UMass Boston students presenting their Honors thesis research at the 23rd Annual Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference
Contents: Spring 2020 Honors College Courses

3  Honors 101 First-Year Seminars

6  Honors 210G Intermediate Seminars

8  Honors 290-level Courses

14  Honors 380 Junior Colloquia
Honors 101 First-Year Seminars for Spring 2020

**Honors 101 (1): Homelessness & the Self-Perpetuating Cycle of "Shame" (#6046)**
**TuTh 2:00 - 3:15pm**
*Julie Batten, Honors College*

Why has the number of people experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts more than doubled since 1990? Through relevant literature, films, and essays, this course will examine the shame that so often contributes to homelessness, and we’ll also discuss current initiatives seeking to shift this self-perpetuating cycle.

When the Mental Health Systems Act was abandoned in the 1980s, unprecedented numbers of the nation’s mentally ill were forced onto the streets. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), 9,493 high school-aged students in public schools are now experiencing homelessness on any given day in Massachusetts, and over 37,000 students of all ages are experiencing homelessness throughout the state. This course will investigate the changing face of homelessness over the past fifty years and question why college-aged young people constitute the fastest growing segment of this population today.

Together, we will examine the socioeconomic factors contributing to homelessness, as well as social justice programs and current public policy debates seeking to halt its rise. Guest speakers from area homeless shelters will contribute to the discussion. We will read *Evicted* by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Matthew Desmond, *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, *No House to Call My Home* by Ryan Berg, as well as watching the award-winning documentary by Daniel Cross, *The Street*. Short weekly reading responses, lively debate, and your own profile assignment about a person experiencing homelessness will help us address our individual and collective responses to this national crisis. (This course can be applied to the minor in Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity.)

**Honors 101 (2): Mutagens and Carcinogens (#6047)**
**TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am**
*Steve Ackerman, Honors College*

This course is for science and non-science majors as an exploration of mutagens and carcinogens. Mutagens are chemicals, ultraviolet (UV) rays, radioactive materials, etc., that can cause changes to how the genetic material is expressed. Mutagens cause DNA damage, and this can result in the inappropriate expression, lack of expression, or altered expression of genes. We will consider a variety of mutagens and how they affect the individual. Examples range from dangerous chemicals to radiation. We will also consider carcinogenic agents, which can cause various kinds of cancer to develop.

We will begin with a non-technical discussion of how DNA damage occurs by discussing what a mutation is and the different classes of mutations that exist. We will discuss categories of mutations including transitions, transversions, insertions, deletions, silent mutations (which can cause disease despite being called “silent”), neutral mutations, missense mutations, and nonsense mutations. We will consider the harmful chemicals in tap water, the dangers of bottled water, the effect that plastics have on health, the triclosan in antibacterial products, etc. We will also discuss why chemotherapy uses mutagens for a good purpose (i.e. cancer treatment) but is still harmful. In these discussions, we will evaluate the methodology of the research and the data presented, in order to determine if the conclusions are warranted and reliable.

Students will write some short (1.5 pages) impact papers, one medium (2 pages) and one longer paper (5 pages), and give an oral presentation. The 2 and 5-page papers are topics chosen by the student and should reflect their area of interest.

**Honors 101 (3): Fashion, Identity, and Protest (#6048)**
**TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm**
*Aparna Mujumdar, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*

Is fashion gendered? Do you dress with purpose and Intent? Do your clothes enable you to define your distinct identity, stage a protest against dominant conventions, and enable you to appear “professional,” among other things? Fashion plays a significant role in our society, given that even political leaders like Hillary Clinton, Theresa May, and Donald Trump have been implicated in discussions of dress, power dynamics, and messaging.
This course will investigate the various functions that fashion in general, and our clothes in particular, perform in our global socio-cultural context, where social media has facilitated the rapid sharing and circulating of images of clothed bodies and the messages encoded in them. Using Judith Butler's book *Gender Trouble* and Maria Mackinney-Valentin's *Fashioning Identity*, among other texts, scholarly essays, and relevant films, we will examine how clothes enable us to express and fashion our identifications with certain institutions, class and value systems, while disrupting certain others.

Assignments will include journal entries, short response essays, and student presentations to generate a vibrant discussion about the role that dressing up performs in our contemporary culture, where concerns about climate change drive our decisions just as much as those of fluid identities, gender, class, and race equality.

**TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm**
**Rebecca Fine Romanow, English**

*Black Mirror* has been called “the most relevant program of our time . . . It doesn’t imagine interstellar civilizations or post-apocalyptic scenarios. Instead, it depicts variations on a near future transformed by information technology — our world, just a little worse” (Poniewozik, J. *The New York Times*, 2016). Film and television are primary cultural vehicles for reflecting how we see ourselves and other people and places, as well as our hopes, fears, and visions for our future. *Black Mirror* is fast becoming the touchstone for these imaginations.

We will watch six episodes of this groundbreaking TV series selected from its four seasons (2011 - present), and read fiction and non-fiction that addresses, depicts, or argues with the future that *Black Mirror* presents. This course emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach with readings in literature, futurism, science, media studies, and related fields. Through close readings and viewings, we will focus on the historical, political, technological, and cultural influences that shape our expectations of the future, and how our current concerns reflect our anxieties and desires for what is to come.

This is a student-driven course. Each student will lead the class discussion once on selected episodes/readings. This course will require one shorter mid-semester essay (4 - 5 pages), and a final essay (6 - 8 pages), as well as short reflections on the episodes of *Black Mirror*. The emphasis on improving critical writing will be reflected in the “building” of the final essay through revisions of the reflections and first shorter essay.

**Honors 101 (5): The Scandalized Subject (#7018)**
**MWF 9:00 - 9:50am**
**Christopher Craig, English**

Since at least Descartes, if not the Ancients, humans have attempted to define and determine the Self, or, as Kant would have it, their subjectivity. While artistic, philosophical, and religious examinations of the Self have developed over the centuries, ranging from the mythological to the theoretical, the quest to interpret the Self remains.

This course considers a number of artistic and theoretical approaches to the Self through a variety of literary and visual texts from the turn of the 20th century to our own historical moment. It examines how the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves position the Self against its dialectical Other — often the monsters we imagine or the technological monstrosities we create — in order to substantiate and at times deny our own existence.

This is a reading, writing, and discussion-based course. It requires active daily participation, along with two formal presentations. Students will also write three essays. The first two essays will each range from 750 to 1,000 words in length. Essay three will include a research component and should not exceed 2,500 words. In preparation for essay three, students will submit a prospectus and bibliography.

**Honors 101 (6): What Does It Mean to Be Poor? (#7273)**
**MW 4:00 - 5:15pm**
**Kathryn Kogan, Psychology**

This course will examine the complex and multidimensional phenomenon of poverty in the United States, focusing on the psychological experience of being poor, its associated stressors, and how being poor impacts lives throughout the life span. The interplay among poverty’s psychological impact, social stigma, and the social institutions that both contribute to poverty and seek to assist those in poverty will be explored. What are the multiple pathways through which families and individuals become impoverished? How does poverty shape one’s psychology and coping strategies? How do psychological, institutional, and social factors interact as the individual or family struggles to survive? How do people escape poverty?
Through readings, documentary films, class discussion, and the insights of guest speakers, we will explore these questions and seek to appreciate the meaning of poverty, while examining the role that social policies and institutions play in creating and maintaining poverty. A life-span perspective will help us to focus on the particular experiences of poverty for families with young children, adults with mental illness, and the elderly.

In addition to regular attendance and active participation, students are expected to bring questions that emerge from the reading materials. Students will write short reflections (2 - 3 pages) in response to readings and films, connecting them with other course materials. Students will be allowed one re-write option per assignment for the first three essays. Students will also arrange and attend a day of volunteer work at a local agency or church serving the poor and prepare a 10-minute oral presentation including a Powerpoint. (This course can also be applied to the minor in Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity.)


TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm  
*Shino Yokotsuka, Global Governance & Human Security*

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees five freedoms. This course examines one of those five freedoms, religious freedom, by examining how religious freedom in the U.S. has evolved and how closely it is connected with immigration and the politics of belonging in America. Students will learn the roots of religious freedom, focusing on four different historical timelines: (1) Colonial America; (2) the Early Republic; (3) the Reconstruction Era; and (4) modern incorporation of religious liberty across America.

Religious freedom is a core value in American culture from past to present. The first pilgrims reached the New World, seeking to freely exercise their religion without government interference. Back then, religious freedom in America existed for Protestants, and no one questioned it because the Protestant religion was widespread at that time. However, along with demographic changes due to massive immigration, religious freedom has become more controversial, raising many challenging questions, such as: Should religious freedom allow believers to discriminate against others based on religious beliefs? (For example, can a baker refuse to bake a wedding cake for a gay or lesbian couple because of religious beliefs?) How truly inclusive should interpretations of religious freedom be?

Through class discussions and critical reflections on the course materials (related mostly to history and law), this course is designed for students to develop their own understandings of what the rights to religious freedom are, where these rights came from, and how these rights should be represented in contemporary America. Students will be required to write a double-entry journal during each of the four historical sections of the course.
Honors 101 (9): “Workin’ for the Man Every Night and Day”: Artistic Expressions of the Working Class (#12580)
TuTh 12:30 - 1:45pm
Jeslyn Medoff, English

John Lennon once famously wrote, “[They] keep you doped with religion and sex and TV / And you think you’re so clever and classless and free . . . / A working-class hero is something to be.” Through fiction, film, music, memoir, journalism, this course will examine the lives of “ordinary” working people in America, both now and in the past. Authors whose books we read in the course will include working-class writers like Richard Wright, Dorothy Allison, Junot Diaz, and Sandra Cisneros.

We will also hear guest speakers from the fields of journalism, labor relations, and creative writing. The course will emphasize class discussion and teamwork, focusing on developing clear writing, careful reading, and critical-thinking skills. Assignments will include three short essays (5 pages each), an oral presentation, and an interview project. There will be no midterm or final exam in the course. (This course can also be applied to the minor in Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity.)

Honors 210G Intermediate Seminars for Spring 2020

Honors 210G (1): Learning Biology through Reading Fiction and Non-fiction (#12581)
MWF 2:00 - 2:50pm
Megan Rokop, Honors College

This course is designed to be an introduction to many current and relevant topics in biology, but with a twist – namely that these topics will be introduced and discussed as they come up in popular and highly regarded books written for non-scientists. In this course, we will use the reading of four books (including fiction and non-fiction), in order to guide our learning of topics in biology. Possible books might include: Twisting Fate, The Collected Schizophrenias, The First Cell, A Life Everlasting, Mercies in Disguise, Happiness, Perfect Predator, and Superbugs.

The instructor’s current plan for these books (though it is possible that these selections may change before the first day of class) means that our class will focus on the following topics in biology:

- **Bioethics**: DNA testing, “designer babies,” informed consent, and animal research
- **Human disease**: Cancers, infectious diseases (such as HIV and malaria), single-gene disorders (such as cystic fibrosis and Huntington’s), and common complex disorders (such as heart disease and schizophrenia)
- **Discovering cures and treatments**: Drug development, clinical trials, the cost of drugs, placebos, funding and patenting scientific discoveries
- **Public health**: Vaccines, antibiotics, and medicine in the US & around the world.

This course will not involve textbook readings, exams, advanced calculations, or memorizing terms. The in-class activities will focus on class discussions, and your grade in this course will be determined by:

- Attendance & class participation
- Nine short (300-word) writing assignments
- A 1500-word paper on a topic of your choice relating to the 1st book
- A 1500-word paper on a topic of your choice relating to the 2nd book
- A 10-minute oral presentation on a topic of your choice relating to the 3rd book

*This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.*
**Honors 210G (2): The Science and Social Impact of Basketball (#12582)**
**TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm**
**Steve Ackerman, Honors College**

This course explores the science of basketball by closely examining specific elements of the sport, as well as the athletes who play it, such as: aspects of human anatomy that allow us to play basketball (elbow flexibility, continuous running, sweat glands, vision); sabermetrics; dynamics of play-making; and physics of the basketball itself (bounceability, elasticity for rebounds). This course will also address the societal impact that basketball has had on America, and how American societal norms have influenced basketball. These influences include: the introduction of minority players to high school, college, and professional basketball; the rise of women’s basketball; the influence of the now-defunct ABA on NBA basketball style and the blending of athletic approaches; the influence of street basketball on the professional sport; apparel used in playing basketball; player sponsorship; and the marketing of athletic endorsements.

Scientific concepts discussed in class will be general and explained in everyday language. This course will emphasize class discussion, creative thinking, and critical reading and writing. Helping students develop careful reading skills and clear writing will be addressed through a variety of short reflections (1 - 2 pages) and creative writing assignments (3 - 4 pages).

*This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.*

---

**TuTh 8:00 - 9:15am**
**Randy Corpuz, Psychology and Honors College**

Why is it that humans invest so much time, energy, and emotion into romantic relationships? Why do these relationships sometimes cause such intense mental anguish and pain? Romantic love has been the focal point and inspiration for innumerable pieces of sculpture, paintings, literature, poetry, movies, and music. From rock music to rap, lyrics on subjects like love, sex, breaking-up, and cheating appear to be the norm. Why do we care so much about mating?

The neuroscience of mating (in humans and other species) has become a growing field that has attracted attention across other disciplines. What does “falling in love” look like in the brain? Why is an orgasm designed to “feel good,” and what is the psychological function of orgasm in either sex? What role do hormones like testosterone play in forming and maintaining long term relationships? Which components of romantic relationships differ across cultures?

Romantic relationships are governed by very specific psychological (and physiological) mechanisms. Throughout the course, we ask questions related to “how” and “why” this might be, focusing on research from neuroscience and evolutionary psychology. The goal of the course is to understand some of the factors influencing romantic relationships, such as biological, environmental, and cultural influences.

The class will include lectures, two oral presentations, short weekly reflections (1 - 2 pages each) and three APA-formatted research essays (6 - 8 pages each) spread throughout the course. Students will be asked to include material on romantic relationships (e.g., art, music, movies) that they find outside of class to be integrated with neuroscientific research.

*This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.*
Honors 290-level Courses for Spring 2020

Honors 291 (1): Weird Fiction (#7781)
MWF 1:00 - 1:50pm
Avak Hasratian, English

"Weird Fiction" is not traditional. It resists categorization and is distinct from the established conventions of Gothic, Detective, Fantastic, and Science Fiction, although it bears some resemblance to each of those genres. H.P. Lovecraft is the “founder” of “Weird Fiction,” which combines ancestral, archaic, occult, and mystical remnants and residues that we have “left behind,” together with weird science.

"Weird Fiction" also experiments with strange aesthetic sensibilities. We will probe the limits of good taste, because what is “weird” is often not found in “high art” but rather in festive, carnivalesque, queer play that is ancient as it is modern. Literary texts in the course will be thematically paired with film screenings. Such pairings in the course will include François Rabelais’ Gargantua and Pantagruel (with John Waters’ film Desperate Living), Franz Kafka’s The Metamorphosis (with a ballet version thereof), and Patrick Süskind’s Perfume: The Story of a Murderer (with Tom Tykwer’s 2006 film adaptation, starring Ben Whishaw). Course assignments will include aesthetic experiments and short to mid-length essay assignments.

This course fulfills an Arts (AR) distribution requirement.

Honors 291 (2): Instrumentality: Musical Systems at the End of the Acoustic Era (#7783)
MWF 9:00 - 9:50am
Frederick Stubbs, Performing Arts

As music is digitized and arranged for new platforms, the instrumentalist and performance itself have been de-emphasized. But acoustic musical instruments tell a unique set of stories when we examine their intersection with human faculties, biology, technology, and socio-cultural systems, together with their implicit music theories. The main subject of this class is how individual instruments imitate, extend, and amplify the human voice, and how instruments in their ensembles identify communities and theories of consonance and harmony.

Our readings draw from Art and Music History, Physics, Geography, and Ethnomusicology, in an effort to examine a spectrum of instrument traditions, especially those associated with China, Turkey, and Europe. Assignments include listening to music from these and other regions, research, and elementary design that will engage students with a series of creative and experimental craft projects. Student writing will entail three reading or listening responses and a research essay or summary. Grading will depend on attendance and participation, together with thoughtful self-evaluation.

Our class will host guest instrumentalists and offers two field trips to the Instrument Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, and to work with the instruments of the Boston Village Gamelan (Javanese Orchestra). This course is recommended for students with an interest in music, instrumentalists, and for students with an interest in cultural and technical systems. The course instructor is an organologist, luthier, and former instrument curator.

This course fulfills an Arts (AR) distribution requirement.
TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm
Diane D’Arrigo, Honors College

Who can afford a college education, and who can’t? Who gets to go to college, and who doesn’t? What gets taught in college, and what doesn’t? These are all issues with a broader social, cultural, historical, political, and economic context. Come explore the great transformation of American higher education since WWII and discuss the more recent evolution of colleges and universities, as well as many current hot topics.

Some specific topics will include a review of major societal changes and their influence on the increased democratization of higher education, such as: the impact of the GI Bill, the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, student protest movements, and changes in public policy. Using both primary and secondary sources, we will discuss relevant court rulings, state and federal legislation, and various institutional histories. Additionally, we’ll explore the origins of UMass Boston and consider its place within the broader history of the American higher education system. Finally, we will review current trends and debates taking place in higher education such as: college rankings, online learning, free speech on college campuses, the value of a college education, how higher education is funded, student debt and the financial aid system, and current public policy proposals that impact a variety of those issues.

This seminar will emphasize lively intellectual discussions individually chosen research topics, with both individual and group support. Grading criteria will include attendance, class preparation and participation, and a variety of assignments: an institutional history paper written on an institution of your choice (5 - 7 pages), short reflection papers, an oral presentation, and a final research project.

This course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.

Honors 292 (3): The World of Hip-Hop: History and Practice (#12586)
TuTh 5:30 - 6:45pm
Jared Bridgeman (aka Akrobatik), Honors College

“Rap is something you do; Hip-Hop is something you live.” —KRS-ONE

This multidisciplinary course will introduce students to hip-hop in all of its complexity—through careful historical inquiry, rigorous historical analysis, and creative practice. The course will combine the interdisciplinary scholarly methods that comprise American Studies and cultural studies work, with a strong commitment to exploring the creative and practical challenges facing practitioners of the hip-hop arts.

The instructor (Boston’s own Akrobatik, a 20+ year music industry veteran described by Billboard Magazine as one of “hip-hop’s most politically conscious emcees”) will bring expertise in scholarly, creative, community, and performative work to the teaching of the class and will expect students to be committed to a type of hybrid inquiry that equally emphasizes scholarly and creative work. Students will read and discuss scholarly works (by historians, musicologists, sociologists, and so on), in order to more fully understand hip-hop’s complicated trajectory, and will be expected to develop the basic skills necessary to understand the writing of hip-hop lyrics, and the construction of musical tracks.

Students will engage with scholarly, journalistic, and autobiographical writing as they begin their study of hip-hop history. They will also regularly participate in workshops that focus on hip-hop’s many disciplines, or “elements”, as they hone their own writing and artistic skills. Interviews of world class artists and class field trips to studios, shows, and even hip-hop’s birthplace in the Bronx have been amongst the experiences of past participants in the course. Assignments will include an oral presentation on hip-hop abroad, an ongoing reading/listening journal, a map project, a 5-page song analysis, and either a creative project (with scholarly annotation) or a research paper.

This course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.
Honors 293 (1): Human Rights, Human Identity, and Human Nature (#7780)
MWF 10:00 - 10:50am
Daria Boeninger, Psychology

How do we create a livable world? Are humans only competitive by nature, or also empathic? How do we decide who owns what, including our labor? How does our relationship to social power shape our identities? How do we forge positive identities in the face of oppression? Does changing an unjust “social contract” have to involve the use of violence?

These questions form the foundation of the social sciences and social praxis. We will explore these questions through seminal works across the social sciences, including political science, economics, sociology, and psychology. We also will read short stories, poetry, and autobiographical narratives that provide opportunities to “see” these questions and proposed answers from an embodied perspective. We will end the course by hearing from some of the great leaders of 20th-century social change movements across the globe (e.g., Gandhi, Fanon, Huerta, Malcolm X).

This course is highly likely to blow our minds and transform our understanding of and relationship to the world! You will do regular, close reading of the original texts outside of class, so that we can spend our class time in informed discussion. Our class will become a safe community in which to further our intellectual, social, and moral development.

Course grades are based on class participation in discussion, your daily reading journal, a team-based debate, and two analytical papers that synthesize core ideas from across sources (one 5 - 7 page paper, and a final paper of 8 - 9 pages).

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement.

Honors 293 (2): Making a Difference: Youth and Civic Engagement (#7994)
TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm
Joan Arches, College of Education and Human Development

In this course centered on service learning, Honors College students will build on their passion for making a difference by engaging with urban youth from Grades 4 through 8 in Boston Public Schools. These youth will be involved with Honors students in an academic project-based program to help enhance their lives and contribute to the public good. Honors students in the class will apply youth development and civic engagement theories in practical ways when facilitating groups of Boston Public School students in an “after-school program” designed to address the opportunity gap. Honors students will apply their knowledge through the creation of materials and activities to promote authentic and culturally sensitive learning, social/emotional development, and community engagement for the BPS students.

Through these group facilitation experiences, Honors College students in the course will also provide structure and opportunities for BPS students to identify pertinent issues, create an action plan, and implement a civic engagement project in their school or community. The course learning will include knowledge and skills to make a difference in the lives of our university’s students, BPS students, and their communities, resulting in an empowering learning experience for both groups of students. In addition to class time, the course will require Honors College students to do the following:

• carry out two hours of service, one day per week (or complete an academic equivalent not requiring service)
• read scholarly articles on youth development and civic engagement
• write short reflection papers and a final essay (length to be determined in relation to other class assignments).

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement.

Not sure who your Honors College Advisor is?
Your assigned Honors College advisor can be found listed in the “Advisor Box” of your Student Center in WISER (see images on left, and note the look of the box may vary according to the version of WISER you are using). Also listed here is your major advisor and sometimes other success advisors such as CLA First!

If you can’t find your Honors College advisor in WISER, please email the Honors College’s Program & Advising Coordinator, Jason Roush, at: Jason.Roush@umb.edu
Honors 293 (3): U.S. Health and Immigration (#7995)
TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am
C. Eduardo Siqueira, School for the Environment

This course provides an overview of the diverse immigrant populations in the United States and examines the health outcomes and their predictors among these populations. Students will gain exposure to key demographic, socio-political, community, and health care delivery factors that influence health outcomes among immigrants. The course will cover the current immigration crisis in the U.S. and immigration policies and laws that address immigrant paths to citizenship.

Students will write short reflections on the course readings (1 - 2 pages each), summarizing the reading and identifying important themes in the articles in a way that demonstrates an understanding of the author’s argument or point of view. Readings include several entries in the Encyclopedia of Immigrant Health, sections from the report The Integration of Immigrants into U.S. Society, and several peer-reviewed articles on immigration and health. Students will also present a final group project on a topic of their choice regarding immigration and health issues.

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement.

Honors 293 (4): Contextual Minds: Action, Autism, and Technology (#13958)
TuTh 12:30 - 1:45pm
Maria Brincker, Philosophy

Our minds – and brains – are often treated as mechanical objects that somehow function in isolation and independently from our overall organism and the cultural world around us. But what if this picture is false? What if our individuality is deeply dependent on our bodily and cultural contexts? Scientific discoveries of contextuality are abundant in most disciplines; however, many people (scientists and politicians included) are reluctant to embrace contextual paradigms. In this course we will look at the role of context in three different areas:

1) Action control & autonomy: We will learn about the role of embodiment for basic brain function and how our ability to engage meaningfully with the world relies on sensory-motor processes.

2) Autism & disability: We will study some difficulties of embodiment and subjective control, and how a more contextual view of the mind can help us understand how we cope with differences, particularly pertaining to people on the autism spectrum.

3) Technology & discriminatory environments: Lastly, we will take on the question of how our cultural world shapes our contextual minds. Questions will include: a) how does our increasingly technological world affect our minds? And b) how does context-control play into gender and race discrimination?

The approach in the course will be highly interdisciplinary and will include readings from philosophy, neuroscience, psychiatry, law, and media studies. There will be a midterm paper and a final paper (5 - 8 pages each), as well as a series of smaller assignments along the way.

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement.
Honors 294 (1): Music and Dance of Latin America and the Caribbean (#7779)
TuTh 2:00 - 3:15pm
Mary Oleskiewicz, Performing Arts

This course will cover diverse music and dance traditions of Latin America and the Caribbean societies, rituals, and cultures, in both practical and academic ways. Students will learn a variety of (beginner-level) partnered dances in workshops held in our university’s dance studio. For context and historical background, readings will trace impacts and influences of diverse forces such as colonialism, immigration, slavery, politics, and globalization. Videos and film will be used to highlight the development and perception of different dance styles.

We will study a number of diverse traditions including Argentine Tango, Bachata, Brazilian Samba, Capoeira, Mambo, Hip-Hop, Reggae, and Salsa. Students will learn to recognize important musical instruments associated with each style, and emphasis will be given to the development of listening skills to recognize and compare differences in each type of music. Using claves (percussion instruments, which will be provided), students will be introduced to (and have a chance to learn to play) the most important rhythms governing the style of different types of music/dance. As we study each style, our focus will shift from origins and traditions to how the style has become manifest in or has influenced popular culture in the U.S. and globally.

No previous dance or musical experience is necessary! All fundamental skills and vocabulary needed for this course will be taught from the beginning level, as part of the course. As a semester project, students will write an 8-page essay or produce an equivalent creative project, which could include a short dance presentation if desired. Warm-ups and stretching will be incorporated into dance workshops (so loose-fitting clothing is recommended for flexibility in the class).

This course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement.

Honors 294 (2): Conversing Culture: Divides, Distractions, and Dialogue (#8000)
MW 4:00 - 5:15pm
Linda Holcombe, Global Governance and Human Security

Do you think you know what culture is? Can you navigate a foreign context without a single faux pas? Are holiday dinners a breeze because everyone agrees? If you have hesitations about any of these questions, then this course might be for you. All too often, people forget that there are many ways of looking at and experiencing the world. Even the most open-minded are tripped up when their sense of normalcy is challenged. Current social, political, and media atmospheres create a false certainty that our experiences are the “right” or only way to engage with the world. Everyone else is just “weird” or crazy.

This course will begin by exploring the fluid concept of culture and its sub-variations. We will engage ethnic, geographic, and ideological/political cultures to consider not just their academic discussions but also the real-world implications. We will also draw on practitioner advice, such as Erin Meyer’s *The Culture Map*, as well as practical conflict resolution literature like Douglas Stone’s *Difficult Conversations*.

Throughout the course we will be engaging in frequent reflections to practice observing our own emotional and thought processes. Case studies and personal stories will help us examine the many pitfalls and opportunities when cultures collide, 2-3 of which will involve a several page situational evaluation assignment. Students will ultimately practice their newfound skills in an external assignment: to immerse in an unfamiliar culture and evaluate the challenges and insights gained by experiencing it through a more deliberate and mindful perspective.

This course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement.
Honors 295 (1): Nostalgia for the Light (#12588)
TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am
Gabriela Barreto Lemos, Physics

This course is inspired by the film Nostalgia for the Light, directed by Patricio Guzman, an intimate interweaving of the celestial quest of astrophysicists and cosmologists working in Chile’s Atacama Desert, and the stories of women searching that same South American desert for the remains of their loved ones who disappeared under the Pinochet dictatorship. In our course the physics of light and of LIGO – Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory – will be interwoven with reflections about what/whom we choose to shed light onto, and what/who disappears from our pictures and stories. We will discuss how scientific models of light can challenge our notions of truth and objectivity. We will also see how light has enabled us to create new instruments that extend our senses to achieve shared scientific understandings about stars and galaxies distant from us in time and space, and relate these to social and cultural issues here and now.

Reading assignments will include selections from popular science books on light and Black Holes, as well as texts from various fields in humanities and art. Students will also be asked to suggest relevant non-fiction and fiction texts and films, and images and music for us to analyze and discuss in class. Please note that our course materials will be accessible to Honors College students of all majors, regardless of scientific background or experience!

Assignments in this course will consist of developing metaphors, participating in class discussions, watching videos, using PhET Colorado simulations (https://phet.colorado.edu), collecting data, and analyzing information relevant to our class discussions. There will be four quizzes and one final project, for which students will conduct and present a homemade experiment.

This course fulfills a Natural Sciences (NS) distribution requirement.
Honors 380 Junior Colloquia for Spring 2020

PLEASE NOTE: students can take their Honors 380 Junior Colloquium after completing at least two of their 200-level Honors College requirements.

**Honors 380 (1): Thinking about Climate Change (#6977)**

**Thursday 12:30 - 3:15pm**

*Reinmar Seidler, Biology*

Climate change is set to be the biggest challenge of the 21st century. Over the past year, the issue has begun to enter even more prominently into the U.S. media and public discourse, yet many of us still feel confused about the details. We may feel overwhelmed by the apparent complexity of the climate problem, and by the technical nature of the arguments. However, this course requires no advanced scientific background. The emphasis will be on critical thinking, critical reading, imaginative engagement, and clear communication.

We will begin by examining the evidence for the claim that human actions are causing significant changes in global climate patterns. We will then explore some of the ways people from different backgrounds and different walks of life are thinking, talking, and writing about climate change today, both here in America and in the wider world. We will focus especially on the “social imaginaries” around climate change, such as:

- how people see the future under expected climate change;
- how politics plays into our fears and imagination;
- how we can assess historical and current responsibilities for climate change;
- how climate questions compete with other issues in media and public awareness;
- how – armed with knowledge – we can help move society onto sustainable pathways.

Readings will include peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, book chapters, fiction, news reports, and supplemental materials. There will be weekly short writing assignments, 2 - 3 oral presentations, and a major individual research report, in which each student will analyze and report on a proposed solution to anthropogenic climate distortion.

---

**Honors 380 (2): Addiction, Mental Illness, and the Justice System: Responding to a Behavioral Health Crisis (#7140)**

**Thursday 9:30am - 12:15pm**

*Rosemary Minehan, Justice (Ret.), Honors College*

Across the United States, individuals with serious addiction and mental health issues have traditionally faced complex systems of criminal and civil justice that have subjected them to incarceration, involuntary civil commitment to inadequate psychiatric and substance treatment facilities, involuntary administration of psychotropic medication, and other invasive treatments for mental illness and addiction. This course will explore how these specialized populations have been managed in the legal system and consider innovative initiatives occurring within the courts, executive agencies, law enforcement, corrections, and the healthcare field, which are changing the landscape of behavioral health and treatment.

Students will become conversant in the full panoply of legal issues surrounding the topics of mental illness and addiction, including patients’ rights, voluntary and involuntary hospitalization, and medical treatment for mental illness and addiction. The course will also explore issues presented in the criminal context, including the use of psychological forensic evaluations, the insanity defense, competency to stand trial, and sentencing.

Visit honors.umb.edu or call 617.287.5520 for more information
Honors 380 (3): Street Trauma: Youth Participatory Action Research Methods in K–12 Urban Schools (#7567)
Tuesday 12:30 - 3:15pm
Kristin Murphy, College of Education and Human Development

In this course, students will learn how to conduct a credible and trustworthy qualitative youth participatory action research study on the topic of street trauma, alongside students from the Boston Public Schools who will serve as their co-researchers. Students will utilize “photovoice” as their research method to explore the notion of how adolescents experience and understand their daily lives in urban locations here in Boston. Photovoice is a method often used in education, public health, and social sciences research studies that empowers a participant as a researcher. Participants are asked to take photographs representing their experiences. These photographs become the focal point of a research process that asks, “What does this mean now, and how does this inform what we can do in order to promote change?”

This is a highly interactive seminar and will require active participation and collaboration with both your college peers and high school student co-researchers. Students will begin the semester with the opportunity to read literature exploring urban education, adolescent development, qualitative research methodology, and youth participatory action research methodology. The latter part of the semester will gradually become more applied as the high school students join our class and we begin our research projects. As a group, research teams will produce a final research paper suitable for publication, in addition to taking part in constructing a culminating gallery event showcasing our class photovoice projects.

Honors 380 (4): Global Infant/Parent Mental Health (#8423)
Wednesday 11:00am - 1:45pm
Edward Tronick, Developmental Brain Sciences Program
Alexandra Harrison, Harvard Medical School

The objectives of this course are to teach the foundational principles of infant/parent mental health through lectures, readings in the scientific and clinical literature, and videotape illustration; to recognize the challenges of translating studies of infant development, parenting practices, and infant mental health interventions, both in Western culture and other global cultures; and to discuss ways of meeting these challenges. In the course we will address the following issues:

(1) Basic concepts of infant behavior and development;
(2) The effect of environmental stress on the developing infant and means of modulating this effect;
(3) The psychological and biological changes in both infant and parents for the infant’s birth;
(4) The neurobiology of infancy;
(5) Classic and contemporary theories of infant development, including Attachment Theory and the Mutual Regulation Model;
(5) Genetics and epigenetics;
(6) The Newborn Behavioral Observation tool for supporting the infant/parent relationship;
(7) Stress originating in the parent, such as post-partum depression;
(8) Stress originating in the infant: prematurity, birth injury or defect, temperament, developmental disorders such as autism;
(9) Therapeutic interventions.

At least one class session will involve distance technology to visit infants and parents in the Maternidad Hospital in Lima, Peru. Dr. Harrison will present her team’s work with nurses and physicians in India and Peru. The interdisciplinary make-up of her intervention team will be described. Her team includes undergraduate interns, and the opportunity for students in the class to join the team will be discussed.
Honors 380 (6): Artificial Intelligence and Society: The Robots Are Coming!  
(#12591)  
TuTh 2:00 - 3:15pm  
Nir Eisikovits, Philosophy  
James J. Hughes, Institutional Research & Policy Studies

Should we be worried that Artificial Intelligence will one day take away our jobs? Is it possible that one day Artificial Intelligence will master all of us, rendering us lazy, dumb, and superfluous? Or maybe it will fight our wars, guard our homes, help us to educate our kids, and alleviate all racial and economic injustices?

Over the past few years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been linked to some of our deepest fears, as well as to some of our loftiest hopes. This course will distinguish the facts from the hype. We will define AI, study the history of the technology, investigate its current and near future impact on the nature of the workplace, its meaning for the future of war, and the ways in which it can both exacerbate and alleviate existing social inequalities.

Through our course assignments, students will also explore the role of data collection, parsing, and prediction, in the business models of companies like Google and Facebook. We will investigate the idea of “singularity” – the state in which AI transcends human intelligence – both as a hypothetical future and as a metaphor encapsulating current anxieties about technology. Overall, we will look at the ways in which AI is already impacting qualities and capacities that we consider fundamental to being human. Our explorations of these topics will culminate in a substantial research project that students will present at the end of the course.
Honors 490 Symposium for Spring 2020

PLEASE NOTE: This course is a continuation of Honors 490-01 in Fall 2019; admission was by permission of the instructor.

Honors 490 (1): International Epidemics, Part II: Focus on South Africa (#12592)
Days/Times to be determined with students from Part I of the course

Rajini Srikanth, English
Dean of the Honors College

South Africa is a young nation, having gained its liberated status as a multiracial democracy in 1994, a mere 25 years ago. It faces many challenges as a result of the legacy of apartheid – gross economic inequalities, xenophobia against immigrants from other parts of Africa, a mounting tuberculosis epidemic, and corruption among leading politicians. No sooner did South Africa emerge from the painful rule of apartheid than it was plunged into the equally devastating challenges of public health care, sanitation, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis.

Yet there is a spirit of activism and determined hopefulness that refuses to be crushed. The people of South Africa carry in them the energy of the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1970s, ‘80s, and ‘90s, and many of them are using that energy in the service of the fight against TB, economic disparities, police violence, and poor sanitation and housing. We will focus on two themes in relation to South Africa: (1) its efforts to reconcile itself as a nation of diverse peoples and (2) its complicated and contradictory stance to public health, housing, and sanitation challenges, at the medical, cultural, economic, and social levels.

In addition, students will volunteer at a community health organization for a minimum of 20 hours over the duration of the semester. Depending on the nature of the organization’s needs and volunteering schedules, you can arrange your volunteering schedule with the organization. It will be absolutely essential that students take this volunteering seriously—honor your commitment to the organization and do not make idle promises to them. Your responsible and dedicated volunteering is a direct reflection not only of you but also of our campus.

There will be four writing assignments and one oral presentation, including the volunteer report. Each written assignment will be a minimum of 2,000 words in length.