SCOTT ABBOTT, Professor of Integrated Studies  
HONR 2100— European Short Fiction

The stories Boccaccio’s characters tell while sheltering from the black plague in fourteenth-century Italy resonate through the ensuing centuries. In their short fiction, Miguel de Cervantes, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Nikolai Gogol, Gustave Flaubert, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Edna O’Brien, Jenny Erpenbeck, and David Albahari explore what it means to be human in sixteenth-century Spain, nineteenth-century Germany, Russia, and France, and twentieth-century Ireland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Yugoslavia. We’ll use their work to explore the stories through which we form our own identities, our own ways of inhabiting the world.

BRENDAN McCARTHY, Assistant Professor of History  
HONR 2000— Rome: From Romulus to Mussolini

When we think of Rome, we often think of a sprawling empire expanding from Britain to Iraq overlooking the fact that that gigantic political and military structure started as one city. This class will focus on the city of Rome and discuss the ways in which our own cities and urban structures are influenced by the greatest city of ancient Europe.

Rome was founded about 3000 years ago as a series of small hill-top settlements on a series of craggy hills surrounding the marshy floodplain of the Tiber River. This class will study how those small settlements united and became a regional then continental power. We will discuss the role infrastructure and legal systems played in the process and how Rome as a city defined the way the Roman military behaved and encouraged its successes and failures. We will also discuss how the collapse of the empire and the emergence of the papacy further changed the city. We will read from ancient beatniks, slave testimonials, medieval tour guides, and fascist propaganda.

Rome was such an influential and powerful city that it formed the model for urban life throughout Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. European colonization and imperialism spread that model even farther. This class will focus on how that legacy has influenced modern cities, including Salt Lake City and Provo.

In order to best study the affect urban space and infrastructure had on Roman life through history, we will be using digital tools to present historical data. We will map the days of famous Romans and create digital tours of cities influenced by Rome. The semester will be capped off with a creative capstone project presenting the legacy of Rome’s urban environment in an interactive and open-ended project.

THOMAS BRETZ, Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
HONR 2000—“Nature, Society and Technology”

In this course, we are going to delve into the complex relationships between nature and society in the ancient world as well as the ways these relationships were mediated through technology. To do so, we going to look at some classical and early modern texts from European, Euro-descendant, and non-Western cultures. This will allow us to map and then critically examine the various ways in which we understand nature, society, and technology as well as their relationship in the ancient world.
SHANNON MUSSETT, Asst. Chair, Professor of Philosophy  
HONR 2000—Legacies of Greatness

Using primary texts drawn from the genres of poetry, philosophy, literature, and religion, this course surveys an extensive period of ancient and medieval history from an interdisciplinary perspective. We begin at the origins of Western literature with Homer’s *Iliad*, a work central to the education of ancient Greek citizens and possibly, the greatest story ever told. Following this, we will study Greek tragedy in the writings of Aeschylus, political science in the words of Pericles, and philosophy in Plato’s dialogue, *Protagoras*. We then turn to a study of religion in the *Book of Job* and selections from Buddhist thought. We conclude the semester through reading and comparing medieval literature from the East and West in the figures of Murasaki Shikibu and Geoffrey Chaucer. Finally, we will watch Akira Kurosawa’s *Ran*, which is a cinematic interpretation of Shakespeare’s famous tragedy, *King Lear*, set in feudal Japan.

NATHAN GORELICK, Professor of English  
HONR 2100— Contagion and Community

In this course, we will consider the history of modern civilization as a series of contagions and resulting containment strategies. Beginning with the Black Death and moving to the present, we will find that modernity itself can best be understood as a vast and dynamic metaphor for humanity’s anxieties toward, vulnerabilities to, and resistances against contagion.

This metaphorical dimension of the modern era is most evident in artistic and philosophical reactions to plague and pestilence whose roots extend at least as far back as Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decameron* — a celebration of sensuality and storytelling set at the height of the Black Death in 1348, published only a decade after this disease eradicated at least a third of Europe’s inhabitants. Other artistic monuments to humanity’s periodic confrontations with this sort of widespread trauma, and with the dis-ease or anxiety such traumas provoke, include Daniel Defoe’s celebrated *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) and Albert Camus’ *The Plague* (1947), as well as contemporary speculative fictions such as José Saramago’s *Blindness*, Octavia E. Butler’s *Earthseed* Trilogy, Alfonso Cuarón’s film *Children of Men* (2006), and even modern takes on folk figures like vampires, zombies, and other variations on the living dead. We will explore these texts and figures in order to examine the ways in which they contribute to, complicate, or challenge the political and social problems pandemics expose or provoke, including local and global wealth inequality, xenophobia, and the development of broad surveillance apparatuses in the interest of “national security.”

The concept of contagion cannot, however, be restricted to matters of infectious disease or even physical illness. It circulates throughout the divisive rhetorics of community identity or national belonging that, together with police and military measures, aim violently to protect the supposed purity of the body politic by treating people or whole populations as pathologies or contaminants. This sort of dehumanization by which a community seeks to sanitize or eradicate some element of itself, as if suffering from a collective autoimmune disorder, further
extends to anyone deemed “abnormal,” and whose very existence thereby disturbs a society’s vision of its own physical or mental health. We therefore will situate the literature, art, and cinema of contagion within a broader intellectual history of psychological, physical, and spiritual pathology in order to grasp how and why contagion is the central metaphor through which modern civilizations attempt to draw the uncertain divide between normal and abnormal, “us” and “them,” and finally self and other.

BRUCE WILSON, Associate Professor, Chemistry
HONR 2100—The Legacy of Alchemy

Alchemy, the attempt to prolong life and turn base metals into gold, started as a philosophical explanation of the operation of nature. Alchemy ended as a refuge for charlatans. Though we have abandoned the quest for making gold, those philosophical reasonings are still being used today in the prolonging of life. We will read the original writings of the philosophers and alchemists to study how ideas are born, how they spread, how they change over centuries and cultures, and what it takes to destroy an idea that “everybody believes in.” You will write several papers: an analysis of a modern usage of alchemical arguments, a process description obscured from the “unworthy” as an allegory, and summary papers where you condense the important changes in thought as alchemy moved between cultures. You will have access to thousands of alchemical texts, but our main readings will be from The Alchemy Reader: From Hermes Trismegistus to Isaac Newton edited by Stanton Linden.

T. HEATH OGDEN, Associate Professor, Biology
HONR 2100—The Evolution of Evolution and its Impact on Society

Evolution is the central organizing concept of Biology and evolution “unites … the world of purposeless, meaningless, matter-in-motion on the one side with the world of purpose, meaning, and design on the other” (Daniel Dennet). The course will investigate the rich history of evolutionary thought and its impact on society. Because evolution is a scientific theory we will overview what science is (and is not) and why scientific thinking and critical thinking are a necessary part of informing our worldviews. We will examine the people and ideas that predate Darwin and how they influenced him. We will dedicate significant time to Darwin and his contemporaries (Wallace and others) and the ideas of natural selection, tree like thinking, and the book Origin of Species. We will follow evolutionary advancements to modern day, highlighting how evolution affects our modern world. And we will examine science and society, including areas of supposed conflict between evolution and religion.