

# BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

## 2017 SPRING COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



**SPRING 2017**

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**HONR 150**

**Dr. Fedja Buric**

**Freshman Seminar—Holocaust Memoir**

TR 9:25-10:40

Prerequisites: None

The course looks at the Holocaust through the eyes of its survivors. We will be reading memoirs of all sorts--novels, autobiographies, and even made up memoirs---in order to investigate how humanity endured this greatest of human tragedies, how it recorded it, and how the tragedy changed humanity. Besides reading the Holocaust memoir classics, like *Night*, we will also explore less known, and more controversial, memoirs of not only survivors but also of unwilling perpetrators like the Polish Auschwitz prisoner Tadeusz Borowski's *This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentlemen*. Students will leave the course with a much more nuanced understanding of how trauma is recorded in history and how memory of trauma is reconstructed.

## **HONR 150**

**Dr. Hoon Choi**

### **Honors Freshman Seminar—Gender, Race, and Christianity**

TR 3:05-4:20

Prerequisites: None

This course explores the complex, often complicated, and always interwoven dynamics between gender and race from Christian perspectives. It examines the historical, social, and especially religious constructions of gender and race, seeks to understand the intersection among them, and exposes where contemporary theological and scientific understandings inform, interrupt, and challenges the perceived norms. Understanding that all races are gendered, and that all gender is raced, will help students to notice some pejorative implications of rigid definitions of masculinity and femininity (especially by Christian institutions) and to start reconstructing a more expansive, integral, and authentic definitions.

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## **HONR 150**

**Dr. Evanthia Speliotis**

### **Honors Freshman Seminar—Justice**

TR 12:15-1:30

Prerequisites: None

Justice is a concern to us in every aspect of our lives, personal and political. We care how we are treated, what furthers our good, whether others gain at our expense, etc. Today, we often appeal to our “rights,” insisting that they be upheld, or protesting that they have been violated. But what is justice, or perhaps more precisely, what is the origin or foundation of justice? That

is the theme of this course. Essentially, there seems to be a determinate list of possibilities of what the origin of justice might be: the gods, the family, authority/will, or nature. We will explore the question of justice by examining various ancient Greek texts on justice. We will look at the ancient Greek authors for two reasons. They seem to cover the range of possible answers to the question of justice, and their writings and ideas form the foundation of every subsequent discussion about justice. As the ancient Greek philosophers and poets present the various possibilities of what justice is, we will interrogate their claims and seek to arrive at the truth.

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## **HONR 151L**

**Professor Frederick Smock**

**Honors Literature—Contemporary American Poetry**

MW 1:30-2:45

Prerequisites: HONR 101 or ENGL 101

In this course we will look at 20<sup>th</sup> century American poetry – the good stuff – beginning with Gertrude Stein and coming forward to poets who are living and writing now. As a poet myself, I have a somewhat different take on things, and will hope to bring you inside the process – we’ll write poems ourselves, and sit in meditation with poems. We’ll read William Carlos Williams, e. e. cummings, Theodore Roethke, Galway Kinnell, and many others, and pull up videos of them reading. Assignments will largely be reflection papers.

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## **HONR 151N**

**Dr. Martha Carlson Mazur**

### **Honors Natural Science with Lab—Understanding Environmental Systems**

MWF 10:00-10:50; F 10:00-12:30 (lab)

Prerequisites: None

Understanding Environmental Systems explores the earth's ecological systems, and considers ways that human populations interact with the natural world. Topics include human populations, agriculture and food systems, environmental health and policy, ecosystems, biodiversity, energy generation, water and air resources, and waste disposal and pollution. Students will integrate principles from the physical, biological, and social sciences as we examine causes and seek solutions for current environmental problems through critical analysis and examination of current events.

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## **HONR 160**

**Dr. David Mosley**

### **Honors Intro to Philosophy**

TR 1:40-2:55

Prerequisites: None

Philosophy is the art of living with questions. The study of philosophy allows each of us to discover our own most pressing questions and to pose them in an ever more sophisticated, nuanced, and productive fashion. Such questioning constitutes philosophical thinking. By reading others' reflections on such questions as the nature of reality, knowledge, truth, personal identity, and human nature, students participate in the wonder that animates philosophers, and come to

appreciate that learning is not simply a tool to be employed in the conduct of practical affairs, but at the core of what it means to be a human being.

The Honors section of this course places a premium on careful reading, critical reflection, and discerning discussion. Texts include works by Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, and Nietzsche, among others. We will also consult 'philosophical' works of art, literature, music (i.e. Bob Dylan), and film. Past courses have read and/or viewed Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Walter Mosley's *Walkin' the Dog*, and Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*.

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## **MATH 205 (Honors restricted section)**

**Dr. Mike Ackerman**

### **Honors Elementary Statistics**

TR 1:40-2:55; F 1:00-1:50

Prerequisites: see description below

Descriptive statistics: graphical representation and numerical summaries of data. Elementary probability. Basic concepts of sampling and experimental design. Linear correlation and regression. Interval estimates and hypothesis testing, including chi-square and proportion. Two years of high school algebra and one year of high school geometry, or their equivalent, are strongly recommended as preparation for this course. Students cannot receive credit for both MATH 200 and MATH 205. Honors Math 205 includes more writing projects and class discussions than the typical Math 205 course.

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## **HONR 220**

**Dr. Jon Blandford**

### **U.S. Experience Seminar--Thomas Merton and the Transcendentalists**

MW 12:00-1:15

Prerequisites: HONR 150 or IDC 101

This course draws connections between Transcendentalism, a nineteenth-century American literary and philosophical movement, and the writings of Thomas Merton, the twentieth-century Catholic theologian whose work and life are central to our distinctive intellectual history and institutional identity at Bellarmine. Although they lived and wrote a century apart, Merton and the Transcendentalists have a great deal in common, including similar ideas about social justice, the relationship between the individual and the community, and the importance of our natural environment. Merton also shares Transcendentalism's deep engagement with Asian religious and philosophical traditions: Transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were among the first American writers to draw heavily on Hindu and Buddhist texts, helping to begin an intercultural dialogue that Merton would later take up and extend in his important works on Taoism and Zen Buddhism.

Over the course of the semester, we will explore these and other key points of contact between Merton and the Transcendentalists, with a special emphasis on interdisciplinary scholarly investigation—i.e., the way in which looking at these writers through different disciplinary lenses (e.g., literary study, philosophy, theology, history, etc.) might open up new and productive lines of inquiry. Students will have an opportunity to visit and learn from the Merton Center here at Bellarmine, as well as to take a day trip to the Abbey of Gethsemani in Bardstown, Kentucky,

the monastic community of which Merton was a part from 1941 until his death in 1968. Work for the course will include a series of short papers, along with a semester-length research project in which students apply some of the ideas of Merton and the Transcendentalists to a contemporary issue or problem.

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## **HONR 353 [REQUIRED COURSE]**

**Dr. Evanthia Speliotis**

### **Junior Honors Research Mentorship**

Time: TBD

Prerequisite: Junior-level standing in program or special permission

The Junior Honors Research Mentorship matches Honors students with faculty members to begin work toward the senior research project and Honors thesis. Students meet as a group three or four times a semester with the course instructor to discuss their progress and the dynamics and processes involved in producing an extended piece of scholarship. Recommended fall semester of junior year. NOTE: HONR 353 is a required course that must be taken in addition to the minimum of five Honors courses you need to complete the program.

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## **HONR 401**

**Dr. Gregory Hillis**

**Senior Seminar—Thomas Merton, Justice, and Dialogue**

MW 3:00-4:15

Prerequisites: HONR 320 or IDC 301

Thomas Merton, a monk at the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, was an influential figure in 20th-century American Christian history, and is of immense importance to Bellarmine University. In this course, we will look at Merton's writings on issues of social justice, writings that continue to have a world-wide influence. We will explore particularly his writings on war and peace, race, and inter-religious dialogue. The course will involve field trips to the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, to the famous corner of 4th & Walnut in downtown Louisville, as well as to the Abbey of Gethsemani to speak to monks who knew Merton. We will also engage in interreligious dialogue.

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## **HONR 451 [REQUIRED COURSE]**

**Dr. Jon Blandford**

**Honors Senior Thesis**

Prerequisite: HONR 450

The Senior Thesis is the culmination of the Honors Program. Each student will work with an advisor in preparing the project, submitting the final research/document, and presenting a summary of it at a public session. Required for Honors seniors.

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