

Honors Core Courses – Fall 2013

Last updated 4-22-13

(Please consult Student Admin for the most up to date information on changes in course details, meeting times, instructors, etc.)

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AMST 1700-002 Honors Core: American Landscapes

Class # 10804 3 cr, TuTh 12:30-1:45, CA 1

Instructor: Robert Gross (History), Janet Pritchard (Art & Art History) & Robert Thorson (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology)

Enrollment Requirements: Open to freshmen and sophomores in the Honors Program. Students with advanced standing may email honors@uconn.edu for help registering.

Did you read Thoreau's Walden in high school and hate it? Did your teachers make you feel guilty for disliking the book? But do you care about the environment and want to stop climate change? Are you ever tempted to go out "into the wild"? Do you hate conformity and convention? And did you ever wonder why Walden is considered a classic of American literature?

American Studies 1700, "Walden and the American Landscape," will address all those questions and more. It's a course that gives you ways to look at the environment through several lenses: art, geology, history, and literature. It shows how Walden became the foundation-text of the environmental movement, at a time when Americans were rapidly despoiling nature to expand farmland, build factories, and run mills. Thoreau's is a voice of protest against those changes in the name of sincerity, simplicity, and independence. But it is formed out of a host of intellectual influences, from Puritanism to Hinduism, Enlightenment to Romanticism. Most importantly, it is a book that offers powerful testimony to how one American male of the mid-19th century defied conformity, challenged his neighbors, and set about creating an authentic life for himself.

Did he succeed? People disagree. The course will take the measure of Thoreau's experiment in "deliberate living" by comparing him to later American nature-writers in the present, male and female alike. And it calls on you to join in the same process of self-making and self-estimation.

BME/MCB/PNB 1401-001D & 002D Honors Core: Computational Molecular Biology

Class #10769 (BME), 10774 (MCB), or 11142 (PNB) 1404-001D – MW 11:15-12:05 & F 10:10-11

Class #10772 (BME), 10775 (MCB), or 11143 (PNB) 1404-002D – MWF 11:15-12:05

3 credits, CA3

Instructors: Ion Mandoiu (Computer Science & Engineering), Craig E. Nelson (Molecular & Cell Biology), and Daniel Schwartz (Physiology & Neurobiology)

This course is an introduction to computational genomics 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 hundreds of complete genome sequences deposited in 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 exploiting 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 problem in genomics.

ECON 1108-001: Game Theory with Applications to the Natural and Social Sciences

Class # 8685, TuTh 11-12:15, 3 credits, CA 2

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.

HIST/LAMS/PRLS 1570 - Migrant Workers in Connecticut

Course # 13543 (HIST), 13490 (LAMS), 13542 (PRLS), W 2-4:30, 4 cr., CA 1 & CA 4

Instructor: Anne Gebelein (El Instituto, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences)

Description: This interdisciplinary Honors Core course examines both the history and contemporary experiences of immigrants and migrants in the United States, with a focus on those in CT. It considers how migrant workers, principally from the Caribbean and Mexico, contribute to the local economy and to the food on our table. Several guest lectures by university faculty and by practitioners in the field will help us understand legal and medical issues, education and housing concerns, and economic contributions of the Nutmeg State's 20,000 seasonal migrant workers, as well as its large and diverse immigrant labor force. Field trips may include tobacco harvesting, visiting New England's largest nursery, and touring Hartford helping agencies.

The seminar is introductory. We assume that most, if not all, of you are unfamiliar with the scholarly literature pertaining to migrant life and labor. The course is thus intended to provide a very broad and eclectic perspective on the world of (im)migrant labor and experiences. Course is limited to 20 students.

"Migrant Workers" combines classroom and service learning as fundamental and equally valued elements of your experience. Service learning involves you in on-site study and work with a variety of organizations in Connecticut that assist the state's (im)migrant community. You will travel on a weekly basis to organizations in Hartford and to farms throughout the area; consequently, you will need to arrange your schedules to accommodate 3-hour blocks of work plus travel time. The organizations may include: Hispanic Health Council (migrant health research); Hartford Public Library (ESOL and citizenship instruction); CT Council Against Domestic Violence (transcription work); Collegiate Health Service Corps or Connecticut Council on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) in Newington, CT

(farm worker health and labor education); and Greater Hartford Legal Aid (legal advocacy). You are expected to dedicate 3 hours a week to on-site service work. Transportation may be available depending on your chosen site.

In this Honors Core and general education 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)

Brief Application:

Admission to the course requires a brief application. We want to see that you understand and are eager to work in both classroom and community settings. Please go to

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HQX6556> and submit your contact information and a paragraph (150 words max.) explanation of why you think you would benefit from and enhance this course and service learning opportunity. New first-year Honors students are encouraged to apply. Applications will be reviewed in the Honors Program. For more information, email Professor Anne.Gebelein@uconn.edu.

Permission numbers to enable registration for this course will be sent to accepted students upon receipt of the survey.

MCB 1405-001D-004D - Honors Core: The Genetics Revolution in Contemporary Culture

Class # 11104 (001D) MWF 10:10-11:00

Class # 11105 (002D) MW 10:10-11:00 & F 11:15-12:05

Class # 11106 (003D) MW 10:10-11:00 & Th 10-10:50

Class # 11107 (004D) MW 10:10-11:00 & Th 11-11:50

3 credits, CA 3

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

Enrollment Requirements: Open to freshmen and sophomores in the Honors Program. Students with advanced standing may email honors@uconn.edu for help registering.

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.

POLS 2998-004 War, Gender & International Relations

Course # 9252, 3 credits, TuTh 11-12:15

Instructor: Christine Sylvester

An exploration of the fundamental nature of political conflicts on the national and international levels.

POLS 3208W: Politics of Oil**Class # 8531, MWF 2:30-3:20, 3 credits, CA 2, W****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.

SOCI 2509W-001: Sociology of Anti-Semitism**Class # 12797, W 3:35-6:35, 3 credits, CA4 INT****Instructor: Arnold Dashefsy (Sociology)****Enrollment Requirements ENGL 1010 or 1011 or 2011 or 3800; open to sophomores or higher.**

In 1898, Mark Twain wrote an article about "a remarkable scene in the Imperial Parliament in Vienna," entitled "Stirring Times in Austria," which revealed the openness of anti-Semitism. He received a number of letters in response to his article and one came from a lawyer, which contained several questions:

"Now will you kindly tell me why, in your judgment, the Jews have thus ever been and are even now, in these days of supposed intelligence, the butt of baseless, vicious animosities? I dare say that for centuries there have been no more quiet, undisturbing, and well-behaving citizens, as a class, than that same Jew. It seems to me that ignorance and fanaticism cannot alone account for these horrible and unjust persecutions. Tell me, therefore, from your vantage point of cold view, what in your mind is the cause. Can American Jews do anything to correct it either in America or abroad? Will it ever come to an end? Will a Jew be permitted to live honestly, decently, and peaceably like the rest of mankind? What has become of the Golden Rule?"

(Twain, Mark. Concerning the Jews. Philadelphia: Running Press, 1985:12)

More than a century later, after the destruction of the Holocaust, we are still confronting these questions. Thus, this course will apply several perspectives of sociological analysis to the understanding and explanation of anti-Semitism within diverse societies. Theoretical and empirical materials bearing on this topic will be examined and analyzed. In addition, a trip to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum* or a similar institution may be arranged (contingent on funding). This course will be useful to students interested in such topics as religion, ethnicity, intergroup relations, prejudice, discrimination, and racism.