

HONORS FORUM COURSES

Fall 2012

HF-200.001 **Thinking About Race-Ethnicity** **1 Credit**
Add-on to HI-225 001: Thinking About Race-Ethnicity
J. Delton
Every other Wednesday 6:30-8:30

An examination of the difference between “race” and “ethnicity.” What are we referring to when we use these terms? Biology? Culture? Faith? Skin color? Nationality? History? Epistemology? What makes categories based on apparently natural differences useful? How has the meaning of “race” and “ethnicity” changed over time? In the United States, the categories have variously overlapped, collided, or remained separate, depending on what those categories have been called upon to explain. At one time, Jews and the Irish were seen as separate races, then they were seen as ethnicities, and eventually they became “white.” What accounts for these changes, and what does that say about these categories? This course addresses these questions by examining how intellectuals, social scientists, the law, and cultural producers in America have historically defined and thought about race, ethnicity, “blackness,” and “whiteness.”

HF-200.002 **Classical Mythology** **1 Credit**
Add-on to CC
J. Westerhold
Wednesday 6:30-7:30

A study of the important myths in Greek and Roman culture, with attention to their religious, psychological, and historical origins. Comparative mythology, structural analysis, modern psychological interpretations and the development of classical myths in Western literature and art receive attention.

Prerequisite: None. Counts towards the Humanities requirement.

In this Honors add-on to Classical Mythology, students will explore the myths and the scholarship in greater detail, making deeper inferences and drawing more informed conclusions. Open to all students concurrently enrolled in CC 220.

Apocalypse Project Cluster I: **“Death from the Skies”**

HF 200.013 **Foundations of Modern Physics** **1 Credit**
Add-on to PY-210 001 Foundations of Modern Physics
M. Crone Odekon

HF 200.014 **Principles of Astronomy** **1 Credit**
Add-on to PY-192 001 Principles of Astronomy
M. Crone Odekon

HF 200.012 **Intro To Statistics** **1 Credit**
Add-on to MS-104 001 Intro to Statistics
M. Hofmann

The students who sign up for this one-credit Honors Forum add on will have the opportunity to study the biology, art, demographics, and history of plagues as they have swept through populations of plants, animals, and humans across time and space. This cluster will focus on the sustainability of natural landscapes and the living communities embedded in them. The loss of the American chestnut to plague, for example, had a profound impact on the structure of early North American forests. In the current decade, plagues are sweeping through populations of mammals (bats), insects (honey bees), and amphibians (frogs). Historically, plagues have decimated societies and altered cultures around the world. Students will use software to evaluate properties of disease that make them most apt to cause mass extinction. They will also utilize the readings and group discussions to create work that visualizes “plagues and peoples.” The projects students create may take the form of maps, charts, software creation, biological and historical timelines, and interactive design (web or ipad ezine), all of which should increase awareness and perceptions of how plagues have affected various populations throughout history.

The students in this cluster will read targeted selections from two books, *Deadly Companions: How Microbes Shaped our History* (Crawford, 2009), and *Plagues and Peoples* (McNeill, 1977). We also expect to have guest lecturers, and to have the students collaborate to explore the consequences of plagues for natural systems and for the human systems that rely on them.

Apocalypse Project Cluster III: "Apocalyptic Thought in History and Literature"

HF 200.008 **New England Begins** **1 Credit**
Add-on to AM-232H 001 New England Begins
M. Lynn

HF 200.009 **Breakthroughs in Physics** **1 Credit**
Add-on to PY-105 001 Breakthroughs in Physics
J. Linz

HF 200.007 **Spanish American Lit** **1 Credit**
Add-on to FS-212 001 Spanish American Literature
V. Lorenzo

HF 200.010 **American Indian History** **1 Credit**
Add-on to HI-217 001 American Indian History
E. Morser

The literal definition of the Greek word Apocalypse is the “lifting of the veil.” By investigating the histories of apocalyptic thoughts and writings in a variety of cultures, from ancient times to the present, students who register for these one-credit add-ons will explore why so many societies, across continents and centuries, have periodically been swept by popular beliefs and obsessions about the end of the world. The constant reoccurrence of apocalyptic thinking across time and space raises compelling questions about the shared challenges of being human in an often-overwhelming universe. What leads a culture to obsess about the forthcoming end of the world? What might science tell us about the possibilities of “the end?” Can we theorize about the end of the universe in the same way physicists theorize about “the beginning?” What role does religion play in these debates? And why does this kind of doomsday thinking persist during an age of unprecedented scientific discovery? By investigating these and other questions, beginning with our first common reading, *Revelation*, from the *New Testament*, students will understand how humans have tried to navigate confusing times and how science can help us “lift the veil” and better grasp our place in the world.

HF-215 001 **Peer Health Education** **3 Credits**
J. McDonald
Monday 1:30-3:30

This course builds on concepts covered during Peer Health Education by guiding students through the process of promoting health and wellbeing among the Skidmore student body. The course is student-driven and allows the opportunity to further delve into specific areas of study that are of particular interest to each student. Students will design, implement, and evaluate programs and outreach education in a variety of topics relevant to the lives of college students including alcohol and substance use and abuse, sexual assault, eating disorders, stress, mental health, sexuality, and other topics commonly addressed by peer counselors and health promotion professionals. In addition, students will continue to build on leadership and communication skills by serving as peer counselors on the Skidmore campus.

AM-232H 001 **New England Begins** **3 Credits**
M. Lynn
TU TH 11:10-12:30

A critical examination of the evolution of culture and society in New England during the seventeenth century. After considering the origins of the Puritan community, the course will explore the ways in which that society changed over the course of the first seventy-five years of settlement, using the resources and methods of a variety of disciplines. By a culminating investigation of the events of the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692, questions will be raised as to the impact of those changes and some of the ways in which New Englanders responded to them. Finally, by studying several historical and literary treatments of the witch trials, we will gain a greater understanding of the interconnections between the past and the present.

(This is an Honors course; it fulfills the social sciences requirement.)

BI-115H 001 **Ecology of Food** **4 Credits**
M. Raveret Richter
TU TH 11:10-12:30

The study of fundamental concepts in ecology from a who-eats-whom perspective. Topics include the behavior and ecology of herbivores, predators, parasites, and mutualists, interactions among competitors in quest of food, trophic connections, and analyses of communities and landscapes managed for agricultural and aquacultural production. Quantitative field investigations of herbivory in Skidmore's North Woods are complemented by laboratory investigations of plant physical defenses and secondary chemicals, including the use and function of these secondary chemicals in world cuisine. A similar investigative approach is taken to the study of pollination, seed dispersal, and predation. Local food producers contribute to the study of agroecology. Ecological impacts of various agricultural and aquacultural practices and the implications and potential ecological impacts of genetically modified foods are explored.

CS-275H 001 **Computer Science Research** **1 Credit**
G. Effinger

An introductory exploration of research in computer science. The students, in collaboration with a faculty mentor, will participate in a research project in a particular area of computer science. The research projects may, for example, include designing new algorithms for computational problems, surveying the research literature, implementing existing algorithms from the research literature, or performing computational experiments. *Prerequisites* permission of instructor.
Students may only take four CS275H courses in their careers and may take no more than two in any given semester. If two are taken in a single semester, each must be a different section. CS275H may not be counted toward the CS major. Must be taken S/U.

EN-105H 001

Writing on Demand

4 Credits

L. Hall

TU TH 9:40-11:00

The honors sections of EN105 offer highly motivated students with strong verbal skills the opportunity to refine their ability to analyze sophisticated ideas, to hone their rhetorical strategies, and to develop cogent arguments. Toward these goals, students write and revise essays drawing upon a variety of challenging readings and critique each other's work with an eye to depth and complexity of thought, logic of supporting evidence, and subtleties of style. The English Department places some students in EN105H and encourages other students to consult with their advisors, the director of the Honors Forum, or the director of the Expository Writing Program to determine if this level of Writing Seminar is appropriate. Each section of EN105H focuses on a topic that is listed in the master schedule and described in the English Department's prospectus and on its Web page.

(This course fulfills the all-college requirement in expository writing.)

EN-105H 002

The Land of Absurdity

4 Credits

M. Wiseman

M W F 12:20 – 1:15

This course will take us into the land of absurdity, as mapped by fiction writers, filmmakers, poets, and playwrights. We will venture into regions of dark humor, charged outrage, searing satire, and profound silliness, with the aid of such guides as Samuel Beckett, Edward Albee, Franz Kafka, Nikolai Gogol, Lewis Carroll, Alfred Jarry, Donald Barthelme, Flann O'Brien, Eugène Ionesco, and the patron saint of serious exuberance, François Rabelais. We will see the absurd as brought to us on screen by Luis Buñuel, the Marx Brothers, Terry Gilliam, and Lindsay Anderson. Sinister, ludicrous, surreal, irreverent, or all of the above, these portrayals and explorations will help us to think about, and especially to write about, the absurdity we might find in our own lives. We will ask, How do these visions illuminate our own dilemmas? How, in other words, can absurd perspective help us to live? How does an appreciation of paradox deepen and free our thinking? How can chaos and incoherence be shaped—how is incoherence made coherent? Thus, the relationship between certainty and chaos, the disjunction between seeing and knowing, the blurred distinctions among sense, senselessness, and nonsense, the uses of satire, and the mingling of the sublime and the ridiculous will serve as catalysts for our writing as well as for our discussions. Our writing practice will emphasize understanding and developing our own writing processes. Students will write frequent short papers of several types—personal, analytical, persuasive, reflective—and three substantial essays, submitted first as drafts and then in careful revision.

EN-303H 001

Hon. Peer Tutoring Project

4 Credits

P. Boshoff

M W 4:00-5:20

Examination of rhetoric, grammar, and composition theory essential to writing, collaborative learning, and **peer tutoring**. Students practice analytical writing and critique expository essays. Weekly writing assignments and a term project explore composition theory and tutoring practices and analyze EN103 assignments. Participation in a weekly supervised **peer tutoring** practicum with EN103 students.

Prerequisites Completion of the Introductory Requirement and upper class standing.

(This is an Honors course.)

ID-201H 001

Peer Mentor Seminar

1 Credit

M. Melito/D. Karp

M 6:30-7:50

An introduction to the theory and practice of collaborative learning and mentoring as they relate to the interdisciplinary issues raised in Scribner Seminars. The course examines the role of mentors, the ethics

a study, collect data, and use a computer data analytic statistical package to analyze their data. Three hours of lecture and two hours of lab per week.

Prerequisites PS217, or consent of instructor.

SO-224H 001

Close Relationships

4 Credits

S. Walzer

Exploration of intimate relationships through a sociological lens. Examines personal interactions as public processes with implications for the organization of society. Students investigate attraction, sexuality, friendship and love as relational experiences embedded in social structures and norms, and develop their abilities to ground social analysis with research.