

Honors Core Courses Offered Fall 2010

- [AMST 1700 - Honors Core: American Landscapes \(Walden and the American Landscape\)](#)
- [BME/CSE/MCB 1401 - Honors Core: Computational Molecular Biology](#)
- [ECON 1107 - Honors Core: Economics, Nature, and the Environment](#)
- [MCB 1405 - Honors Core: The Genetics Revolution in Contemporary Culture](#)
- [MUSI 1005 - Honors Core: Music, Nature, & the Environment](#)
- [PSYC 3884 - Seminar in Psychology: Human Sexuality, From Between the Sheets to Between the Ears and Between Computers](#)
- [SCI 1051 - Geoscience Through American Studies](#)
- [SOC 3823 - Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives](#)

AMST 1700 - Honors Core: American Landscapes (Walden and the American Landscape)

Content Area 1 – Arts & Humanities (CLAS: CA1-C-History), 3 credits

Instructors: Robert Gross (History), Matthew McKenzie (History) and Janet Pritchard (Art)

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 global warming? 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/CSE/MCB 1401 - Honors Core: Computational Molecular Biology

Content Area 3 - Science & Technology, 3 Credits

Instructors: Craig Nelson (Molecular & Cell Biology) & Ion Mandoiu (Computer Science & Engineering)

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 1107 - Honors Core: Economics, Nature, and the Environment

Content Area 2 – Social Sciences, 3 credits

Instructor: Olivier Morand (Economics)

This course will study of the interaction between people and their natural environment from a global and historical perspective. The course is multidisciplinary and synthesizes valuable insights from various disciplines, including economics and the social sciences, geography, archaeology, history, ecology, while emphasizing a scientific approach. Topics of study will include the impact of nature on societies; effects of geography and climate on economic development and income inequality. The impact of humans on their environment; environmental problems; collapse of societies; and sustainable development will also be discussed.

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

Content Area 3 - Science & Technology, 3 Credits

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

This course will introduce students to genetics and genetic technologies. Various forms of popular culture, including news clips, movies, books and art will be used to provide a framework for the syllabus and will introduce students to various genetics and technology topics. A textbook will be used for the scientific material, which will be discussed in the context of the interpretation of science in modern society. The students will learn 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 as well as medical practice and law.

MUSI 1005 - Honors Core: Music, Nature, & the Environment

Content Area 1 - Arts & Humanities, 3 Credits

Instructor: Cameron Logan (Music)

This course focuses on how musicians in the “western art tradition” have engaged with nature and the environment in the creation and performance of their music. I use both nature and environment in my title, because I see a distinction between them. Nature can exist independently of mankind; there is nature where there is no civilization of any kind, no interaction between man and nature. Environment means the positioning of civilization within nature, and connotes the interactions between nature and civilization. For this reason the course will fall into two main parts. First we will explore some of the ways that musicians have drawn upon nature as a source of inspiration, imitated and glorified nature, looking at different kinds of music (songs, opera, orchestral music) beginning with the late middle ages and concluding in the twentieth century. Then we will study how music has been used, in the recent past and continuing today, to call attention to the dangers facing the environment in an increasingly industrialized world with a growing population and patterns of settlement and production that threatens a fragile equilibrium between man and nature. (This course is open to freshmen and sophomores in the Honors Program.)

PSYC 3884 - Seminar in Psychology: Human Sexuality, From Between the Sheets to Between the Ears and Between Computers

pending CA2 approval, 3 Credits

Instructor: V. Bede Agocha (Psychology)

This course introduces Honors students to the study of human sexuality, and how interdisciplinary perspectives and evidence help explain the incredibly rich diversity of different behaviors that fall within this domain. 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), and our coursework and activities are guided by a central aim 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.

Students will learn to examine and understand human sexual behavior from a systematic approach that integrates information and examples from multiple disciplines. In addition, students will 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. The course will be taught as an interactive seminar (i.e., more discussions than lectures). We will explore topics in a manner that allows each student to appreciate the relevance and application of learned principles and information about sexuality to her or his own personal experiences, as well as be able to see important parallels and connections to the lives of other persons, historic and contemporary events, and the broader local and global social world.

SCI 1051 - Geoscience Through American Studies

Content Area 3, 3 Credits (*Not open to students who have passed GSCI 1050 or 1051*)

Instructor: Robert Thorson (Geoscience)

Most honors students arrive with solid high school coursework in American literature and history, but with only glancing exposure to geoscience. This Honors Core Course taps the geology component embedded within American nature writing to help students learn how the earth works (planetary, climatic, and evolutionary) and what its history has been. Particular topics of overlap between American studies and geoscience to be explored include Pilgrim settlement (shoreline processes), Transcendentalist philosophy (kettle ponds), Hudson River School (oxbows and waterfalls), Manifest Destiny (canyons and peaks). Captain John Smith, John Wesley Powell, and Willa Cather 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 content at the same level, uses the same textbook, and meets the same pre-requisites. It reinforces the learning community goals of the Honors Program by providing an Honors-only, interdisciplinary, and experiential course taught in a small group setting by an experienced professor.

SOCI 3823 - Sociology of Law: Global and Comparative Perspectives

Content Area 2 - Social Sciences and Content Area 4 - Diversity & Multiculturalism, 3 Credits

Instructor: Mary Bernstein (Sociology)

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. Interested Honors freshmen and sophomores may contact the instructor by e-mail (Mary.Bernstein@uconn.edu) for a permission number.