Fall, 2016 Honors Seminar Descriptions

Monsters, from Folklore to Reality—Andrew Eklund

We’ll examine history, religion, culture, and science through the medium of monsters and the psychology of fear. We’ll also look at how we respond to the presence of monsters. Alpha predators, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, the supernatural, & invasive species will be analyzed using movies, television, and books (“On Monsters”, “Monsters in America”). We'll focus on the scariest monsters—humans. Through group presentations, designing our own monsters, and a team trivia final in addition to sharing journal entries, we'll discuss how racism, anti-immigration, women's suffrage, and nuclear fears are expressed using monsters. We’ll partake in pumpkin carving, haunted houses and ghost tours.

Soft Core: An introduction to Textile Arts—Katarina Riesing

Ever wanted to make your own silk scarf, create a hand-woven wall hanging or enhance your clothes with embroidery? Get ready to give your fingers a workout - this honors course will put them to work with an introduction to textile arts. In this course we will: work with batik and other silk painting techniques, construct hand looms for weaving experiments, explore basic embroidery stitches for artworks and wearables, and look at historical and contemporary fiber artists for reference and inspiration. This course will require a fee for helping cover the costs of materials. A student project will be required.

Star Wars: Myth, Magic, and Mania—Danielle Gagne

The Force awakened in both new and veteran fans this past December with the release of Episode VII, and Star Wars images ubiquitously appeared on everything from toys to coffee creamer. This course will examine the seven Star Wars films critically and analytically in terms of contemporary myth and storytelling, archetypes, feminism, racism, politics, merchandising, and its general cult-like influence on American Culture through works of fiction, readings, and footage commentary. Weekly quizzes, arguments, and discussions will culminate in a final project examining some aspect of the SW galaxy. NOTE: Students are expected to have watched films prior to the beginning of class.

The Science and History of Alcohol—Garrett McGowan

Medicinally, as a source of nutrients, in worship and religion, and as a social lubricant, alcohol (ethanol) has been used by people from the earliest times to present. It was likely a fortuitous accident tens of thousands of years ago that it came into human culture, and while abused by a minority of drinkers, most derive pleasure from its consumption. In this course, the history and science of ethanol will be examined. A combination of laboratory exercises and lectures will comprise this course; and may include but not be limited to “crafting a homebrew,” analysis of beer/wine/spirits, field trips to vineyards and invited speaker visits.
**Dreams, Dreams, Dreams—Gordon Atlas**

What are dreams all about? Are they really meaningful, interpretable stories that are relevant to our lives or simply irrelevant neuron-firings that amount to unintelligible gibberish? What is the value of examining one’s dreams closely? What is the function of dreams for the human organism? We will explore these questions and plunge into the world of dreams in this seminar. Students will be asked to study their dreams by keeping a dream journal and interpreting their own and others’ dreams. Dream dictionaries, outlandish theories, and poorly conceived beliefs about dreams will be trashed, debunked, and abandoned. Dream groups will be utilized to develop greater self-understanding and interpretative skills.

**Soundtrack to Rebellion: Metal, Punk, and Hardcore—Steve Byrne**

Black Sabbath and The Sex Pistols made Elvis and the Beatles seem quaint; Marilyn Manson and Bad Religion could outsmart Miley and Bieber six ways from Sunday. To what cultural, social, and psychological (or psychotropic) events are the “heaviest” of these musical genres responding? This course combines an exploration of harder-edged music genres with analysis of the psychological underpinnings of their artists and fans. Students will be exposed to a variety of relevant genres and will introduce new artists to the class each week. Psychological theorists, such as Jung, Freud, and Adler, will play a prominent role in discussions. Students will also construct a personal music profile, a multimedia work detailing their genre and artist preferences and their personal/psychological origins.

**Wanderlust—Chase Angier**

Experience walking as a method of investigating people, place, concept, and the environment. In this course we will explore the history of walking, walking art works, and the rural and urban environment. There will be readings/viewings/research about walking, walking assignments each week, and experiential walking projects created by the students. No specific experience necessary. We will be exploring walking through your chosen lens of interest - science, history, art, environmental studies, architecture, engineering etc… Walking shoes and warm clothes required. Angier has created walking art works in Prague, Czech Republic; New York City, United States; and Kyoto, Japan.