Spring ’15 Honors Seminars

Wiseguys, Whackos and Whiners--Jeff Sluyter-Beltrão

This course is based on the assumption that some of those who are widely considered lunatics, ranters or doomsayers actually have quite interesting things to say about the way society works. Drawing from an assortment of controversial short essays, indy films, and internet websites, we’ll explore a wide variety of impassioned riffs – from third-wave feminism, queer theory, and radical environmentalism to race nationalism, revolutionary anarchism and religious fundamentalism.

T'ai Chi: A Way of Life T’ai Chi  - Steve Crosby

T’ai Chi is a way of life that has been practiced by the Chinese for many centuries. This meditative, peaceful “martial art”, is known and regularly practiced daily by millions of people throughout the world. This course intends to have dual emphases. Academically, students will be introduced to T’ai Chi’s early history and its evolution into the contemporary era. To this end, we will explore T’ai Chi’s philosophical background as it links with Chinese culture, with occasional comparisons and contrasts to Western thought. Readings will provide additional stimuli for class discussions, which will include what is meant by the energy “Chi” and the internal power of “Jing”.

Show Me The Money! –Mark Lewis

The purpose of this course is to introduce honors students to the fundamentals of personal financial management in a more creative, interactive and dynamic manner that is used in the regular class. The class will include subject area experts sharing knowledge with the class, a stock investing competition with a $50 cash prize for the winner, and hands-on exercises. We will focus on wealth accumulation, paying off student loans, investment planning, insurance planning, retirement planning and estate planning. At the conclusion of the course, each student will develop their individual financial plan personalized for their unique circumstances.

Alfred E. Nigmas—Garrett McGowan & Andrew Eklund

Throughout history, societies have used puzzles for relaxation and encrypting information. More recently, it has been shown that puzzles are an excellent means to flex your brain, to build cognitive ability and maintain mental health as we age. In this course, we'll study, develop, and solve puzzles of many forms - numerical, alphabetical (words), and mechanical. In addition to focusing on the history and importance of cryptography, ciphers ranging from simple substitution to technologically advanced systems will be discussed.
The Car - Geoffrey M. Bowers

There is no more iconic item in modern society that blends art, engineering, science, history, and culture than the automobile, especially in the United States. In this course, we will explore topics such as automotive chemistry, physics, and engineering; the aesthetics of cars; car production; racing and its role in technological development; automotive history; basic auto maintenance; protecting and restoring cars; the rise of auto auctions; cars and television; etc. Through this course, students will develop an increased appreciation of and passion for cars, how they work, how they blend many disciplines, and how they affect our lives.

Dungeons and Dragons: Analyzing the Adventure –Danielle Gagne

Whether your love of the game has turned you into “the cool one,” “the total dork,” or somewhere in between, there is no denying that Dungeons and Dragons has infiltrated many aspects of our culture. This course will explore D&D from multiple perspectives; students will analyze characters and discuss topics related to the literary roots of dungeons and dragons, the societal impact of the game (including its influence on subculture, art, economics, modern films, and video games), the “backlash” from parent and religious groups, personality types and values, racism, identity theory, social networking, the role of myths and storytelling, the spectrum of good and evil, magical beasts, and collaborative cognition.