



Spring 2022 Honors Courses

Focus Courses

What is an honors focus course (HNR 219R)? It's 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. 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.

SPRING 2022 BLOCK 1 (JAN. 12—MARCH 2)

HNR 219R 01 JAMES'S *THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE* (0.5), F 2:30–3:20 P.M.

When we think about knowledge generally, we are strongly inclined to think of perceptual experiences as justifying both our beliefs in the objects of the external world and our beliefs about them. But what justifies our belief in God and our beliefs about Him? In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James (1842–1910) offers a way of thinking of religious experience as justifying belief in God. But then another problem arises: people all over the world have religious experiences, but they believe in radically different kinds of gods. We will discuss James's account of the justification for our beliefs in and about God and how he addresses the plurality of religious experience.

INSTRUCTOR: JAN-ERIK JONES

HNR 219R 02 'A'ISHAH AL-BA'UNIYYAH'S MYSTICAL PATH TO GOD (0.5), T 8:30–9:20 A.M.

'A'ishah al-Ba'uniyyah (c.1456–1517 CE) is one of the greatest female mystics, poets, and scholars in the Islamic tradition. In *The Principles of Sufism*, she offers her audience a manual on how to achieve mystical union with God. We will examine and follow the path she lays out for her readers, exploring the foundations of Islamic mysticism and ethics and experiencing its relevance in our own lives.

INSTRUCTOR: ANDREW SORBER

**HNR 219R 03 BACH'S SACRED WORKS (0.5),
F 8:00–8:50 A.M.**

Mass in B Minor by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) is one of the most alluring pieces of sacred music ever written. A monumental work for orchestra, chorus, and soloists, it is regarded as one of the most impressive achievements in all musical history and serves as a grand summation of Bach's compositional output. We will explore the history and influence of the mass, its musical structures and liturgical form, and the sacred symbolism found throughout the work in text, harmony, and numerology. We will also explore Bach's compositional process and discuss relevant biographical details. The *St. Matthew Passion* and the *St. John Passion* will be referenced and studied in a similar manner.

INSTRUCTOR: JAKOB HOFER

SPRING 2022 BLOCK 2 (MARCH 3—MAY 5)

**HNR 219R 05 WOLLSTONECRAFT'S A
VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN (0.5),
M 5:00–5:50 P.M.**

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman by Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) was one of the most important arguments for gender equality of its period. While it fell out of public favor after Godwin published his scandalous biography of Wollstonecraft, privately it continued to influence thinkers for many years to come. Even today portions of her argument are considered revolutionary. We will study Wollstonecraft's short text in its entirety and discuss why her argument was considered too revolutionary then and, sometimes, now.

INSTRUCTOR: SARAH MAITLAND

**HNR 219R 04 CONFUCIUS'S ANALECTS (0.5),
TH 5:00–5:50 P.M.**

Confucius (551–479 B.C.) is one of the most influential thinkers of all time. The *Analects* is a collection of his sayings and those of his students. It shows their efforts to create harmonious societies of virtuous rulers and citizens. Their efforts seem always to have failed, but readers of the *Analects* have found inspiration and guidance for their own lives for thousands of years. The People's Republic of China has emerged as one of the two most powerful nations on earth, and its president, Xi Jinping, has encouraged its citizens to study Confucius's teachings. Discussing the *Analects* not only helps us reflect on what is important in life; it also helps us understand the culture of the world's most populous country.

INSTRUCTOR: JOHN ARMSTRONG

**HNR 219R 06 NIETZSCHE'S ON THE GENEALOGY
OF MORALS (0.5), M 8:00–8:50 A.M.**

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) is famous for being a polemical atheist and critic of Christianity, but he was also a critic of the way people in the modern world think about morality, including concepts like evil, responsibility, guilt, equality, and justice. His *On the Genealogy of Morals* traces the origins of moral ideas that seem to us to be common sense, but which are for Nietzsche a legacy of religious, social, and political developments that began in the ancient world.

INSTRUCTOR: JEREMIAH JOHN

HNR 219R 07 DARWIN'S ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES (0.5), W 8:00–8:50 A.M.

Evolution was an emerging idea when Charles Darwin (1809–1882) published his book in 1859. However, previous arguments for evolution had lacked a mechanism that explained how evolution worked. Natural selection was Darwin's major contribution. The *Origin* presented his idea and expanded it with numerous examples that he had collected over 20 years. Darwin set forth many ideas that became the foundation of evolutionary biology. Even in the 21st century, evolutionary biologists remark on how much Darwin got right with the limited understanding of inheritance in his day.

INSTRUCTOR: JARED LEE

HNR 219R 08 SMITH'S THE WEALTH OF NATIONS (0.5), F 2:30–3:20 P.M.

Adam Smith (1723–1790), a major thinker of the Scottish Enlightenment, is often called the father of modern economics because of his influential discussions of the division of labor, productivity, free markets, and related topics in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. We will discuss Smith's views on the nature and causes of wealth, compare and contrast them with the views of other thinkers, and consider what Smith's 250-year-old words can teach us today.

INSTRUCTOR: ZEBULEN RILEY

Seminars

What is an honors seminar (HNR 395R)? It's 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: honors student and junior or senior class standing.

SPRING 2022 SEMESTER (JAN. 12—MAY 5)

HNR 395R 01 MARCH OF THE WOMEN (3), TR 12:30–1:45 P.M.

In the first half of the 20th century as women fought for their voices to be heard, Dame Ethel Smyth, the English suffragette who kept composing from prison; Amy Beach, the American housewife who overcame an abusive marriage to perform her own music; and Florence Price, the first African-American woman to have her music performed by a major symphony, created worlds that have quietly influenced generations of composers and performers. We will study their work and the literary, historical, and theoretical contexts from which they composed. Cross-listed with MUS 375R.

INSTRUCTORS: MEGAN MASON & SARAH MAITLAND

HNR 395R 02 MINDS, BRAINS, AND NEUROSCIENCE (3), MWF 1:30–2:20 P.M.

How much do we learn about the mind by studying the brain? This question is not as easy to answer as it looks. In fact, it takes a detailed knowledge of cutting-edge science and philosophy to even appreciate the issues involved! But that is just the detailed knowledge you will gain during this class. We'll learn about the brain, the mind, neuroscience, and psychology in order to see what they do (or don't) tell us about human behavior. Cross-listed with PHI 335R and PSY 375R.

INSTRUCTOR: BRYCE GESSELL

Thesis

SPRING 2022 SEMESTER (JAN. 12—MAY 5)

**HNR 497 01 HONORS THESIS RESEARCH (1),
M 9:00–9:50 A.M. OR OTHER WEEKLY TIME BY
MUTUAL ARRANGEMENT**

A particular honors thesis might 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.

**INSTRUCTORS: JOHN ARMSTRONG AND
A FACULTY MEMBER IN THE DISCIPLINE
OF THE THESIS**

**HNR 498 01 HONORS THESIS (2), W 9:00–9:50
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.

**INSTRUCTORS: JOHN ARMSTRONG AND
A FACULTY MEMBER IN THE DISCIPLINE
OF THE THESIS**

