



# Fall 2021 Honors Courses

## Focus Courses

An honors focus course (HNR 219R) is a discussion-based course focusing on a work or artist of major significance to world civilization. It meets weekly for seven weeks (a half-semester or "block") before a final exam. Any Southern Virginia student is welcome to enroll in focus courses, whether an honors student or not. There are no prerequisites. Sign up through mySVU. First-year students should contact registrar@svu.edu or their academic advisor to add a focus course to their schedules.

### FALL 2021 BLOCK 1 (AUG. 25–OCT. 13)

HNR 219R 01 PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM (0.5), F 8:00-8:50 A.M.

What is love? A desire for the good of our beloved? A drive to exploit another person for our own gratification? An attraction between two halves of an original whole? A force that keeps our bodies, societies, and universe from falling apart? A yearning for Beauty Itself? In this funny and poignant dialogue, Plato depicts Socrates and others at a drinking party where, instead of drinking, they decide to give speeches on love. The result is one of the most influential accounts of human longing, happiness, and enlightenment of all time. **INSTRUCTOR: JOHN ARMSTRONG**

HNR 219R 02 SONDHEIM'S MUSICALS (0.5), M 2:30-3:20 P.M.

Most critics believe Stephen Sondheim is the greatest composer/lyricist in musical theatre history. We will study two of his most popular works to discover why his music and lyrics have transformed the American musical theatre: his masterpiece, Sweeney Todd, and Into the Woods, the musical that Southern Virginia will be presenting in November. **INSTRUCTOR: ROBERT STODDARD**

HNR 219R 03 FRANKL'S *MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING* (0.5), T 5:00-5:50 P.M.

During World War II, Viktor Frankl spent three years at Auschwitz, Dachau, and other concentration camps. Many of his experiences and his developing thoughts on life, love, and ultimate meaning are chronicled in his memoir, *Man's Search for Meaning*. In this classic text, Frankl references and examines Nietzsche's maxim, "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how." Through Frankl's writings, we will explore his ideas on how to instill life with meaning by examining his thoughts on courage during difficult times, relationships, and creativity. **INSTRUCTOR: MICHAEL GIBBONS**

## FALL 2021 BLOCK 2 (OCT. 14–DEC. 16)

HNR 219R 04 NEWTON'S *PRINCIPIA MATHEMATICA* (0.5), M 3:30–4:20 P.M.

Isaac Newton's magnum opus was the most impactful text of the scientific revolution and one of the most important books ever written. Despite its importance, though, many of Newton's contemporaries rejected some of his foundational contributions, and his arguments generate controversy even today. We will read the most important (non-mathematical) parts of the *Principia*, and we'll learn why so many people have found Newton's work so troubling. **INSTRUCTOR: BRYCE GESSELL**

HNR 219R 05 WORDSWORTH'S *THE PRELUDE* (0.5), W 2:30–3:20 P.M.

William Wordsworth began *The Prelude* in 1798 with the intention to explore the growth of his own mind prior to writing his epic, "The Recluse." He continued to write and rewrite *The Prelude* until his death in 1850 while his intended epic went unfinished. We'll read *The Prelude*, discuss why Wordsworth couldn't stop writing it, and consider whether it qualifies as an epic in and of itself.

**INSTRUCTOR: SARAH MAITLAND**

HNR 219R 06 IBN TUFAYL'S *ALIVE, SON OF AWAKE* (HAYY IBN YAQZAN) (0.5), W 6:00–6:50 P.M.

In the philosophical novel *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, a child is raised by deer on a remote, deserted island. While he has the necessities of life, he has no one to teach him to speak, how to behave as a human, or what to believe. But left to himself, he learns things for himself by living in and reflecting upon nature. This classic Arabic text from the 12th century asks how people come to know the truth about God and the universe, and about ethics and science. Centuries later, the book influenced famous European stories like Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Henry Neville's *The Isle of Pines*. **INSTRUCTOR: JEREMIAH JOHN**

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## Seminars

An honors seminar (HNR 395R) is a course on an interdisciplinary topic related to an issue treated in one or more of the university's core courses. Honors students must complete at least one honors seminar for University Honors. Prerequisites: honors student and junior or senior class standing.

## FALL 2021 SEMESTER (AUG. 25–DEC. 16)

HNR 395R 01 GRATITUDE: PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE, AND LIFE (3), MWF 12:30–1:20 P.M.

Gratitude is everywhere: it has its own national holiday, and "thank you" is one of the first phrases a child learns. But we hardly reflect on gratitude at all. When is gratitude owed? How far must you go to honor a debt of gratitude? Is gratitude a burden or the key to a happy life? We will explore such questions through the arguments of philosophers, ancient and modern; the conclusions of positive psychology; and the works of novelists and poets. Ultimately, this course aims to both deepen one's intellectual understanding of and refine one's moral judgments about gratitude. **INSTRUCTOR: DALLIN LEWIS & BRYCE GESSELL**

HNR 395R 02 ANCIENT PSYCHOLOGY (3), TR 12:30–1:45 P.M.

Why do some things move themselves but other things don't? Why do some things perceive the world around them? Why do some things feel emotions? Why do some things come up with theories

to explain what they perceive and feel? The traditional answer is that these things have soul and the things that cannot move themselves, perceive, feel, or think don't have soul. This seminar will explore what ancient Greek and Chinese thinkers said about what the soul's powers are and how a human being should develop them to live a flourishing life. Cross-listed with PHI 355R 01 and PSY 375R 04.

**INSTRUCTOR: JOHN ARMSTRONG**

## Thesis

### FALL 2021 SEMESTER (AUG. 25–DEC. 16)

#### HNR 497 01 HONORS THESIS RESEARCH (1), M 8:00-8:50 A.M. OR OTHER WEEKLY TIME BY MUTUAL ARRANGEMENT

Some honors theses require a preliminary period for research. This optional course allows an honors student to conduct that research under the supervision of a faculty member knowledgeable in the field. The student's research proposal must be approved by that faculty member and the honors program director before the semester begins. The student meets weekly with the faculty supervisor to report on progress. The course may be approved for one, two, or three credit hours, depending on the scale of the student's project. This course is not required for University Honors. Prerequisites: honors student, junior or senior class standing, consent of instructor, and consent of the honors program director. **INSTRUCTOR: JOHN ARMSTRONG AND A FACULTY MEMBER IN THE DISCIPLINE OF THE THESIS**

#### HNR 498 01 HONORS THESIS (2), W 8:00-8:50 A.M. OR OTHER WEEKLY TIME BY MUTUAL ARRANGEMENT

The honors thesis is the capstone of the honors student's college education. It is a student-driven, faculty-supervised, research-based thesis. The course may be a supervised independent study or cross-listed with a senior paper course, although the honors thesis is more in-depth and usually longer than a senior paper. The student completes weekly assignments and meets at least weekly with the faculty supervisor. The course may be approved for two or three credit hours, depending on whether it is an independent study or a course that meets three hours per week. This course is required for University Honors. Prerequisites: honors student, senior class standing, consent of instructor, and consent of honors program director. **INSTRUCTOR: JOHN ARMSTRONG AND A FACULTY MEMBER IN THE DISCIPLINE OF THE THESIS**

