

Fall 2023 Ancient Legacies

Dr. Rick McDonald, Department of English and Literature

“Classic or Contemporary?”

HONR 2000-001 and -002

This Course will read a variety of heroic stories from antiquity (Greek, Roman, Indian), and European Medieval and Renaissance literature (English, French, Italian). The books we will be reading are more than “Classics”; the people who wrote “the Classics” read and often revered the works you will be studying. These texts have had a broad impact on literature and thought in the western world. There are many works which are their equal in artistry, but these works constitute some of the most influential literature ever created. They were enjoyed and respected by their contemporary audiences and their effects are often just as strong today. Every work we are reading will be a translation of a great work from another (often ancient) culture. Changes from one language to another and one culture to another sometimes require greater concentration on our part, but you will find that most of what these works have to say is still interesting in our day and easily applicable to segments of our world.

When you complete this class you will be that much more an educated individual. You will have participated in a reading process that began by at least 19 B.C.E in the Western world and which has been observed through the Renaissance and quite obviously up until today. The world changes and what is important sometimes does as well, but the issues important to the contemporary audiences of these works are not that far removed from our own interests: War, love, inhumanity, suffering, faith, honor, compassion, fairness, equality, power, damnation, redemption, and salvation.

Dr. Grant Moss, Department of English and Literature

“What Is a Hero?”

HONR 2000-003 and -004

This course will look at a number of texts and artifacts and consider such questions as:

- How do we memorialize great people and great events?
- How do legends of heroes and events inform our world view(s)?
- How important is it that we understand the differences between the legend and reality?

Materials will include such works as The Epic of Gilgamesh, Homer’s Odyssey, and selections from the Old Testament as well as modern works which examine the ancient world, such as Werner Herzog’s film Cave of Forgotten Dreams.

Dr. Brendon McCarthy, Department of History and Political Science

“Sports and History”

HONR 2000-X01

This section of Ancient Legacies will investigate the role of sports in societies throughout history and the way scholars use modern sports to better understand the past. We will focus on art and literature, modern and ancient, as we explore major issues like creating communities through competition, using competition to establish social hierarchies, and the physical effects of life on the human body.

Fall 2023 Modern Legacies

Dr. Linda Shelton, Department of English and Literature
“English, Propaganda, and Racism”
HONR 2100-001 and -005

Many people are becoming aware of how racism is systemic in American culture. An integral part of that culture is our language. Have we been subjected to racist propaganda in our cultural system? This course will investigate if Standard American English (SAE) is systemically racist. We will search for the roots of SAE, its development, acceptance, and rise to global power. Parallel to the history of SAE is the history of racism throughout the U.S. We will examine both histories and look for connections, including our current culture and the position for people of color in America.

Dr. Iaan Reynolds, Department of Philosophy and Humanities
“Monstrous Modernity”
HONR 2100-002 and -004

This course will focus on the themes of monstrosity and human creation in the modern intellectual tradition. While much of this tradition is concerned with expanding human rationality and overcoming superstition, we will study some of the dynamics and patterns often obscured by this focus. What forms of unintelligibility or monstrosity does the enlightenment narrative of historical progress overlook? Are these cases necessary paradoxes of modernity? How do we account for those beings incapable of being assimilated into a rational order? After gaining a philosophical background into the enlightenment tradition, we will broadly explore these themes as they occur in literature and philosophy. Aside from reading Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* in full, we will explore these themes as they have appeared in authors such as Dante, Karl Marx, Hannah Arendt, and Susan Sontag.

Dr. Brian Birch, Department of Philosophy and Humanities
“The Challenge of Religious Diversity”
HONR 2100-003

This course will explore the historical and theoretical development of the problem of religious diversity. These issues lie at the heart of the rise of modernism, so we will trace how concepts of diversity developed from the Renaissance to the present day. Students will examine classic and contemporary texts in legal theory, philosophy, theology, and religious studies. Authors include Thomas More, Roger Williams, John Locke, Martha Nussbaum, James Madison, Diana Eck, Talal Asad, and others.

Tiffany Nez and Kumen Louis, Honors Program
Native American Literature and the Culture of Storytelling
HONR 2100-006

This course will focus on the cultural and social activity of storytelling through the personal and fictional narratives of North American Indian writers. We will study contemporary American Indian poetry, fiction, essays, and theories of American Indians and their tribal identity and culture and the ways in which tribes function within the larger “American” context. While we will focus on

contemporary writers, we will also look at the importance of oral traditions and the historic, cultural, and social contexts out of which contemporary American Indians write. We will consider how American Indian writers see the world they live in, and how these writers envision identity, self, place, through the tradition of storytelling. We will read Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko, Alexie Sherman, N. Scott Momaday, Joy Harjo, Bojan Louis.