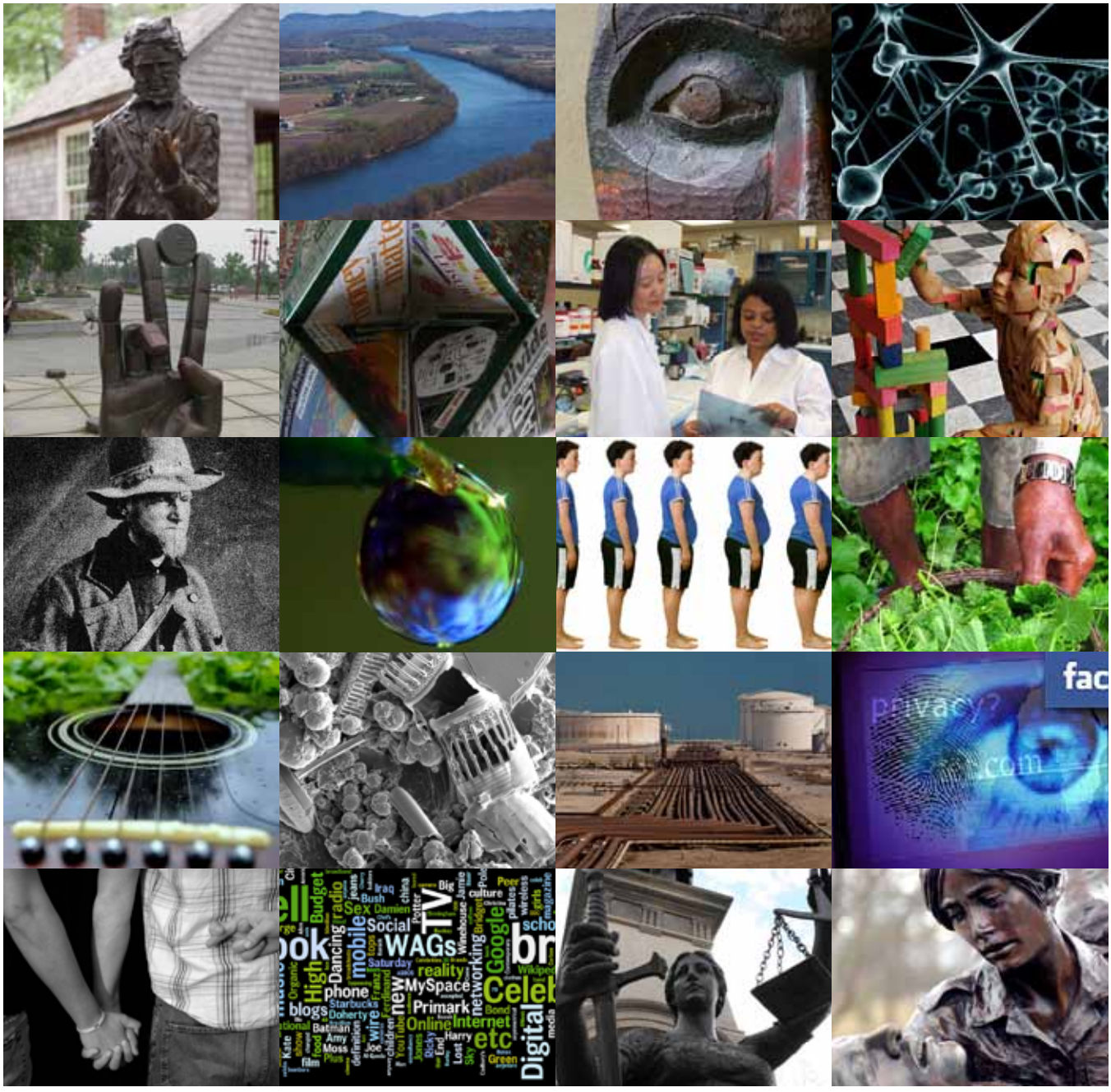
HONORS PROGRAM

THE CORE

Creating a Community of Scholars



University of Connecticut

I'm proud to introduce the "Honors Core," a set of innovative and academically challenging courses designed for first-year and sophomore Honors students. The courses were developed by faculty members from across the University who worked collaboratively with the Honors Program—usually after funded competitions—to create new courses or adapt existing courses to meet the objectives of the Honors Core. This document lists and describes the Honors Core courses and reports personal comments from students and instructors about the courses. We are proud of this new, enriched, and interdisciplinary component of the undergraduate experience at UConn, and we look forward to developing and strengthening it in the years ahead.

The Honors Core was the brainchild of faculty members who wanted to introduce Honors students to a community of scholars. Academic life within the University community is grounded in academic disciplines, but it is increasingly the case that scholarship spans academic boundaries. Diverse perspectives and interdisciplinary problem-solving expertise provide the scholarly community with the means to tackle important and thorny challenges in the humanities and the social, life, and physical sciences. The co-chairs of the task force that recommended the creation of the new Honors Core—faculty members Anne Hiskes (Philosophy) and Andrew Moiseff (Physiology and Neurobiology)—comment:

> *By focusing on the goals of liberal education and the connectedness of knowledge across the disciplines, the [Honors Core] will provide a meaningful framework within which the "best and the brightest" can pursue future studies and better apply their education to complex problems of the 21st century. … The challenge is to bring already high-achieving students to new levels of problem-solving ability and critical thinking, and to reinforce and stimulate their natural desire for discovery* (Honors Core Task Force, 2005).

Most Honors Core courses satisfy the University of Connecticut's general education requirements. General education provides students with the foundations for lifelong learning. To paraphrase the University of Connecticut's Student Guide to the General Education Curriculum, general education should provide students with an appreciation of past and present diversity of human achievement and perspectives, preparation for responsible citizenship, and the flexibility and skills necessary to face the personal and public changes and challenges ahead. General education courses across the whole of the University of Connecticut are engaging and relevant, thanks to the effort, expertise, and creativity of faculty members. The Honors Core built on this tradition by developing courses for students committed to the Honors Program, those who expect classes with more discussion, who prefer to explore subjects more broadly or intensively—often from multiple perspectives—and who expect workloads that test their limits.

The Honors Core will continue to develop new courses and variants of existing courses. Creativity, vibrancy, and relevance are touchstones of the Honors Core. Students thrive in an environment that encourages originality, sets high expectations for achievement, and values critical thinking. Honors Core courses help to provide the medium for many ambitious UConn students to grow intellectually and begin their UConn Honors careers engaged, eager, and energized.

Lynne Goodstein, Ph.D.
Associate Vice Provost, Honors and Enrichment Programs
Director, Honors Program

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Table of Contents

HONORS CORE OBJECTIVES AND CHARACTERISTICS

A 2005 faculty task force proposed the introduction of Honors Core courses that would challenge and stimulate Honors students early in their UConn studies. Seven objectives for the new group of Honors courses were articulated. The objectives guided faculty as they created or adapted existing courses for the Honors Core. Honors Core courses facilitate exploration of the distinctive ways that academic disciplines approach the study of important themes and complex problems in our changing world. Some Honors Core courses are taught by teams of instructors; others are taught by instructors who cross academic boundaries in their own scholarly work. The Honors Core is a collaboration of a diverse group of instructors who teach innovative subjects in creative ways. Instructors have developed their Honors Core courses with Honors students in focus. Their ambition, however, is also to spark creativity, faculty cooperation, and new course designs that will enhance pedagogy and opportunities for all of UConn's undergraduate students.

Objectives of the Honors Core

1. *Expose Honors students to the connection of knowledge across the disciplines*
2. *Create an intellectually exciting group of courses that reflects the expertise and vision of the UConn faculty*
3. *Foster discussion and debate among Honors students beyond the confines of the classroom by creating a critical mass of Honors students exposed to a common set of courses*
4. *Encourage the development of critical thinking*
5. *Nurture students' intellectual curiosity and drive towards excellence*
6. *Provide a meaningful framework within which high-achieving students can pursue future studies and better apply their education to the complex problems of the 21st century*
7. *Support a community of scholars who value inquiry and discovery*

Honors Core courses form the centerpiece of studies designed to earn "Sophomore Honors." Honors students may choose to pursue "Sophomore Honors" if they wish to receive formal recognition for their academic achievements during their first two years in the Honors Program. This Honors Program distinction is awarded at the end of the sophomore year to Honors students who complete one Honors Core course among a total of 16 to 18 Honors credits earned in Honors courses, together with participation in a specified number of co-curricular Honors events and activities. The award recognizes that Honors students balance exploration of new academic subjects and intellectual interests with study toward the completion of one or more majors and a general education plan of study during their first two years at UConn. Honors courses in the first two years of study are, therefore, designed to be either (pre-) major courses or general education courses.

Honors Core courses are taught in small sections and discussion is lively. Usually meeting two or three times a week, Honors Core courses are designed to promote active and engaged learning, intellectual challenge, and spark high levels of academic performance. The courses encourage students to think critically about important contemporary issues, develop an appreciation for context, and consider the connections of knowledge across academic disciplines. Instructors are actively involved in developing and teaching Honors Core courses. Engagement and lively class participation are expected of students. Inquiry-based teaching and learning are the norms. Instructors often bring visiting speakers into their classes or take students on field trips. Students are encouraged to begin to understand and practice research.

HONORS CORE COURSES AND GENERAL EDUCATION

Most Honors Core courses satisfy University general education requirements. At UConn, every undergraduate is required to complete at least 21 academic credits in general education "content areas." General education requirements are specified at the university-level, but schools and colleges may add additional requirements. This publication refers to University Content Area (CA) requirements, as well as the additional requirements of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS).

The general education curriculum underpins professional and liberal arts education. At the University of Connecticut:

> *The purpose of general education is to ensure that all University of Connecticut undergraduate students become articulate and acquire intellectual breadth and versatility, critical judgment, moral sensitivity, awareness of their era and society, consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience, and a working understanding of the process by which they can continue to acquire and use knowledge* (University Senate, 2003).

General education is the essential complement to study in a major. There is widespread agreement across American higher education that an undergraduate education must include two major elements: *a general education* that provides acquisition of knowledge and skills across a range of disciplines and intellectual competences, and specialized or in-depth studies in *a major field*. This combination—often referred to as "liberal education"—is designed to prepare graduates for rewarding future personal and professional lives, to nurture their capacities to adapt to change, and to address "[t]he problems we face—as individuals and societies—[that] are urgent and increasingly defined as global: environment and development, health and disease, conflict and insecurity, poverty and hopelessness" (Shared Futures, Association of American Colleges and Universities).

General education builds intellectual skills that are highly valued by our students' future employers. Research conducted for a consortium of U.S. universities indicates that "business executives seek to hire graduates who have received a broad education as well as at least some specific job or technical skills and real-world experience. They understand well the broad array of learning outcomes that are essential for success in today's volatile global economy" (Humphreys, AAC&U, 2006: 5). The outcomes are summarized below.

Learning Outcomes Essential for Success in Today's World

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural and Physical World

- *grounded in study of the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts*
- *focused through engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring*

Intellectual and Practical Skills

- *inquiry, critical and creative thinking*
- *written and oral communication*
- *quantitative literacy*
- *information literacy*
- *teamwork and problem solving*

Individual and Social Responsibilities

- *civic knowledge and engagement (local and global)*
- *intercultural knowledge and competence*
- *ethical reasoning and action*
- *foundations and skills for lifelong learning*

Integrative Learning

- *synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies*
- *the demonstrated capacity to adapt knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and questions*

(Humphreys, AAC&U, 2006: 3)

HONORS CORE COURSES AND GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

The University of Connecticut's general education curriculum is a collaborative project. Faculty members, academic departments, and University leaders have collaborated to ensure that a diverse and engaging set of courses are developed to satisfy general education requirements. University-wide innovation has been initiated by the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), a faculty committee of the University Senate. Annual Provost's competitions for new general education courses commenced in 2004 under GEOC leadership; from some courses created under this initiative, Honors Core course variants have been developed. The development of the Honors Core both serves the needs of Honors students and contributes to the development and diversity of general education courses at the University of Connecticut.

Honors Core Courses in relation to General Education Requirements

Arts & Humanities (Content Area One)

American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape" (2005**)
American Landscapes: "The Connecticut River Valley"
Anthropology Through Film (2005*)
Migrant Workers in Connecticut (2008**)
Music, Nature, and the Environment (2005**)
Reading Between the Arts (2010**)

Social Sciences (Content Area Two)

Economics, Nature, and the Environment (2005**)
Game Theory with Applications to the Natural and Social Sciences (2004*) (2010**)
Politics of Oil (2007*)
Privacy in the Information Age (2010**)
Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives (2007*)

Science & Technology (Content Area Three)

Computational Molecular Biology (2006**)
Geoscience Through American Studies (2004*)
Interdisciplinary Approach to Obesity Prevention (2006**)
The Genetics Revolution in Contemporary Culture (2006**)

Diversity & Multiculturalism (Content Area Four)

Anthropology Through Film (2005*)
Gender and Science (2010**)
Migrant Workers in Connecticut (2008**)
Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives (2007*)

Other Honors Core Courses (without a Content Area designation)

Global Environmental Politics
Nanoscience and Society (*general education recognition in Content Area Three proposed*) (2010**)
Psychology of Human Sexuality
War, Gender, and International Relations

** These Honors Core courses stem from general education courses developed through the Provost's Office General Education Course Development/ Enhancement Grant Competition grants awarded in 2004, 2005, and 2007.*

*** These Honors Core courses were created or developed as variants of existing courses through Honors Interdisciplinary Core Course Grant Competition grants, sponsored by the Office of the Provost and the Honors Program, awarded in 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2010.*

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS REPRESENTED IN THE CORE

School/College	Department	Honors Core Course	Faculty Member
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Allied Health Sciences	Interdisciplinary Approach to Obesity Prevention	Valerie Duffy Yih-Woei Fridell
	Nutritional Sciences	Interdisciplinary Approach to Obesity Prevention	Valerie Duffy Nancy Rodriguez
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS)	Anthropology	Anthropology Through Film	Samuel Martinez
		American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape"	Robert Thorson
		Geoscience Through American Studies	Robert Thorson
	Center for Integrative Geosciences	American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape"	Robert Thorson
		Geoscience Through American Studies	Robert Thorson
	Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies	Migrant Workers in Connecticut	Anne Gebelein Mark Overmyer-Velázquez
	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape"	Robert Thorson
		Geoscience Through American Studies	Robert Thorson
	Economics	Economics, Nature, and the Environment	Olivier Morand
		Game Theory with Applications to the Natural and Social Sciences	Vicki Knoblauch
	English	American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape"	Wayne Franklin Sydney Plum
	History	American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape"	Christopher Clark Robert Gross Matthew McKenzie
		American Landscapes: "The Connecticut River Valley"	Walter Woodward
		Migrant Workers in Connecticut	Mark Overmyer-Velázquez
	Institute for African American Studies	Psychology of Human Sexuality	V. Bede Agocha
	Literatures, Cultures & Languages	Reading Between the Arts	Anke Finger
	Molecular & Cell Biology	Computational Molecular Biology	Craig Nelson
		The Genetics Revolution in Contemporary Culture	Michael O'Neill Rachel O'Neill
	Physiology & Neurobiology	Computational Molecular Biology	Daniel Schwartz
	Political Science	Global Environmental Politics	Mark Boyer
		Politics of Oil	Oksan Bayulgen
		Privacy in the Information Age	Kristin Kelly
		War, Gender, and International Relations	Christine Sylvester
	Psychology	Psychology of Human Sexuality	V. Bede Agocha
	Sociology	Gender and Science	Nancy Naples
		Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives	Mary Bernstein
	Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	Gender and Science	Nancy Naples
		War, Gender, and International Relations	Christine Sylvester
School of Engineering	Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering	Computational Molecular Biology	Ion Mandoiu
		Nanoscience and Society	Bryan Huey
	Computer Science & Engineering	Computational Molecular Biology	Ion Mandoiu Yufeng Wu
	Electrical & Computer Engineering	Nanoscience and Society	Helena Silva
School of Fine Arts	Art & Art History	American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape"	Janet Pritchard
	Music	Music, Nature, and the Environment	Glenn Stanley

HONORS CORE COURSES

*American Landscapes: "*Walden *and the American Landscape"*

INTD 170 – Honors Core: Walden*, A History (Fall 2006)*
AMST 1700 – Honors Core: American Landscapes (Subsequent semesters)
Credits: 3 (CA 1: Arts & Humanities/CLAS CA 1-C: History)

Developed by: Robert Gross (History), Robert Thorson (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Anthropology, and Center for Integrative Geosciences), Janet Pritchard (Art & Art History)

Instructors: Christopher Clark (History), Wayne Franklin (English) *(Fall 2008 only)*, Robert Gross (History), Matthew McKenzie (History), Sydney Plum (English), Janet Pritchard (Art & Art History), Robert Thorson (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Anthropology, and Center for Integrative Geosciences)


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This Core course focuses on Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), a classic of American literature and a foundational text for the environmental movement. Students will explore how this vital work transformed views of wildness, relationships with nature, and sense of place. The book provides an examination of the American landscape from perspectives of social and intellectual history, geology, literature, and art. Students will learn how different fields are able to illuminate a single subject.

Students cultivate skills in interpretation of literature, photographs, films, and other documents, with particular attention paid to the uses and complexities of language and expression. They make connections between specific texts and their historical contexts (e.g., exploring how Thoreau's account of his bean field addresses and reflects changes in farming during the 1840s).

The small group meetings aim to enhance the shared intellectual community of the Honors Program. The course is an opportunity for students to engage in moral reflection about American attitudes toward and uses of the environment over time.

Honors Student Perspective

The course on Walden *was the most enjoyable course I've ever taken.* (~David McCloskey '13)

… The class discussions took learning far beyond what was in the pages of the reading . … By the end of the semester, I saw my way of thinking change, as evidenced in my writing. I became not just a science major, but a critical thinker in all disciplines. The level of learning I achieved was only possible through this combination of dedicated, creative, and brilliant faculty mixed with knowledge-hungry, outgoing Honors students. (~Erin Duffy '12)

… The field trip to Walden Pond was a great way to get to know people in the class and aided … discussions in the classroom as well as on written assignments. (~Christiana Fischer '13)

Faculty Comments

[T]he course is interdisciplinary, combining methods of study that are too often taught in separate branches of the curriculum. Thoreau lived in a world before the professionalization of academic disciplines, and he distilled everything he learned from school, books, and experience into his richly embroidered text. Making sense of Walden *is a general education in itself. (~*Professor Robert Gross)

Students in this team-taught course watch professors learn, challenge, and support each other, in real-time and real-life. Their take home message is that learning is an enjoyable life-long experience. (~Professor Robert Thorson)

American Landscapes: "The Connecticut River Valley"

AMST 1700 - Honors Core: American Landscapes
Credits: 3 (CA 1: Arts & Humanities/CLAS CA 1-C: History)

Developed by: Walter Woodward (History)
*(As a variant of "*Walden *and the American Landscape," pioneered by professors Gross, Thorson, and Pritchard)*

Instructor: Walter Woodward (History)

From its source on the United States/Canadian border to its merger with the Atlantic Ocean in the Long Island Sound, the 410 miles of the Connecticut River form the main artery and psychological lifeblood of New England.

In its successful application to have the Connecticut designated an American Heritage river, the Connecticut River Watershed Council wrote:

> *Like a grand main street, the Connecticut River runs through the lives and livelihoods of the people and communities of the Valley. New England's mightiest river, the Connecticut stands at the heart of this region's human settlement and commerce; it is at the core of its history and culture; and it represents the essence of its environmental quality and economic vitality.*

Students will consider a wide variety of ways to think about this foundational natural landmark: geologically; historically; environmentally; as an economic resource; as a transportation network; as a recreational and tourism resource; as a source of water and power; and as a focus of creative expression.

This is an active course, engaging students in thoughtful discussion and hands-on exploration of how "the river that connects us" has shaped New England. Field trips will be included, and may involve journeys to the Connecticut River Museum in Essex, Connecticut, to explore exhibits and eagle watch; the Great Falls Discovery Center at Turner Falls, Massachusetts, to study habitat and natural history of the river valley; and/or the Montshire Museum of Science in Norwich, Vermont.

Honors Student Perspective

I really enjoyed my Honors Core course with Professor Woodward. I learned a lot about the history of this part of the country, as well as some of the aspects of the environment and preservation that would not normally be taught in a history class. The class was discussion-based, which was really awesome, and it had very interesting reading material and lectures. … I would recommend it to anyone. (~Rachel Puelle '13)

Faculty Comments

It is a reality of 21st century American life that most of us live near or around rivers without realizing how dependent we are on them. One of the joys of this course for me is that in the process of creating a learning community, students become reconnected to an essential part of their natural and historical heritage, while learning that the river is a critical element in their environmental future. (~Professor Walter Woodward)

Anthropology Through Film

ANTH 1001W: Anthropology Through Film
Credits: 3 (CA 1: Arts & Humanities/CLAS CA 1-E: World Cultures; CA 4: Diversity & Multiculturalism [International])
Prerequisite: ENGL 1010, ENGL 1011, ENGL 2011, or ENGL 3800

Developed by: Samuel Martinez (Anthropology)
Instructors: Samuel Martinez (Anthropology), Robert Booth (Anthropology) *(Spring 2012 only)*, Summer Coblyn (Anthropology) *(Spring 2010 only)*

This course introduces cultural anthropology through the medium of film. By studying and comparing the diverse experiences and viewpoints of people around the world, cultural anthropologists seek to explain why people in other societies hold beliefs and behave in ways that differ from our own. Cross-cultural comparisons also provide a fresh vantage point for studying our own society, making it possible to gain awareness of ideas and practices so basic to our personal experiences that they often seem natural.

Cultural anthropology studied through film opens up discussion of issues relevant to a wide range of humanities and human scientific inquiry pertaining to the politics and ethics of representation and what influence the conceptual, temporal, and spatial "frames" in which social researchers situate their topics of study may have on anthropological depictions of the human world.

In this course, students:

- Learn basic concepts and methods used by cultural anthropologists.
- Develop habits of critical viewing and reading based on the principle that both filmed and written accounts of other people's lives are not unmediated reflections of reality, but representations crafted from the authors' particular points of view and framed in ways that include certain ideas and evidence but exclude others.
- Hone observational, critical, and expository skills basic to how cultural anthropologists understand, describe, and analyze their surrounding world.

Honors Student Perspective

I sincerely enjoyed and fully appreciated the opportunity to meet and learn from some of the most interesting and successful people I have ever worked with; the faculty and others who participated in the teaching of this course were exceptional and extraordinary people. This was my favorite class at UConn by far to date. (~Kayleigh Kangas '13)

I learned that there are many different ways to study a culture, and found the use of film [in the class to be] very effective! (~Amanda Fox '13)

Faculty Comments

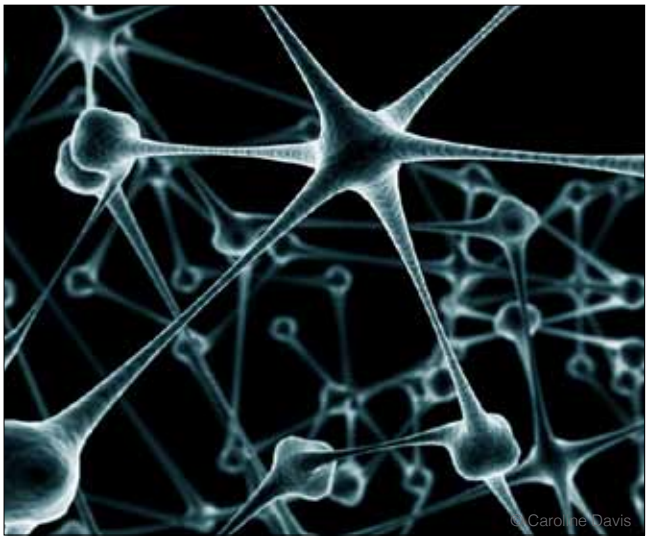
My guess is that my students most vividly remember the course sessions in which they were in charge: we hosted classroom visits by four UConn … faculty and one external expert. … I had envisioned these sessions not as guest lectures, but as opportunities for the students to engage in dialogue with [experts]. … Particularly memorable were our sessions on deaf culture, led by … Doreen Simons Marques … and—via Skype—with Inuit filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk. (~Professor Samuel Martinez)

Computational Molecular Biology

BME/CSE/MCB/PNB 1401 - Honors Core: Computational Molecular Biology
Credits: 3 (CA 3: Science & Technology)

Developed by: Ion Mandoiu (Computer Science & Engineering and Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering), Craig Nelson (Molecular & Cell Biology)

Instructors: Ion Mandoiu (Computer Science & Engineering and Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering), Craig Nelson (Molecular & Cell Biology), Daniel Schwartz (Physiology & Neurobiology), Yufeng Wu (Computer Science & Engineering)
(Fall 2009 only)



This course is an introduction to computational genomics achieved through lectures, computer lab exercises, and mentored research projects. Started in 1995 by the completion of the first genome sequence of a free-living organism, *H. influenzae*, the genomic era has already led to the deposit of hundreds of complete genome sequences into public databases and many more genome projects at various stages of completion. The huge amounts of available genome data are revolutionizing biomedical research, but fully utilizing them requires powerful computational and statistical methods.

The main objective of the course is to provide students with a general understanding of the field of computational genomics, including current problems and research. Students will become familiar with fundamental molecular biology concepts and computational techniques, and will learn how to use the MATLAB bioinformatics toolbox for solving problems in genomics.

Honors Student Perspective

This course expanded my mind in that it taught me to bring together two disciplines and use each to make the other more meaningful. Biology can't be done without computers, but computers are useless without biology. It gave me an understanding of computer programming, which has been very beneficial. (~Ethan Talbot '12)

The group project was a great introduction to group work at the college level, and walked everyone through the important steps needed to develop solid research—from literature review to presenting. This has helped with a variety of projects and presentations in the semesters since I took the course. (~Matthew Gajdosik '12)

The final projects that we undertook were especially engaging! We got a hands-on look at how professional researchers think and were exposed to potential real-world applications. (~Crystal Xue '14)

I learned about several different aspects in the field of molecular biology and how important it is. It showed me how people in this discipline are getting a better understanding of the biology of humans as well as all other organisms on earth. It has showed me what people can do to help others using biological and scientific ideas combined with critical thinking. (~Anthony Renzullo '14)

It has been very helpful in reading science research papers; now, I can identify some of the tools used to collect, process, and interpret data (such as bootstrapping and parsimony). The best thing about this course was the amount of help available due to the faculty-to-student ratio. (~Alexis Cordone '14)

Faculty Comments

Few fields have progressed as rapidly as genomics. In 2003, after more than a decade of work, the Human Genome Project produced the first complete human genome at a cost of nearly $3 billion. Today, the thought of sequencing a human genome in a matter of minutes at a cost of a few hundred dollars is no longer science fiction, and may be achieved before the incoming class graduates! The ability to quickly and cheaply sequence genomes will undoubtedly lead to transformations in the way we practice medicine, and will require expertise from a wide variety of disciplines including, engineering, computer science, and biology. This course provides a great introduction for students wishing to explore the fundamentals and future of biomedical research. (~Professor Daniel Schwartz)

Economics, Nature, and the Environment

ECON 1107 - Honors Core: Economics, Nature, and the Environment
Credits: 3 (CA 2: Social Sciences)

Developed by: Olivier Morand (Economics)

Instructor: Olivier Morand (Economics)

In this course students study the interactions between economies and their natural environment from global and historical perspectives. The course is multidisciplinary and synthesizes insights from various disciplines, including economics and the social sciences, geography, archaeology, history, and ecology, while emphasizing a scientific approach. Among the many topics discussed are the effects of geography and climate on economic development and income inequality, the impact of humans on their environment, the causes and consequences of environmental problems, the environmental collapses of societies, and sustainable development.

Beyond offering a solid understanding of the subject, this course aims to:

- Illustrate that a multidisciplinary approach is critical to the analysis of most real-world problems.
- Emphasize that the basis for our understanding of such problems (and for possible subsequent actions) is the scientific method. This involves:
  - *The systematic and unbiased gathering of data*
  - *The identification of specific mechanisms within complex systems*
  - *The testing of hypothesis and the formulation of predictions*
  - *The design and implementation of laboratory or natural experiments*
- Foster students' long-term interest in current research and recent findings in various fields, and to demonstrate that such research and findings are approachable even to non-specialists.

Honors Student Perspective

This course taught me how heavily the environment has shaped the course of human history. It is the reason that some people came to power and others didn't, and it will continue to shape the future of human existence. Also, human economies affect the environment and are shaping the entire globe. (~Ethan Talbot '12)

The course linked topics such as economics and the environment, which I never considered together, and pushed me towards understanding how nature works—not only in terms of evolution and ecology, but also through economics and other fields. (~Bijal Patel '11)

This course had an impact on my education beyond the material. My professor encouraged us everyday to be motivated and highly educated individuals. He reminded me that I am at college to become the most educated person I can and be a leader at this university. (~Michelle Forella '13)

Complex concepts can be broken down into smaller pieces that can be understood easily, and then combined to understand the overall concept. (~Dave Pyrch '12)

Faculty Comments

Basic economic theory (supply and demand, theory of externalities, theory of the firm, …) and more advanced concepts and ideas (valuation of ecosystem services, models of long term economic growth) are gradually introduced in parallel with the discussion of important papers from various fields. After all, economics not only can be fun but can also provide a framework to better understand our world and our role in society. This has been my favorite course to teach from the beginning. Each session turns out to be a different experience, depending on students' personalities, interests, and backgrounds, although one of my challenge remains unchanged: How to get students to think differently and more rigorously about some well-know issues and facts. (~Professor Olivier Morand)

Game Theory with Applications to the Natural and Social Sciences

ECON 1108: Game Theory with Applications to the Natural and Social Sciences
Credits: 3 (CA 2: Social Sciences)

Developed by: Vicki Knoblauch (Economics)

Instructor: Vicki Knoblauch (Economics)

Introduction to game theory examines applications in the natural and social sciences and technology, which may include electric power auctions, evolutionary biology, and elections. The course is an opportunity for students to begin to think strategically about many types of problems found in science, social settings, and even university life.

In this course, students will learn:

- To recognize strategic behavior—and the potential for strategic behavior—in a variety of situations, for example, in social and political situations and even in the natural sciences.
- To solve games, use solutions to predict and explain behavior, and recognize and learn from the successes and failures of their analyses.
- How to work through a short sequence of directed projects to learn that choosing a topic for the Honors thesis is not quite as daunting as they may believe.

Honors Student Perspective

This course is a wonderful opportunity for students in the physical sciences to apply mathematics to a social science, and to improve their understanding of decision-making. Professor Knoblauch is approachable, and with her guidance, so is game theory. (~Ben Iannitelli '12)

Game Theory with Applications to the Natural and Social Sciences is one of the most unique and interesting courses I've taken thus far at the University of Connecticut. It encompasses topics in math, history, evolution, and even psychology, all within the context of economics. With exercises ranging from in-class games to group-based independent research, this course is as enjoyable as it is fascinating." (~Tyler Reese '13)

As a humanities major, I was nervous about what to expect from a game theory course. Professor Knoblauch made the material fun and interesting, and I'm glad I was able to be involved in such an unusual course. It was definitely a great experience. (~Claire Thomas '12)

Faculty Comments

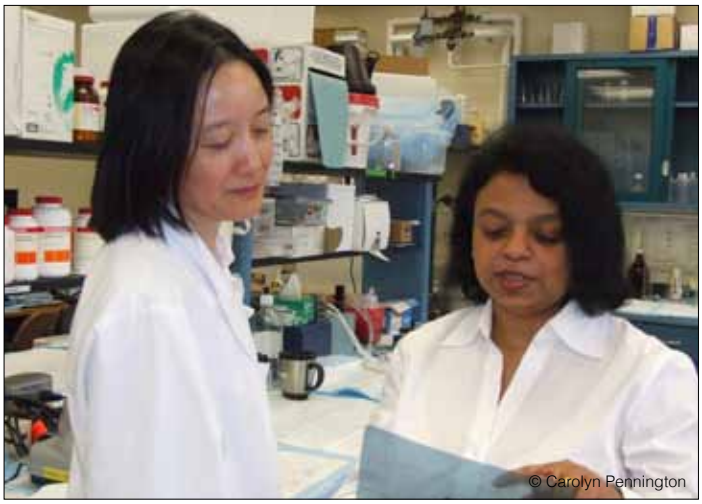
Question: What have you—as an instructor—learned from teaching the course?
Answer: I have learned about new applications of game theory. One student produced a very skillful game theoretic analysis of the opera, Die Fledermaus. *Students' seemingly naive comments and questions about game theory sometimes lead to interesting and difficult problems. … I have found some groups are unaware that they have very good ideas right away and some to be overly enthusiastic about weak ideas. I need to encourage them to step back and think about ideas so they can separate the wheat from the chaff.* (~Professor Vicki Knoblauch)

Gender and Science

WS 2105/W: Gender and Science
Credits: 3 (CA 4: Diversity & Multiculturalism [International])
Prerequisite for W version of course: ENGL 1010, ENGL 1011, ENGL 2011, or ENGL 3800

Developed by: Nancy Naples (Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Sociology)

Instructor: Nancy Naples (Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Sociology)



This course critically examines how social constructions of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation shape science, medicine, and technology. Students will consider the complex relationships between constructions of nature, language, race, and the body to highlight how culture influences theory and practice.

Specific topics include historical and contemporary constructions of differences (e.g., race, sex/gender, sexual preferences) through scientific, biomedical, and technological practices; bodily constructions and inscriptions in science, medicine, and technology; genetics and reproductive technologies; reevaluation of indigenous knowledge; and possibilities for feminist and non-racist knowledge production.

Students will create and engage in a variety of activities, including interviews with scientists, personal journal responses, and forays into popular culture of science, medicine, and technology. No scientific background or experience is required; only a willingness to critically examine both science and ourselves.

Some of the questions to be explored:

- How do science and technology influence everyday life?
- How do influences vary by race, class, and gender?
- How are gender, race, sexuality, and nation woven through the historical development of Western sciences?
- What is the role of colonialism in the development of science?
- How are constructions of gender, race, and class evident in the laboratory, theory, and practice?
- How do gender, race, and sexuality influence the questions asked in science and medical research and the answers that are found?
- How have people of color and women of all racial-ethnic backgrounds contributed to the development of science, medicine, and technology?
- Do women and men approach science and technology differently, and if so, why?

Faculty Comments

The class exercises I [will develop] for this course lend themselves to collaborations outside the classroom. Learning to work in groups, collaborating on problem solving, and handling conflict or managing differences of opinion are all important experiences that lead to a different set of skills than is typically fostered in the large classes that most of our students find themselves in for much of their undergraduate education. Teams of two to three students will join together for observations at scientific laboratories and field sites to learn firsthand what different scientists actually do in their laboratories. They will meet graduate students in different scientific fields and have the opportunity to interview scientists, research assistants, and scholars in the field of science studies. … In this way, they will be encouraged to take responsibility for fulfilling their own learning needs. (~Professor Nancy Naples)

The Genetics Revolution in Contemporary Culture

MCB 1405 - Honors Core: The Genetics Revolution in Contemporary Culture
Credits: 3 (CA 3: Science & Technology)

Developed by: Rachel O'Neill (Molecular & Cell Biology), Michael O'Neill (Molecular & Cell Biology)

Instructors: Rachel O'Neill (Molecular & Cell Biology), Michael O'Neill (Molecular & Cell Biology)

This course introduces students to genetics and genetic technologies. Various forms of popular culture—news clips, movies, books, and art—are used to provide a framework for the syllabus and to introduce students to different genetics and technology topics. A textbook introduces the scientific material, which is discussed in the context of the interpretation of science in modern society. Students study the scientific principles of genetics and genetic technology as well as the impact these topics have had on our culture, attitudes towards science, domestic and foreign policy, medical practice, and law.

Honors Student Perspective

My Honors Core course is the reason I changed my major [from political science] to [molecular & cell biology]. The class exposed me to a whole new type of hybrid science that I truly love. … (~Matt Magda '13)

Honestly, the course I took did not relate to my major at all—I took it just because I was interested in the topic. However, it was a good way to expose me to the value of interdisciplinary studies, which became the basis of my individualized major [in Japanese Studies]. (~Krista Rogers '11)

The best part about the course was the compelling discussion that the professors and TA maintained with the students throughout the entire semester. Lectures were never so crammed full of information that there wasn't enough time to talk about what we were learning. (~Alex Gale '13)

*This course is definitely one of the best courses I have taken. … The [instructors were] knowledgeable, … funny, interesting, enthusiastic, and genuinely caring. … We watched a film (*Gattaca*) and an episode of* CSI*, participated in a mock trial, and created our own film plot—complete with trailer, synopsis, and movie poster—from scratch. MCB 1405 was certainly an interesting class and one that I have highly recommended to all my friends.* (~Jared Mikulski '14)

Faculty Comments

We designed this course to use popular media—such as film, television, and contemporary literature—as a way to introduce genetics to students from a broad range of backgrounds. Regardless of your career goals, genetics principles will affect you in your daily life, from the choices you make at a physician's office to your rights and responsibilities as a citizen in an open society. We hope this is a fun, creative way to learn the concepts of modern genetics while exploring its impact on our culture. (~Professors Rachel O'Neill and Michael O'Neill)

Geoscience Through American Studies

SCI 1051: Geoscience Through American Studies
Credits: 3 (CA 3: Science & Technology)
Note: Not open to students who have passed GSCI 1050 or GSCI 1051

Developed by: Robert Thorson (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Anthropology, and Center for Integrative Geosciences)

Instructor: Robert Thorson (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Anthropology, and Center for Integrative Geosciences)

Charles Whittlesey, America's first glacial geologist

Most Honors students start their first year of higher education with solid high school coursework in American literature and history, but limited exposure to geoscience. This Honors Core course taps the geology component embedded within American nature writing to help students learn how the earth works and what its history has been.

Particular topics of overlap between American studies and geoscience to be explored include Pilgrim settlement (coastal processes); Transcendentalist philosophy (glacial kettle ponds); Hudson River School (oxbows and waterfalls); and Manifest Destiny (canyons and mountain peaks). Captain John Smith, John Wesley Powell, Willa Cather, and Ursala Le Guin are among authors to be read. By combining SCI 1051 with a geology laboratory (GSCI 1052 taken concurrently or subsequently), Honors students can also meet the GEOC requirement for a lab science.

SCI 1051 was given the same number as the introductory geology course (GSCI 1051: Earth and Life Through Time) because it addresses the same geological content at the same level, uses the same textbook, and meets the same prerequisites.

In this course, students will:

- Become geoscience literate
- Understand that geology has a pervasive influence on human societies
- Realize that geoscience is a respected scientific career (with good job prospects) contributing to natural hazards, environmental assessment, and water, energy, and mineral resource development
- Realize also that a geosciences major provides a platform for graduate education in other non-scientific fields

Honors Student Perspective

This is the only class I have taken at UConn so far in which the responsibility for learning was placed entirely upon the students. Dr. Thorson certainly facilitated our learning and corrected us when we fell into error, but the fact that we completed a survey of geology in just over a month was a result of personal commitment and determination that arose when the professor did not intensively manage the class. I appreciated also that the class was not entirely devoted to understanding factual knowledge about geology, but also to a social and artistic understanding of it that often is not dealt with in introductory science courses. (~Chris Kempf '14)

In defiance to impersonal lecture classes, this course stood out as a throwback to the close-knit "high school" format of learning: small classes and extensive discussions. We would sit in a circle rather than rows, leading to easier discussion and participation. As opposed to classes where students rely on the teacher to learn material, students were responsible for reading and learning on their own and then engaging in teacher-facilitated discussions in class. It was an interesting, new format to learn with, but it worked out and I really enjoyed the freedom of the class. (~Paul Clermont '14)

Faculty Comments

This was the first UConn course specifically developed as an Honors-alternative to the [regular] general education menu. It's been fascinating for me to compare the greater student interest and involvement in this course (SCI 1051), with the large-enrollment, lecture-based non-Honors version of the same course (GSCI 1051). From my point of view, the Honors students are lucky to have the opportunity for their more intimate classroom setting. (~Professor Robert Thorson)

Global Environmental Politics

POLS 2998: Political Issues (Global Environmental Politics)
Credits: 3
Recommended prerequisite or co-requisite: POLS 1402: Introduction to International Relations

Developed by: Mark Boyer (Political Science)

Instructor: Mark Boyer (Political Science)

This course is designed as a critical and intensive investigation of global environmental politics. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the topics at hand, students will need to understand concepts and relationships from the biophysical sciences, economics, and political science to grasp the complexity of the problems facing the global community today. Throughout the course we will focus on the seamless way disciplines overlap and are woven together into the fabric of scientific inquiry and into the search for solutions to vexing global environmental problems.

Honors Student Perspective

[The best thing about the course was] the forum structure of the class that allowed interested students to tackle the issues in a hands-on manner, while polishing our argument and refining our views. Advice to future students: Be prepared to talk and truly stimulate ideas. This class … makes you think on a different level because it isn't regurgitation of facts. It is the creation of independent thought. (~S'ha Siddiqi '14)

This is a great course and I recommend that any Honors student take it. Even if you aren't a political science major, the course still teaches you how to look at real life and incorporate it into your studies, which is an important thing that not many college courses teach. (~Megan Fleck '13)

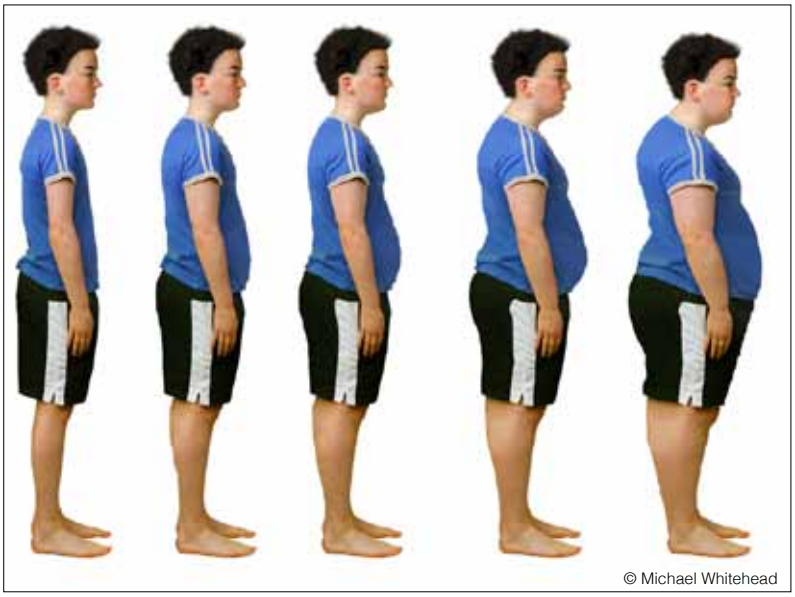
Faculty Comments

This is … a course that requires active participation by students in all aspects of the course. … Students are encouraged to ask questions, raise interesting topics, and explore the world of global environmental politics in new and creative ways. Only by doing this will the next generation of citizens and policymakers be able to meet the environmental challenges facing the world system. The course is interdisciplinary in character though grounded in political science and international relations. It requires critical thinking, group work, and thinking across multiple fields. We take several field trips … and have several guest speakers . … It also draws on case-based discussion that emphasizes "on-the-ground" applications of abstract course topics. It is one of the most stimulating and challenging teaching experiences that I have had in many years. I learn as much as the students. … The mix of students from across campus … is enormously valuable and brings great value to the educational experience. The students are phenomenal: motivated, engaged, and really fun to work with. (~Professor Mark Boyer)

Interdisciplinary Approach to Obesity Prevention

AH 298: Special Topics: Interdisciplinary Approach to Obesity Prevention (Spring 2008)
AH/NUSC 1030: Interdisciplinary Approach to Obesity Prevention (Subsequent semesters)
Credits: 3 (CA 3: Science & Technology)

Developed by: Valerie Duffy (Allied Health Sciences)
Instructors: Valerie Duffy (Allied Health Sciences), Nancy Rodriguez (Nutritional Sciences), Yih-Woei Fridell (Allied Health Sciences) *(only Spring 2011)*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Obesity is considered a national epidemic and possibly a pandemic as it affects many developed countries around the world. This interdisciplinary course explores the biology of obesity, including genetic predispositions and behaviors that increase obesity risk (dietary, physical activity, social, and psychological); the obesigenic environment, including how communities are physically built as well as the economic relationship to obesity risk; and the policy and ethical implications for obesity prevention. Multi-level obesity prevention approaches that involve the individual, family, organization, community, and policy will be considered. The format will consist of common lectures, weekly discussions, hands-on activities, team projects, and synthesis of material presented.

Honors Student Perspective

I was not on a career path into the field of nutrition, yet I knew I was interested in it, so I took the class because I feel passionate about helping ameliorate America's obesity epidemic. Taking this class provided me more information on the topic and nurtured my desire to study nutrition. I contacted other nutrition faculty and established a role as an undergraduate research student. As a result I am going to attend UConn next year as a graduate student in nutrition. (~Allyson Bower '11)

The best thing about this course was that it made us examine the topic of obesity in a new way. Rather than looking just at statistics, we explored where obesity was a big problem in the United States and abroad, and discussed reasons why low-income families are the ones affected most. In order to get a full understanding of the topic, the class incorporated some science skills, such as how to measure BMI and resting metabolic rate. (~Tiffany Phillips '12)

Faculty Comments

As a global problem, obesity challenges personal health and quality of life, as well as hinders economic growth as individuals, companies, and countries address rising health care costs and losses in productivity due to obesity-related conditions. We all acknowledge that prevention of obesity is key; what is less clear is how. We have designed and continually refine this course to encourage students to think creatively across disciplines about the obesity problem and potential approaches to prevent obesity at the individual, community, and societal levels. We learn with the students—they are an inspiration and reinforce our commitment to interdisciplinary teaching in a way that translates science to application for a worldwide health problem that requires immediate attention and diligent efforts to manage on a variety of levels.

Through interdisciplinary teams, lively class discussions, and individual discovery, we compare and contrast obesity problems and actions in various areas, applying scientific principals and concepts pertaining to energy intake, expenditure, obesity genetics, and the psycho-socio economic-biology of eating behaviors. Our hope is that students gain new knowledge and develop competence on how to access, interpret, critically evaluate, and communicate the level of scientific evidence that addresses a complex problem. (~Professors Valerie Duffy and Nancy Rodriguez)

Migrant Workers in Connecticut

HIST 1998: Varieties of History [Migrant Workers in Connecticut] (Spring 2009)
HIST/LAMS/PRLS 1570: Migrant Workers in Connecticut (Subsequent semesters)
Credits: 4 (CA 1: Arts & Humanities/CLAS CA 1-C: History; CA 4: Diversity & Multiculturalism)

Developed by: Mark Overmyer-Velázquez (History and Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies)

Instructors: Anne Gebelein (Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies), Mark Overmyer-Velázquez (History and Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies)

This interdisciplinary Honors course examines the life and work experiences of migrant workers—mostly Spanish-speaking from the Caribbean and Latin America, but with some attention to non-Spanish-speaking migrants (e.g., from Haiti)—in the United States with a significant focus on migrant workers in Connecticut. This seminar is introductory. The instructors assume that most, if not all, students are generally unfamiliar with much of the basic literature pertaining to migrant life and labor. The course is thus intended to provide a very broad and eclectic perspective on the world of migrant labor and experiences.

Weekly sessions combine short lectures and discussions of assigned readings. The class also incorporates several guest lectures by University faculty and subject experts. Classroom and service learning are fundamental and equally valued elements of each student's experience. Service learning involves the student in on-site study and work with a variety of organizations in Connecticut that assist the state's migrant community. Students will travel on a weekly basis to organizations in Hartford and to farms throughout the area; consequently, they will need to arrange their schedules to accommodate three-hour blocks to work plus travel time. Students are expected to dedicate three hours a week to on-site service work. Transportation may be available depending on a student's chosen site. Admission to the course requires a brief application.

In the course, students will:

- Critically analyze the myriad forces and structures that shape migrants' lives
- Examine how an individual's family story is part of the larger history of migration in the U.S.
- Develop an understanding of learning through practice by engaging in and reflecting upon responsible and challenging service work in Connecticut-based migrant service organizations
- Learn about food and farming (what products are made locally and who in Connecticut's communities produce them)

Honors Student Perspective

I learned how to think critically and objectively about information presented by people and/or publications, and how to be conscientious in attempting to view all sides of the issue before making opinions or drawing conclusions. … I enjoyed class debates and especially the required service learning projects. (~Lauren Abbott '13)

This course truly exposed to me to issues of social justice. … [T]he course's service learning component is what I feel is the hallmark of the experience. … The perspective I've gained from this course will remain with me for … my future career in health. The course left lasting impressions among not only myself but the class as a whole, and created more questions than it answered—something which I felt was very special. (~Shadaab Kazi '13)

Faculty Comments

Running this course has been a constant source of discovery and learning for me with the students. The students return to the classroom with a boon of applied knowledge from their service learning projects, integrating their off-campus learning into the discussions and assignments. Just as the seminar topic involves populations that cross geopolitical borders, the course participants are challenged to cross disciplinary and institutional boundaries to gain valuable insights from a wide range of perspectives. Perhaps most satisfying has been my work with course alumni who have continued to examine lessons learned years after the semester's end. (~Professor Mark Overmyer-Velázquez)

Music, Nature, and the Environment

MUSI 1005: Honors Core: Music, Nature, & the Environment
Credits: 3 (CA 1: Arts & Humanities/CLAS CA 1-A: Arts)

Developed by: Glenn Stanley (Music)
Instructors: Cameron Logan (Music) *(Fall 2009 to Spring 2011 only)*, Elizabeth Leann Sanders (Music) *(Spring and Fall 2008 only)*, Glenn Stanley (Music), Ryan Weber (Music) *(Fall 2011 to Spring 2012 only)*

This course focuses on the ways in which musicians in the "western art tradition" have engaged with nature and the environment through the creation and performance of their music. Both "nature" and "environment" are used in the title because there is a distinction between them.

"Nature" can exist independently of mankind; there is nature even where there is no civilization, no interaction between man and nature. "Environment" is the positioning of civilization within nature, connoting the interaction between nature and civilization. For this reason, the course falls into two main parts.

First, students will explore examples of musicians who draw upon nature as inspiration, imitating and glorifying it. This process includes examining different kinds of music (songs, opera, orchestral music) from the late middle ages to the 20th century.

Then, students will study how music functions—past and present—as a mechanism for calling attention to the environmental dangers in an increasingly industrialized world, with growing populations, patterns of settlement, and production that threaten a fragile equilibrium between man and nature.

The course aims to introduce students to:

- The materials and form of music
- The many ways composers of "western art" music have represented nature in their vocal and instrumental music
- Recent music that speaks out in defense of the environment and incorporates actual sounds of nature

Honors Student Perspective

I learned a lot about creative influences. As someone who does not frequently remove herself from the world of science and technology, observing inspiration and the creative process helped me understand why people choose to pursue education and careers in those fields. (~Emily Cole '11)

I learned about the different interpretations of music. It encouraged me to pursue a music minor. (~Brittany Nkounkou '12)

Faculty Comments

We will listen, read, watch, and discuss in a lively, interactive environment in which the emphasis is on reflection, dialogue, and exchange. (~Professor Glenn Stanley)

Nanoscience and Society

ENGR 3195: Special Topics in Engineering/Introduction to Nanotechnology [Nanoscience and Society] (Spring 2012)
ENGR 2243: Nanoscience and Society (Subsequent semesters- pending necessary course approvals)
Credits: 3 (pending necessary approvals: CA 3: Science & Technology)

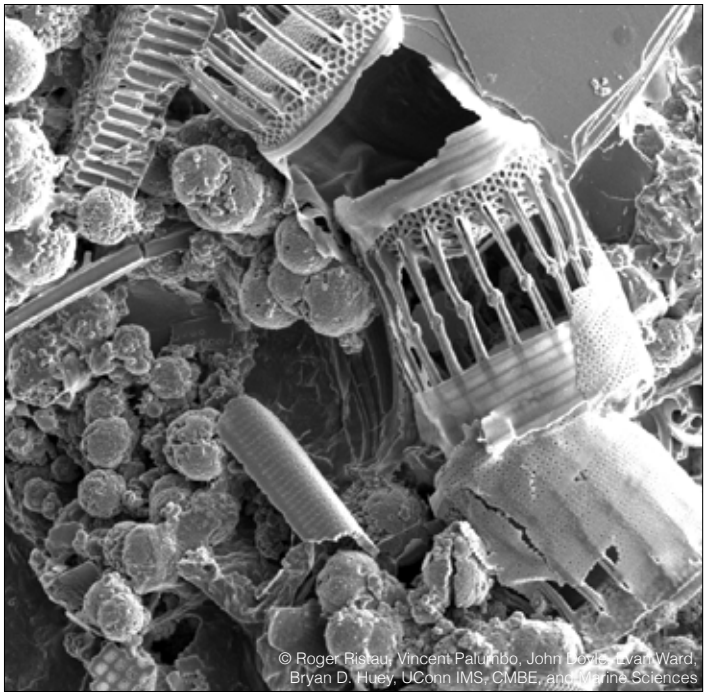
Developed by: Bryan Huey (Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering), Helena Silva (Electrical & Computer Engineering)

Instructors: Bryan Huey (Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering), Helena Silva (Electrical & Computer Engineering)

An interdisciplinary class on nanoscale science and technology, this Core course has two objectives:

- Introduce students to the fundamentals of nanoscience
- Expose students to the broader societal implications of implementing nanotechnology (locally and globally)

Nanoscience and nanotechnology relate to the understanding, fabrication, and application of materials or devices with at least one dimension less than 100 nanometers (100*10-9 meters). This includes products for electronic and computer devices, energy production and storage, water purification, pharmaceutical drug delivery, biomedical applications, food packaging and safety, chemical treatments and manufacturing, and the automotive and aerospace sectors, to name a few. Accordingly, research into nanoscience is conducted by engineering, science, and medical labs worldwide, with substantial interdisciplinarity.



Investigations of TiO2 nanoparticle agglomerations accumulated in "Marine Snow," an early stage in the aquatic and ultimately human food chain, reveal a variety of diatoms. Found in seawater, these naturally intricate creatures resemble familiar ancient structures such as Parthenon-like ruins. Scattered amongst these natural features are individual nanoparticles, as well as clusters, potentially from sources ranging from sunscreen to industrial waste.

Faculty Comments

By framing the course material in terms of ethical, economic, and environmental costs and benefits, this course will be instrumental in enhancing awareness and interest in science and engineering, as well as imbuing a greater sense of personal and professional responsibility for these advanced students who are likely to become leaders at UConn and beyond. Class sessions will alternate between traditional lectures and group discussions led by the principal investigators or guest lecturers, with a few field trips to campus labs as well as a national laboratory facility in Boston. Group assignments, culminating in the creation of a class "wiki" website, will foster participation, collaboration, creativity, and the identification of interconnections between seemingly separate scientific topics, technological challenges, practical and futuristic solutions, and societal implications. The class will be taught primarily by the two PIs from the ECE and CMBE departments, with guest lecturers from other programs such as the Center for Clean Energy Engineering, Center for Environmental Science and Engineering, marine sciences and chemistry departments, and the UConn Health Center. (~Professor Helena Silva)

Politics of Oil

POLS 3208: Politics of Oil
Credits: 3 (CA 2: Social Sciences)

Developed by: Oksan Bayulgen (Political Science)

Instructor: Oksan Bayulgen (Political Science)

This is a course on the complex relationship between oil and politics. It seeks to develop students' research, thinking, and writing skills about the role of oil in the international political system as well as in domestic politics.

Today, oil undeniably affects all aspects of our lives, but who really controls oil resources and what does that mean for national and international distribution of political power? How has the contest over oil resources affected the relations among nations as well as the economic, political, social, and environmental development of oil-rich countries? What are the alternatives to oil and what needs to be done to reduce dependency on it? We address these questions as well as analyze and compare individual cases of how oil shapes the way we think about the world.

The course is conducted in a discussion format, although occasionally there are lectures. We also rely on several documentaries to generate discussion. Finally, at the end of the semester, we have formal debates on some of the most controversial topics that we cover in class, such as the necessity of more oil drilling in the U.S.; the oil motives behind diplomacy and foreign policy; the responsibility of oil companies versus governments; and the effectiveness and feasibility of oil alternatives. We invite the university community to watch and participate in our debates.

Honors Student Perspective

Politics of Oil is a truly interdisciplinary course combining elements of history, political science, economics, and chemical engineering. The material is fascinating and timely: Have you ever wondered what causes fluctuations in gas prices? I would recommend this course to any student in any major. As a neuroscience and math student, I found Politics of Oil to be the most interesting course that I took at UConn. (~David Lindsay '12)

In Professor Bayulgen's Politics of Oil class, we examined the role oil plays in a number of contexts; from its historical influence on the development of the American economy and American culture, to the environmental implications of its production; from its impact on the societies that posses it to the sway it holds over societies that don't. At the end of the semester, a series of formal debates served as an opportunity for us to use knowledge from our coursework to actively engage in contemporary disputes that surround this controversial natural resource. After Politics of Oil, I have a whole new perspective when I'm standing at the pump! (~Helen Zincavage '11)

Faculty Comments

This class is one of the most challenging and exciting classes I have ever taught at UConn. It is both very theoretical and practical in its implications. What is so interesting is that it brings together students from different backgrounds to analyze one of the most fundamental issues of our time. Despite our divergent starting points, we come to realize the common energy problems we all face and the solutions that need to be addressed. I think the most stimulating and rewarding part of the class is at the end during the formal debates. The students' performances are extremely professional and insightful. After each class, I leave with much gratification and hunger to learn more. (~Professor Oksan Bayulgen)

Privacy in the Information Age

POLS 2998: Political Issues: Privacy in the Information Age (Spring 2011)
POLS 2062: Privacy in the Information Age (Subsequent semesters)
Credits: 3 (CA 2: Social Sciences)

Developed by: Kristin Kelly (Political Science)

Instructor: Kristin Kelly (Political Science)

Privacy is one of the most important concepts of our time, yet it is also one of the most puzzling.

As technology makes the volume and types of information more accessible, academics, activists, policymakers, and citizens struggle to define (and redefine) the meaning of privacy. By providing a thematic overview of the topic of privacy from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, this course prepares Honors students for critical engagement with the many and diverse public policy, legal, and ethical debates that surround privacy.

The course focus will provide students with the opportunity to participate in on-going discussions regarding the impact of technology and scientific advances on the ways in which privacy is conceptualized, valued, enacted, and protected.

Topics of analysis include, but are not limited to:

- The history of privacy
- Cultural variations of privacy as discussed in anthropological literature
- Philosophical definitions of privacy and debates about the moral/ethical status of privacy (including the status of privacy as an internationally recognized human right)
- Legal/constitutional interpretations of the right to privacy as it pertains to issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and reputation
- Changes in how privacy is understood and protected, which have developed as a result of technological and/or scientific advances in areas such as genetics, reproductive technology, mobile devices, electronic records storage, digital images, data mining, encryption, and the Internet

Honors Student Perspective

I learned about information privacy and security in today's world, and how the law hasn't seemed to keep up. It was very interesting and a topic that I had never learned about before, but one that is very useful to know, and very eye-opening as well. … The best thing about this course was the discussion format, and the discussion questions that we had to bring every class. They helped move the discussion along, and also helped us learn different points of view and different opinions on the subjects. (~Daniel Marquis '14)

Faculty Comments

The objective of this class is to help students develop a meaningful framework for understanding and negotiating a wide variety of privacy issues that are likely to arise during the course of their personal and/or professional lives. My hope is that the insights the students will gain through taking this course will enhance their capacity to make informed decisions about what they will (and will not) reveal about themselves. (~Professor Kristin Kelly)

Psychology of Human Sexuality

PSYC 2110: Psychology of Human Sexuality
Credits: 3

Developed by: V. Bede Agocha (Psychology)

Instructor: V. Bede Agocha (Psychology)

In this course, sexuality is explored from the vantage points of the various fields of psychological science, highlighting relevant theoretical perspectives, methodology, and empirical research.

Consider the many possibilities ranging from dating to mating; from "texting" to "sexting;" from "safer sex" to "bug chasing;" from virgins who are happily single to non-virgins blithely dedicated to polyamory; from looking to loving, and everything in between. As evident in these phenomena, what constitutes sexuality truly runs the gamut. However, the course also has specific foci (e.g., seeing human sexuality as a biopsychosocial phenomenon).

Coursework and activities are guided by a central goal to build Honors students' competence and confidence to deal with sexuality as an area of study and to improve sexual decision making in students' day-to-day lives outside the classroom.

In the course, students will learn to:

- Examine and understand human sexual behavior from a systematic approach that integrates information and examples from multiple disciplines
- Consider theoretical perspectives, behavioral research evidence, artistic renditions, and multimedia presentations seeking to depict and explain the origins, motivations, and consequences of sexual thoughts, feelings, and actions

Honors Student Perspective

This is one of the best courses I've ever taken in terms of the importance of what was learned and what I took away from it... I would recommend it to anyone, regardless of major! … With a wide variety of students from different backgrounds, the discussions in this class were thought-provoking and insightful. We could all talk about subjects that were taboo in everyday conversation without the fear of being judged. And that allowed for a more enriching academic experience. (~Biota Hung '13)

Faculty Comments

From the outset and throughout the course, all material will be handled in a straightforward, but sensitive manner. This course introduces Honors students to the study of human sexuality, specifically using interdisciplinary perspectives and evidence to help explain the incredibly rich diversity of different behaviors that fall within this domain. (~Professor Bede Agocha)

Reading Between the Arts

CLCS 1002: Reading Between the Arts
Credits: 3 (CA 1: Arts & Humanities/CLAS CA 1-A: Arts)

Developed by: Anke Finger (Literatures, Cultures, & Languages)
Instructor: Anke Finger (Literatures, Cultures, & Languages)

In everyday reading of news media, humans are often exposed to a dynamic intermixing of media and arts as well as intermixing of images and stories about events around the world. This intermixing is also prevalent in the arts and cultural expressions such as cinema, theater, visual art, text, music, and computer and video games. In this course, students will explore, analyze, and unravel some of this intermixing.

The course is an introduction to the semiotics and fluctuations of interart relations. In it, students will develop transferable multimedia reading skills in an effort to become interpreters of 21st century multimedia products. Much of the work will bridge natural sciences and the humanities.

Questions that will inform discussions, field trips, and work include:

- Are there similarities connecting the diversity of expression in various arts and media?
- Can one characterize the arts as an area of research comparable and equal to scientific inquiries?
- Does art, as a diverse world of signs, help humans recognize and understand reality?
- What can we learn about individual approaches to experiencing art and media when focusing on sensory perception?

Honors Student Perspective

[In this class, t]he arts are presented with the complexity that they demand and deserve, while always trying to bridge the gap between the art of engineering and the engineering of artwork. … Your critical thinking is challenged. … [T]he course isn't really about being right; it's more about taking a calculated risk, and I loved that. Personally, I've been pretty influenced [by the course] because I realize that my education exists along multiple dimensions rather than on a line. It's all well and good to get a degree in natural science; however, I'll really be missing out on a perspective. I'm declaring a double major in the humanities, and this course definitely had an impact on developing this whole idea. … We've learned a lot, and I think that the things we've learned are going to be in our minds for a LONG time. (~Ricky Holtz '14)

Faculty Comments

Most students remarked that they rarely discuss this much, and this passionately, in any other classroom setting. I tried to vary the venue, the material, and the pedagogical approach. … (~Professor Anke Finger)

Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives

SOCI 3823: Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives
Credits: 3 (CA 2: Social Sciences; CA 4: Diversity & Multiculturalism [International])

Developed by: Mary Bernstein (Sociology)

Instructor: Mary Bernstein (Sociology)

This course explores the relationship between law and social change cross-nationally, including dispute processing in kinship societies; the impact of Western law on Third World countries; legal strategies that challenge inequality based on class, race, sex, religion, and sexuality; and the impact of international human rights treaties on inequality.

Students will acquire knowledge about different types of legal systems and will learn to analyze how various societies contend with issues of diversity and inequality under the law. Students will also study the interrelationships between the law, social structure, and the ways nations are linked globally.

In this course, students examine:

- Theoretical perspectives and empirical studies relating the type of law found in a society to its social structure
- How the law figures into fundamental social change
- Anthropological studies of dispute processing in societies that are structured primarily on the basis of kinship
- What impact the introduction of Western Law into Third World countries has had on economic growth, democratic political development, and human rights protections
- Cross-national influences on law in the post-colonial world
- The ways in which legal strategies can and have challenged inequality based on class, race, sex, religion, and sexuality
- The critiques and limits of legal approaches to social change
- What is the impact of international human rights treaties on the legal systems of different countries?
- To what extent are international treaty obligations relevant in domestic court proceedings?
- What is the relationship between social movements and the law?

Honors Student Perspective

Very hard work and lots of critical thinking—but completely worth it! … I really enjoyed this course and was inspired to think more critically about politics and law and how they can impact society as [a] whole. I loved studying both the history as well as being able to talk about current issues and express my opinions on them. I enjoyed this course so much that I decided to pick up a minor in political science to learn more about the law field. (~Mary Reilly '12)

It is an interactive class that will give [future students] a deep understanding of how society influences law. (~Johanna Thomas '13)

Faculty Comments

This is an exciting class to teach. Together, the students and I examine some of the most important and contentious issues of our time and debate the efficacy of the law as a tool to create social change. Students also have a chance to explore legal issues of interest to them in different national contexts. (~Professor Mary Bernstein)

War, Gender, and International Relations

POLS 2998/WS 3998: Political Issues/Variable Topics (War, Gender, and International Relations)
Credits: 3

Developed by: Christine Sylvester (Political Science and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)

Instructor: Christine Sylvester (Political Science and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)

War is a defining characteristic of international relations. Although by some measures war is declining in frequency over time, in the post-World War II era wars have raged in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Central America, the Pacific Islands, and the Middle East. The field of international relations views war as one of its core subjects and tends to study it in terms of state and military security strategies, new and old wars, generations of weaponry, ethics and laws of war, humanitarian coalitions, and war causes.

Historically, there has been little study done on gender and war in the field of international relations. Even feminist scholars—who examine gender power relations and the positions of women in society—have avoided the subject due to the violence it entails. However, a new generation of feminist thinking in international relations sees no contradiction between feminism and war. This course draws on scholarly resources in international relations and feminism, as well as war representations in novels, visual art, and memorials, to reveal new points of connection.

The teaching and learning in this course is organized into three distinct parts:

- The complex phenomenon of war from typical international relations and feminist points of view, including the effect various fields of study have on the meaning of war
- Case studies of contemporary war from feminist and international relations perspectives: Zimbabwe's anti-colonial wars (1970s to the present), the Rwandan genocide of 1994, and pre- and post-9/11 wars in Afghanistan and Iraq
- Intersections of war, feminism, and international relations suggested in war art and memorials, exemplified through artifacts at the Benton Art Museum such as Afghan war rugs, war drawings by German feminist artist Kathe Kollwitz, and works by American artist George Bellows and Spanish artist Goya, as well as artifacts at other sites familiar to students

Honors Student Perspective

Quite simply, this was one of the most interesting, exciting, and intellectually stimulating courses I've had at UConn. … The best thing was how this course tied together different disciplines—war, feminism, international relations, art—and showed how these disciplines inform each other. … This course exposed me to different paradigms of international relations and how they could be applied to recent and current situations in the world …. The course also focused on feminism as a political theory, and how a major goal is to question things that are often taken for granted. I was exposed to how much politics influences art and vice versa, eventually completing a research paper on how Pablo Picasso's Guernica *incorporated elements of feminism, war, and international relations. …* (-John Dearborn '13)

Faculty Comments

The students really grabbed hold of the material and made it their own, through lively discussions, presentations and debates, plus a session at the Benton Art Museum on Afghan war rugs. The atmosphere was informal but serious; we all had a remarkable time considering two topics (war and feminism) that are not usually put together. I look forward teaching the class again soon. (-Professor Christine Sylvester)

SEMESTER CHART FOR HONORS CORE COURSES

Course Name	Semester Offered													
Fall (F) or Spring (S)	**F '05**	**S '06**	**F '06**	**S '07**	**F '07**	**S '08**	**F '08**	**S '09**	**F '09**	**S '10**	**F '10**	**S '11**	**F '11**	**S '12**
American Landscapes: "*Walden* and the American Landscape"			C		C		C		C		C		C	
American Landscapes: "The Connecticut River Valley"								C		C				C
Anthropology Through Film			R		R		R			C				C
Computational Molecular Biology					C		C	C	C		C	C	C	C
Economics, Nature, and the Environment			C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C		C	
Game Theory with Applications to the Natural and Social Sciences	R		R		H			R		H	H			C
Gender and Science								R			R		C	R
The Genetics Revolution in Contemporary Culture						C		C	C		C		C	
Geoscience Through American Studies	H		H								C			
Global Environmental Politics												C		
Interdisciplinary Approach to Obesity Prevention						C		C		C		C		C
Migrant Workers in Connecticut								C		C		C	C	
Music, Nature, and the Environment			C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Nanoscience and Society														C
Politics of Oil								R		C		R		R
Privacy in the Information Age												C		
Psychology of Human Sexuality										C	C	C		
Reading Between the Arts												C		C
Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives									C	R	C		C	
War, Gender, and International Relations									C					

CHART KEY
C: *Honors Core course*
H: *Offered as an Honors course before development and approval as part of the Honors Core*
R: *A variant offered as a regular (not Honors) course*

HONORS CORE FACULTY AND GRADUATE FELLOWS

Faculty *(*Inaugural Honors Faculty Fellows, 2005)*

Name	Title	Department, School/College
V. Bede Agocha	Assistant Professor in Residence	Psychology and Institute for African American Studies, CLAS
Oksan Bayulgen	Associate Professor	Political Science, CLAS
Mary Bernstein	Professor	Sociology, CLAS
Mark Boyer	Professor and Department Head	Political Science, CLAS
Christopher Clark	Professor	History, CLAS
Valerie Duffy	Professor	Allied Health Sciences and Nutritional Sciences, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Anke Finger	Associate Professor	Literatures, Cultures & Languages, CLAS
Wayne Franklin	Professor and Department Head	English, CLAS
Yih-Woei Fridell	Assistant Professor	Allied Health Sciences, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Anne Gebelein	Associate Director	Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, CLAS
*Robert Gross	Draper Professor of Early American History	History, CLAS
Bryan Huey	Associate Professor	Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering, School of Engineering
Kristin Kelly	Associate Professor	Political Science, CLAS
Vicki Knoblauch	Professor	Economics, CLAS
Ion Mandoiu	Associate Professor	Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering and Computer Science & Engineering, School of Engineering
Samuel Martinez	Associate Professor	Anthropology, CLAS
Matthew McKenzie	Assistant Professor	History, CLAS
*Olivier Morand	Associate Professor	Economics, CLAS
Nancy Naples	Professor	Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, CLAS
Craig Nelson	Associate Professor	Molecular & Cell Biology, CLAS
Rachel O'Neill	Professor	Molecular & Cell Biology, CLAS
Michael O'Neill	Associate Professor	Molecular & Cell Biology, CLAS
Mark Overmyer-Velázquez	Associate Professor	History and Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (Director), CLAS
Sydney Plum	Adjunct Professor	English, CLAS
*Janet Pritchard	Associate Professor	Art & Art History, School of Fine Arts
Nancy Rodriguez	Professor	Nutritional Sciences, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Daniel Schwartz	Assistant Professor	Physiology & Neurobiology, CLAS
Helena Silva	Assistant Professor	Electrical & Computer Engineering, School of Engineering
*Glenn Stanley	Professor	Music, School of Fine Arts
Christine Sylvester	Professor	Political Science and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, CLAS
*Robert Thorson	Professor	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Anthropology, and Center for Integrative Geosciences, CLAS
Walter Woodward	Associate Professor and CT State Historian	History, CLAS
Yufeng Wu	Assistant Professor	Computer Science & Engineering, School of Engineering

Honors Graduate Fellows

Robert Booth	Doctoral candidate	Anthropology, CLAS
Summer Coblyn	Doctoral candidate	Anthropology, CLAS
Cameron Logan	Doctoral candidate	Music, School of Fine Arts
Elizabeth Leann Sanders	Masters candidate	Music, School of Fine Arts
Ryan Weber	Doctoral candidate	Music, School of Fine Arts

HONORS PROGRAM
MISSION STATEMENT

The Honors Program is designed to challenge and instruct our students so they may perform and achieve distinction at the highest possible academic levels, to expose them to broadening and enriching experiences in the University community and beyond, and to assist them in reaching their full human potential so they may serve society in a thoughtful manner throughout their lives.

Honors Program
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