



Honors Course Descriptions

Fall 2009

If you are planning on completing an honors option with a course or an honors independent study, you must contact Dr. Guertin to verify the course is eligible for honors work. The honors paperwork is to be completed during the first two weeks of the fall semester.

Listing of Fall 2009 honors courses:

- *ENGL 030S, Freshman Composition (3 credits, GWS)
Section 601, MWF 11:30AM-12:20PM
- *L ST 100H, Information Search Strategy (1 credit)
Section 601, by appointment
- *STS 130H, World Food Problems (1 credit),
Section 601, meets 08/18 9AM-4PM and 08/20 Noon-5PM
Work begins in the summer with a summer read and assignments
- *HONOR 301H, The Role of Knowledge in Society (3 credits)
Section 601, MWF 1:30PM-2:20PM
- *AM ST 100U, Introduction to American Studies (3 credits, GH/US)
Section 601, TR 2:30PM-3:45PM
- EARTH 150H, Dinosaur Extinctions and Other Controversies (3 credits, GN)
Study abroad course in London during Thanksgiving week

Advanced planning for the Spring 2010:

Spring 2010

- *ENGL 001H, Understanding Literature – “Sex, Violence, and the Law in Literature”
(3 credits, GH)
- *L ST 301H, Information Research Methods and Systems (1 credit)
- YFE 211U, Foundations: Civic and Community Engagement (3 credits, GS/US/IL)
- CAMS 045U, Classical Mythology in Western Art (3 credits, GH/IL)
Study abroad course in Italy in May
- *ITALIAN 130H, Italian Culture and Civilization (3 credits, GH/IL)
Study abroad course in Italy in May

*denotes courses offered only in the honors program

- Courses required for all entering first-semester honors freshmen (Cooper and Schreyer Scholars) include ENGL 030S and L ST 100H and STS 130H.
- L ST 301H is a thesis preparation course required for all honors students (Cooper and Schreyer) in the second semester of the junior year.
- HONOR 301H is required for all honors scholars during the fall semester of the sophomore or junior year.

Descriptions for Fall 2009 courses:

ENGL 030S, Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Associate Professor of English and Honors Coordinator

English 030 is an intensive writing course that will approach writing through the exploration of global education, looking at the varied linguistic and cultural frameworks that exist in contemporary societies. The course will encourage us to think more deeply about educational issues in the United States and throughout the world, and the texts *Good Reasons with Contemporary Arguments* and *Three Cups of Tea* will form the basis of these thoughts and discussions. We will begin our discussion by examining the basic premise of education – both in and out of the classroom – questioning language, identity, nationhood and power, and then we will question, challenge and, perhaps, even re-think the educational policies associated with them.

L ST 100H, Sara Whildin, Associate Librarian

This course explores concepts and methodology for determining information needs and planning efficient strategies to locate information in a library. Specifically, we are seeking to develop several of the skills associated with information literacy. Information literacy is a set of intellectual skills and values that integrate critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making into the retrieval, evaluation and use of information. In this course we seek to develop all the skills that define an information literate individual. An information literate individual is able to:

- * Determine the nature and extent of information needed
- * Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- * Evaluate information and its sources critically
- * Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- * Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- * Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

In the course of developing these skills you will learn to use the following tools:

- LIAS (Libraries Information Access System)
- The CAT (catalog of Penn State Libraries Holdings)
- World CAT (union catalog of worldwide libraries)
- ILLIAD (the online interlibrary loan system)
- Citation formats
- Online databases providing access to periodical articles, data, and images

STS 130H, Dr. Laura Guertin and Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Honors Coordinators

This course serves as a required honors orientation for all new Cooper and Schreyer Scholars (regardless of class year) and your first true introduction to the topic of environmental sustainability and the connection to democratic practices. There are many topics we will cover in the context of environmental sustainability democracy, such as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations meeting their needs. Food production and consumption are high-priorities. From organic

foods to Frankenfoods, this course will explore how we can make a difference in creating a sustainable society and how democratic practices can dictate the future direction of food resources locally and globally.

HONOR 301H, Dr. Laura Guertin and Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Honors Coordinators

This course is interdisciplinary study of the theme innovation utilizing contributions from science/ engineering, business, public policy, behavioral sciences/education, and the humanities. In addition, this course serves to prepare honors scholars with the professional research skills needed to succeed on campus and beyond. The course will cover how to write an abstract, prepare and submit a manuscript for publication, construct an oral and poster presentation, and etiquette appropriate for a professional conference. This course is required for all scholars in the sophomore or junior year.

AM ST 100U, Dr. Phyllis Cole, Professor of American Studies

This course will be a study of contemporary and historical first-person narratives, ranging from formal autobiographies to oral histories recorded in writing or sound. First-person narrative has the advantage of being at once personal and political, both illuminating the “big events” of history and the vivid details of individual memory. It has always been a genre relatively available to both genders and to multiple races and ethnicities. As such it offers an ideal approach to interdisciplinary work in American Studies—and a challenging Gen Ed experience. This course will begin with Barack Obama’s 1994 *Dreams from My Father*; then survey earlier multicultural narratives of personal and national identity, probably through the excellent anthology *American Lives*; and end by exploring Story Corps, the national archive of recorded interviews by ordinary Americans accumulating at the Library of Congress since 2003.

I am excited about starting with all of Obama’s story (not just excerpts) and using his complex, now presidential identity as a window on American and global culture. I will schedule a group trip, probably including exhibits at the National Constitution Center focused on Obama and race and/or the 200th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth. Though this introductory course has always culminated in students interviewing family members and writing a narrative of experience in the United States since 1960, for the honors section I would require more formal recording and archiving of our own “Story Corps,” modeled on the national project.

There are several possibilities for this final project. At the very least we will record and share the written texts from these stories on ANGEL. But sound recording and photography will be additional resources, and I am open to using Digital Commons. In any case the goal will be to “publish” our collective project in a form that class members can enjoy and possibly disseminate to others. Who knows, class members might even contribute directly to the national project.

EARTH 150H, Dr. Laura Guertin, Associate Professor of Earth Science and Honors Coordinator

For the majority of students, this will be their first true scientific introduction to dinosaurs. There are no prerequisites for this course - students need an open mind and

will learn things about dinosaurs they never knew before. Students will find out what Earth was like during the Mesozoic Era, gain insight into the origin and classification of dinosaurs, and learn about the “hot topics” such as the warm blooded/cold blooded debate and the mass extinction that killed the dinosaurs. Students will learn about the value of dinosaur trace fossils and find out how we know about dinosaur biology and behavior. Additional topics include the important role the early dinosaur paleontologists played and their international discoveries, and examining how dinosaurs have been portrayed in the media – accurately and erroneously. The most exciting part is that we will be able to visit some sites and view some of the original dinosaur fossils and sculptures you are unable to see anywhere else in the world – in London! The class will visit the Natural History Museum, tour its Darwin Centre, visit the original dinosaur sculptures at Crystal Palace, and visit Downe House (the home of Charles Darwin).



Honors Course Descriptions Spring 2010

ENGL 001H, Dr. Kathleen Kennedy, Assistant Professor of English

“Sex, Violence, and the Law in Literature” fulfills the expectations for a Penn State honors course thoroughly in offering a demanding structure, content, and assessment. “Sex, Violence, and the Law in Literature” will challenge honors students and lead them to greater critical thinking about the legal culture in which they live. Briefly put, “Sex, Violence, and the Law in Literature” explores the traditional popularity of crime, and particularly sexual crime, in literature. Students read examples of literature emphasizing crime from works by Chaucer through one by Ian McEwan and explore and test hypotheses about how and why this sort of literature has remained popular, even canonical, through so many centuries. As the inclusion of McEwan's *Atonement* suggests, throughout the course students are challenged to consider how our legal system is founded on notions of impartiality, while at the same time it functions only through the telling of stories in the form of principle and witness depositions, and courtroom argument. The story-telling inherent in our felony law is explored using a variety of texts. Students examine the gory courtroom transcripts of the seventeenth-century Castlehaven trial, and then study how these transcripts were repackaged and reprinted at several points throughout the century to achieve different political ends. In 1642 the transcripts make clear that Castlehaven was punished for economic misbehavior; yet by 1699 the same transcripts show that he was indicted for sodomy. Similarly, selections from Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* offer further metacritical material for the class'

consideration. The Victorian Browning bought a collection of 17th-century Italian court materials about a domestic murder, similar to those the students read in the Castlehaven unit. In *The Ring and the Book*, Browning imagines the voices of the principles involved in the case, among others, and (re)tells their stories based on the depositions in his antique printed collection. In so doing, Browning is able to highlight a number of differences between continental law and culture, and England's more "rational" procedure implicitly. Closing the course with McEwan's postmodern novel *Atonement* embodies the honors course mission statement: "content should shift from a sense of closure and factual assimilation to a sense of open exploration and discovery." Students learn a lot in this course, but are left with more questions about the world they inhabit than answers, as they leave more willing to question the relationship between the law and the media than many had been going into the course.

Taught as ENGL001H, "Sex, Violence, and the Law in Literature" would fulfill a General Humanities requirement, and be the first ENGL001 taught at Brandywine, to my knowledge. Its exploration of crime in literature would fit 001's mission to seek to "clarify enduring human values and issues." The last time I taught this course, it was at the 400-level, and the students were juniors and seniors. It was challenging for them, and at the introductory level, "Sex, Violence, and the Law" could only be taught in an honors classroom. This material requires emotional maturity and intellectual dexterity honors students have already demonstrated, and these students will complete the course having been troubled and stretched in positive ways. The attached reading list is a sample based on a revision of the 400-level syllabus I taught. After introducing the law and theory involved, I would begin ENGL001H with Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale* and *Physician's Tale*, both of which link thematically to Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. After that the class would complete the unit on the Gunpowder Plot, followed by the Castlehaven material, as Castlehaven's crimes were initially associated with the Plot. Continuing with seventeenth-century material but moving into the nineteenth century, following Castlehaven, I want to expand the Browning section, and include more background material for the students than I did previously. Given how Browning renarrated "true crime" documents, I would then close the course with McEwan's *Atonement*, as his protagonist does the same.

I will make use of ANGEL's discussion feature to encourage student debate and support outside of the classroom. This is difficult material in a number of respects, and in my experience classes bond throughout the course; making networking available and part of course participation requirements facilitates this bonding. While I will likely continue with two essays demanding that students demonstrate their abilities to develop arguments about this material using close reading, the final project I would like to propose would be a series of websites. For their final projects, students will choose a case from current or recent events and develop a website about it, educating the public about how the case and its media representations were or are being constructed out of a series of stories. I am hoping we would be able to advertise these websites at local high schools and libraries. In this way, students enrolled in ENGL001H will participate in community-enriching civic education.

L ST 301H, Sara Whildin, Associate and Head Librarian

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the structure and tools of information retrieval in various disciplines in order to prepare for honors thesis research.

By the end of this course, students should:

1. know how the literature of his/her discipline is organized.
2. be able to use the major information retrieval tools in his/her discipline.
3. conduct an efficient and effective search for information in his/her discipline.
4. identify, select and evaluate information sources in his/her discipline.
5. document information sources in his/her discipline.
6. apply information to solve specific problems in his/her discipline.

YFE 211U, Dr. Myra Goldschmidt, Associate Professor of English and Honors Coordinator

This course will examine the history, theories and practices of the American Grassroots Social Movement and its impact on Civic Engagement in the last fifty years. Students will explore issues associated with marginalized groups and the role that grassroots organizations have had in giving a 'voice' to these groups. Students will work collaboratively, both in the classroom and in the field, to create their own grassroots 'project.' The course will include a trip to a location TBA.

CAMS 045U, Dr. Arnold Markley, Associate Professor of English

Classical Mythology in Western Art - **Seminar in Rome, Naples and Pompeii**

This course is designed as an introduction to the myths and legends of the classical world, with a particular emphasis on the role of mythology in the development of Western Art. By studying the manner in which the Greeks and Romans depicted their gods and goddesses, and by focusing on the reinterpretations of these stories by Renaissance artists, students will gain a deep appreciation of the literature, art, and culture of both the ancient world and the Italian/European Renaissance. The students' exposure to both ancient and later European art will be dramatically enhanced by travel in Italy. In Rome, Naples, Pompeii, and Herculaneum, we will have the rare opportunity to visit and study the ruins of ancient sites of city life and of worship and to study extant examples of ancient artwork held both in world-class museums and on site in Pompeii and Herculaneum. While it includes traditional reading and writing responses on the ancient myths and a creative project assignment, this course differs from the non-Honors section in requiring Honors students to delve more deeply into ancient literature in their study of the Greeks' depiction of the gods and heroes. Honors students will choose to read either the *Medea* or the *Bacchae* of Euripides and complete a discussion in response to their study of these primary works.

ITALIAN 130H, Dr. Arnold Markley, Associate Professor of English

Rome: Portrait of a City - **Seminar in Rome, Naples and Pompeii**. In this course Honors students will work towards an understanding of the history, architecture, culture, and people of the city of Rome by visiting and experiencing the modern Rome that flourishes today. We will study aspects of Rome's literary, artistic, social, religious, and

political history, concentrating on ways to access specific periods of Rome's past in the modern city. This course is not offered to non-Honors students because it requires students to take the initiative to visit a number of sites representing significant achievements or aspects of life in the following periods: the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, the Papacy and the Middle Ages, the Italian Renaissance, 20th Century Rome, and Rome Today. While the instructor is available to guide the students to these sites, most students tend to choose to arrange their visits on their own. The course will, however, include a required class day-trip to the Ruins of Rome's port city Ostia Antica and of the Emperor Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. Students will also have the opportunity to continue their study of the lives of the ancient Romans in their visits to the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and to the Archaeological Museum of Naples.