 1

Key O8397, Section 01, Monday-Thursday 1:30-3:10pm (Sequence 3)

Instructor: Jeffrey Burds, Associate Professor Department of History

Engineering: Historical Elective Criminal Justice: Social Science Requirement or Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description: Commonly referred to as the world's second oldest profession, espionage is an intrinsic part of the relationships between communities, institutions, states. Drawing from a wide variety of published and unpublished primary and secondary sources, supplemented by modern theoretical and social science perspectives, literature, and films this course explores the history of espionage through a series of case studies: from ancient Rome; the Reformation; the French Revolution; the American Civil War; World War I; the Russian Revolution; World War II; the Chinese Revolution; the Cold War; and the post-Cold War era. Students will create a framework for understanding the alternative roles of espionage in wartime and peacetime, as well as the standard methods for establishing and running agent networks in hostile conditions. They will apply these lessons in their own semester research projects on some aspect of the history of espionage.

HNR U 342 Topics in Contemporary Issues: Focus on Analysis

"The Edible Environment"

Summer 2

Key O3728, Section 01, Monday-Thursday 9:50-11:30am (Sequence 2)

Instructor: Jennifer Rivers Cole, Academic Specialist; Director, Environmental Science Program

Engineering: Historical Elective Engineering: Historical or Social/Cultural Elective Criminal Justice: Science Requirement or Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description: Agriculture activities are the single largest impact humans have on the earth. Historically, subsistence farming provided for families and communities with minimal impact on the environment. As we shifted to industrial farming, the impacts on soil, air, and water, biodiversity, and human health have become unsustainable. This course examines the environmental, historic, social, economic, and political dimensions of eating. Environmental impacts include soil erosion and contamination, global warming, and groundwater contamination by pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Economic impacts include poverty and



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nutrition, fair wages for farm workers, the misuse of natural resources in industrializing nations, and monocrops for trade instead of multiple crops in subsistence farming. Social impacts include mad cow disease, bacterial food poisoning, the cases for vegetarianism, and the use of antibiotics and growth hormones in the meat industry. Political discussions will include the development of technology, the possibility of cultivating more land, moving to the oceans for food, and the political implications of food importing. We will discuss alternatives such as organic farming, fair trade, and shifting to different types of food including insects and algae.

Fall 2009

HONR 3341

Contemporary Issues: Arts and Humanities/Contemporary Issues: An Historical, Ethical or Aesthetic Perspective

"Social Justice: The Role of Reading, Writing and Understanding Non-Fiction"

Instructor: Michael Patrick MacDonald, Honors Program Writer in Residence
CRN - 15684, Monday 5-8pm

Course Description:

In order to write the most effective non-fiction around social justice issues, a writer might undertake personal reflection on their own life to access that "place" that allows for greater empathy. When we write about issues affecting other people's lives, it is important to engage in a process of contemplation that will lead to more in-depth understanding, and create a unique and passionate "voice" that brings the reader in. This is true, no matter where we come from or what our previous exposure to the issues at hand. This model is the mark of training in traditional fields such as anthropology and the new genre of "self aware" contemporary writing that contributes to our understanding of social issues. This "writing classroom" will help students engage in critical thought and discussion of a wide range of social issues as well as grassroots movement for change. Central unifying themes of the course will be poverty, violence, and the intersection of social justice and healing efforts in communities affected by both. We will focus on the implications for writers of non-fiction on these topics. The course will present an "insider's" view into writing with a greater consciousness of these topics by starting with some of my work, which includes two memoirs, a screen-play, editorials and a work-in-progress on solutions to gang violence in Massachusetts. Second, the course will move outward to the works of other significant writers of non-fiction – what has made their work so effective and memorable? Have the works influenced or been influenced by contemporary social problems? Are there policy links to any of these writings? Finally, the course will frame a discussion of the many ways to write non-fiction about these central themes: as memoirs, non-fiction books, as reports, as news articles, and as policy initiatives. This course is suitable for students interested in general public policy issues, criminal justice concerns, social problems and social justice, journalism, urban anthropology, international affairs, English and the practice of writing.



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HONR 3341

Contemporary Issues: Arts and Humanities/Contemporary Issues: An Historical, Ethical or Aesthetic Perspective

"Leadership and Rebellion: Examining an Uneasy Partnership in the 1960s"

Instructor: Bert Spector, Associate Professor, International Business and Strategy, College of Business
CRN 10849, Monday, 5pm – 8pm

Course Description:

The 1960s witnessed the emergence of leadership studies as a separate, rigorous academic topic, especially in the fields of psychology and business administration. What had been labeled previously as the "functions of the executive" now became a field of study focusing on such emergent topics as the psychological traits of effective leaders, the relationship between leaders and followers, the task of leading without formal authority, and the joint responsibilities of attention to performance and to people. The election and early death of John Kennedy initiated an especially intense debate over the centrality of charisma in defining leadership effectiveness. At the same time, American culture increasingly rejected formal leadership in favor of a grassroots oriented activism, typified by the popularity of Saul Alinsky's *Reveille for Radicals*. The purpose of this seminar will be to examine the multiple theories of leadership that emerged in the 1960s, as well as the conflicting attitudes expressed through the broader culture. By combining management theory with history, sociology, political science, and popular culture, students will be able to place the concept of leadership within the broad cultural, political, and social environment that embraced IBM's Thomas Watson and the dueling leadership styles of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. We will take as our "text" a broad cross-section of material, ranging from management studies (particularly from the Harvard Business Review) to popular movies and novels that reflected this battle between leadership and rebelliousness within the context of the 1960s.

HONR 3302

Topics in Research and Inquiry: Focus on Analysis

"Limits on Scientific Knowledge: Chaos, Computational Complexity and Computability"

Instructor: Waleed Meleis, Associate Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering, College of Engineering
CRN 15444, Monday & Thursday, 11:45am – 1:25pm

Course Description:

The principle of determinism – the belief that future behavior can be known and determined from an analysis of current conditions – has shaped contemporary scientific knowledge in physics, chemistry, mathematics, and other areas. This seminar begins with an exploration of this principle, and then focuses on four important conceptual challenges that were discovered during the 20th century and which reduce the applicability of determinism: chaos, complexity, uncertainty, and noncomputability. These ideas have had a dramatic effect on scientific disciplines as diverse as biology, computer science, economics, sociology and engineering, and on applications such as weather prediction, genome sequencing, and cell phone routing. In understanding these challenges, we will discuss their practical implications for scientists. Throughout the seminar students will get hands-on experience using software



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packages. The seminar is self-contained and the only prerequisite are the ability to think critically, and to carefully read non-technical descriptions of the ideas being discussed. The emphasis is on the broad ideas and not the technical details.

HONR 3342

Topics in Contemporary Issues: Focus on Analysis

"The Edible Environment"

Instructor: Jennifer Rivers Cole, Academic Specialist; Director, Environmental Science Program

CRN 10850, Tuesday & Friday, 9:50am – 11:30am

Engineering: Historical or Social/Cultural Elective

Criminal Justice: Science Requirement or Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description:

Agriculture activities are the single largest impact humans have on the earth. Historically, subsistence farming provided for families and communities with minimal impact on the environment. As we shifted to industrial farming, the impacts on soil, air, and water, biodiversity, and human health have become unsustainable. This course examines the environmental, historic, social, economic, and political dimensions of eating. Environmental impacts include soil erosion and contamination, global warming, and groundwater contamination by pesticides, 3 herbicides, and fertilizers. Economic impacts include poverty and nutrition, fair wages for farm workers, the misuse of natural resources in industrializing nations, and monocrops for trade instead of multiple crops in subsistence farming. Social impacts include mad cow disease, bacterial food poisoning, the cases for vegetarianism, and the use of antibiotics and growth hormones in the meat industry. Political discussions will include the development of technology, the possibility of cultivating more land, moving to the oceans for food, and the political implications of food importing. We will discuss alternatives such as organic farming, fair trade, and shifting to different types of food including insects and algae.

HONR 3342

Topics in Contemporary Issues: Focus on Analysis

"Law, Ethics and the New Wall Street"

CRN 15692, Wednesday 5-8pm

Instructor: Dennis R. Shaughnessy, Executive Professor, College of Business

Engineering: Social/Cultural Elective

Criminal Justice: Social Science Requirement or Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description:

This seminar will introduce students to the legal and ethical problems, issues, challenges and opportunities associated with the breakdown on Wall Street beginning in October 2008. We will examine topics such as corporate governance, global compliance, securities law (fraud and insider trading), liability identification and management, ethical codes of conduct, and government regulation of the capital markets. We will also consider the many ethical issues associated with managing other people's money (fiduciary duty), and consider whether the rules of Wall Street, both formal and informal, will change significantly in response to the mismanagement, ethical lapses and fraud of the past year. Students will read thoroughly on these topics, write individual papers, and undertake a group



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project and presentation based on developing case studies, such as AIG's retention bonuses, Bernie Madoff's Ponzi scheme, Merrill Lynch's merger with Bank of America, Bear Stearns' bail-out, Lehman Brothers' failure, and the Congressional response. Students will gain a broad understanding of the inner workings of the capital markets and those companies and people who are responsible for their proper functioning, with a particular emphasis on the legal and ethical questions that confront the people at the epicenter of the American brand of capitalism.

HONR 3342

Topics in Contemporary Issues: Focus on Analysis

"Social Fact from Fiction: Using Novels to Explore Contemporary Social Problems and Public Policy Reforms"

Instructor: David A. Rochefort, Arts & Sciences Distinguished Professor, Department of Political Science
CRN 15445, Wednesday 5-8pm
Engineering: Social/Cultural Elective
Criminal Justice: Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description:

Teen drinking. Homelessness. Abortion. Poverty. Capital punishment. Fictional works can provide a unique perspective on social problems, breathing life into abstract facts and statistics by portraying lives oppressed by powerful social forces and raising moral questions about inequality, discrimination, and neglect. At times, such writing has had far-reaching consequences in raising public consciousness and triggering social reforms. This Honors Seminar examines the way that novelists on the contemporary scene use their craft to address the social issues listed above and others. Sample readings for the course include *The Street Lawyer* by John Grisham, *Reversible Errors* by Scott Turow, and *Dreamer* by Charles Johnson, an historical fiction about the life of Martin Luther King. Through seminar discussions, multimedia presentations, and student reports, the course covers both the factual foundations of fictional texts and the narrative.

Spring 2010

HONR 3340

Topics in Contemporary Issues: A Diversity Perspective

"Being 'Crazy' in America: History, Policy and Popular Culture"

Instructor: Maureen Kelleher, Director, Honors Program, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
CRN: TBA, Section TBA, Monday 5-8pm
Engineering: Social/Cultural Elective
Criminal Justice: Social Science Requirement or Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description:

The social history of mental illness in the United States and the manner in which this health issue is portrayed cements a perspective of 'being crazy' that is often linked to tensions between normality and social deviance. This course will track this tension by focusing on three broad themes. First, the course will situate the historical response to mental illness by tracking the emergence of the asylum movement



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in the United States through to present day mental health interventions. Second, this course will explore how the category of 'mental illness' is socially constructed and will address how gender, age, and social class among other variables affect perceptions of who is mentally ill, why they are ill, and how we should respond to this 'illness.' Finally, this course will assess how cultural forms such as contemporary film, fiction and memoirs have helped to shape our perceptions of mental illness and influenced our contemporary public policy response. This course targets students interested in social history, social problems, and social policy issues viewed through a popular culture lens.

HONR 3320

Topics in Research and Inquiry: Focus on Analysis

"A History of Espionage"

CRN TBA, Section TBA, Wednesday 5-8pm

Instructor: Jeffrey Burds, Associate Professor Department of History

Engineering: Historical Elective

Criminal Justice: Social Science Requirement or Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description:

Commonly referred to as the world's "second oldest profession," espionage is an intrinsic part of the relationships between communities, institutions, states. Drawing from a wide variety of published and unpublished primary and secondary sources, supplemented by modern theoretical and social science perspectives, literature, and films this course explores the history of espionage through a series of case studies: from ancient Rome; the Reformation; the French Revolution; the American Civil War; World War I; the Russian Revolution; World War II; the Chinese Revolution; the Cold War; and the post-Cold War era. Students will create a framework for understanding the alternative roles of espionage in wartime and peacetime, as well as the standard methods for establishing and running agent networks in hostile conditions. They will apply these lessons in their own semester research projects on some aspect of the history of espionage.

HONR3341

Topics in Contemporary Issues: An Historical, Ethical or Aesthetic Perspective

"Contemporary Issues in Health Care"

CRN TBA, Section TBA

Instructor: Lorna Hayward, Associate Professor. Department of Physical Therapy, Bouve College of Health Profession

Engineering: Social/Cultural Elective

Criminal Justice: Non-CJ Open Elective

Course Description:

The course will examine modern health care issues at the individual, local, national, and global levels. Students will develop an understanding of U.S. health care issues in an historical context. Students will also develop an understanding of health care issues abroad in both developed and underdeveloped nations. Students will examine health decisions from multiple perspectives including: historical, political, ethical, financial, technological, and epidemiological.