

# Fall 2024 Honors Courses



## Focus Courses

An honors focus course (HNR 219R) is a discussion-based course on a work or artist of significance to world civilization. It meets once a week for seven weeks—a half-semester or “block”—before a final exam. All Southern Virginia students, whether in the Honors Program or not, are welcome to enroll in focus courses. There are no prerequisites. Honors students must complete at least six focus courses for University Honors. 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 2024 BLOCK 1 (AUG. 28–OCT. 16)

#### **HNR 219R 01 Heaney’s Troubles Poetry (.5)**

Seamus Heaney quickly became Ireland’s leading poet with the publication of his first book in 1966, which beautifully captured a coming of age in rural Ireland and celebrated nature and the Irish landscape. His poetry took a dark turn when he addressed “the troubles” of Northern Ireland (violence between the factions standing for Catholic identity and Irish independence on the one hand, and Protestant identity and allegiance to England on the other) through the 1970s and 80s. We will read his poetry closely and discuss the meaning of his tragic depictions of violence in the land he loved.

Instructor & Time: Scott Dransfield, W 11:00–11:50 a.m.

#### **HNR 219R 02 Singer’s *Animal Liberation Now* (.5)**

Peter Singer published *Animal Liberation* in 1975, awakening millions to human mistreatment of animals and inspiring a worldwide movement. In 2023, Singer published *Animal Liberation Now*, updating his data, examples, and arguments. We will examine Singer’s arguments and discuss background topics such as speciation, animal behavior, evolution, and neuroscience.

Instructor & Time: Samuel Hirt, Th 8:30–9:20 a.m.

#### **HNR 219R 03 Walzer’s *Just and Unjust Wars* (.5)**

Michael Walzer is among the most important living American political thinkers. *Just and Unjust Wars* is his most famous book. First published in 1977, it reviews the tradition of just war theory and updates it for the modern world. More than a book of abstract theory, it mixes Walzer’s philosophical arguments about the morality of war with historical examples and classic reflections upon armed conflict.

Instructor & Time: Jeremiah John, M 1:30–2:20 p.m.

#### **HNR 219R 04 Sacred Poetry of Herbert & Donne (.5)**

George Herbert and John Donne, perhaps the most beloved devotional poets in English, were both pastors of the same denomination at the same time within 20 miles of each other, and yet their poetic approach to devotion clashed in fascinating ways. As T. S. Eliot famously said, “Both men were highly intellectual ... with a keen sensibility: but in Donne thought seems in control of feeling, and in Herbert feeling seems in control of thought.” We will examine devotional poetics of thought and feeling in their beautiful and daring poetry, imagining our own intellectual and emotional relationship with God.

Instructor & Time: James Lambert, Th 11:00–11:50 a.m.

#### **FALL 2024 BLOCK 2 (OCT. 17–DEC. 18)**

#### **HNR 219R 05 Cather’s *My Ántonia* (.5)**

Willa Cather’s *My Ántonia* (1918) is considered one of the most significant American novels of the twentieth century. Set during the great migration west to settle the plains of the North American continent, the narrative follows Ántonia Shimerda, a Bohemian immigrant who comes to Nebraska as a child and grows with the country, inspiring a childhood friend, Jim Burden, to write her life story. The novel is important both for its literary aesthetic and as a portrayal of important aspects of American social ideals and history, particularly the centrality of migration to American culture.

Instructor & Time: Ariel Silver, W 11:00–11:50 a.m.

#### **HNR 219R 06 Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* (.5)**

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 which he examines Nietzsche’s maxim, “He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.” We will explore Frankl’s ideas on how to instill life with meaning by examining his thoughts on courage, relationships, and creativity.

Instructor & Time: Michael Gibbons, T 2:30–3:20 p.m.

#### **HNR 219R 07 Shakespeare & Kurosawa (.5)**

Nothing speaks to William Shakespeare’s enduring, universal appeal more than the interest of film directors over the years and across the globe in adapting his plays to the screen. Few Shakespeare adaptations have been as successful or as well-received as Akira Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* and *Ran*, adaptations of *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, respectively. Kurosawa, the master of samurai films, transforms Shakespeare’s tragedies into the world of Japanese courtly politics to devastating effect.

Instructor & Time: Dallin Lewis, W 2:30–3:20 p.m.

### **HNR 219R 08 Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates* (.5)**

Socrates' friends loved and admired him for valuing virtue and wisdom above all else. Several of them wrote dialogues portraying his philosophical conversations, but the dialogues of only Plato and Xenophon have survived. Xenophon was a few years older than Plato and became a distinguished military leader and historian. His *Memoirs of Socrates* conveys the morally transforming power of Socrates' arguments and personality, adding details about Socrates' beliefs not found in Plato, including his beliefs about God.

Instructor & Time: John Armstrong, F 10:00–10:50 a.m.

## Honors Seminars

An honors seminar (HNR 395R) is a discussion-based 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: junior or senior class standing. Sophomores with appropriate background studies will be considered.

### **FALL 2024 SEMESTER**

#### **HNR 395R 01 The Nuclear Age (3)**

What are the scientific, social, and political implications of the rise of nuclear science, nuclear weapons, and nuclear energy? The military and economic uses of nuclear fission transformed the 20th century, just as harnessing fossil fuels and the power of steam propulsion changed the world in the 19th century. The Industrial Revolution led many to hope for a richer, more peaceful, and more enlightened world but also unleashed a long period of colonialism, war, and revolution. The Nuclear Age offers both the hope of a utopia without energy scarcity and the threat of human extinction. We live in this paradox today: poverty and illiteracy have continued to plummet while environmental concerns warn of an uninhabitable planet. Nuclear science is still central to these hopes and fears. Cross-listed with POL 345R.

Instructors & Time: Jeremiah John & Tim Knudson, TR 12:30–1:45 p.m.

#### **HNR 395R 02 Ancient Psychology (3)**

Why do some things move themselves and others don't? Why do some things perceive the world, feel emotions, and come up with theories to explain what they perceive and feel? The traditional answer is that these things have soul. We will examine ancient Greek and Chinese theories of soul and how a human being should cultivate and direct the soul's powers to live a flourishing life. Cross-listed with PHI 355R & PSY 375R.

Instructor & Time: John Armstrong, TR 8:00–9:15 a.m.

#### **HNR 395R 03 Peacemaking (3)**

How can Christ's restored gospel heal our relationships and societies? Understanding causes of conflict, violence, and oppression is essential to their amelioration. Understanding principles of

peacemaking in latter-day revelation motivates Christ's disciples to champion reconciliation over division. In addition to producing such understanding in its students and faculty, this seminar will include peacemaking projects. Cross-listed with BUS 375R.

Instructors & Time: John Armstrong & Todd Brotherson, MWF 9:00–9:50 a.m.

## Honors Thesis

### **FALL 2024 SEMESTER**

#### **HNR 497 01 Honors Thesis Research (1)**, *weekly time by mutual arrangement*

A particular honors thesis might require a preliminary period of 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)**, *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

For more information about the Honors Program, visit [svu.edu/honors](https://svu.edu/honors).

