Edgar Fellows Courses

Fall 2018

F/HONR 204: Honors Seminar in Fine Arts

The Great War in Literature and the Arts

Instructor: Beverly Evans (Languages and Literatures)

Description: This course will examine literature, music, paintings/drawings, and films by representative writers and artists whose works reflect their personal experience during the Great War and/or the impact of the Great War on their respective cultures. Attention will be given to writers and artists on both sides of the conflict. It will also focus on the remarkable afterlife of World War I-related literature and art in connection with collective memory and national identity of the present day.

HONR 205: Honors Seminar in the Sciences

How to Build a Habitable Planet

Instructor: Margaret Reitz (President's Commission on Sustainability, Adjunct Faculty, Geology)

Description: From media outlets and scientists across the globe, we hear that our planet is in trouble. But what exactly does that mean? This course delves into why the planet Earth was habitable by carbon-based life in the first place, events in Earth History that paved the way for the human species, and considerations about what it may take to maintain the planet for human survival into the future. [NOTE: This course does *NOT* satisfy the N/ Natural Science general education requirement.]

HONR 203: Honors Seminar in the Social Sciences

The Second Darwinian Revolution

Instructor: Paul McLaughlin (Sociology)

Description: This seminar will be a collaborative exploration of the proposition that a Second Darwinian Revolution is occurring across the social sciences. We will consider the pure and applied motivations for this revolution and the intellectual and social implications of its realization. We will begin by examining several deeply-rooted Western ideas that constitute the pre- Darwinian worldview—Judeo-Christian anthropocentrism, essentialism, the nature/nurture dichotomy, the Chain of Being, the idea of progress, humoral theory and Francis Bacon’s patriarchal scientific program. Through historical/theoretical accounts and case studies students will consider how these ideas have shaped the moral and political landscape, buttressed systems of social stratification and structured our relationship with nature for two thousand years. We will then examine how the Darwinian revolution systematically overturned each of these assumptions, generating a new synthesis which radically altered our understanding of nature by explaining the origins and dynamics of biological diversity and adaptation. Finally, we will investigate several emerging evolutionary theories of social change--e.g., evolutionary epistemology, history, economics, anthropology and archeology, organizational ecology, complexity theory, and my own work on adaptive landscapes--and how they provide a better understanding of the interactions between structural diversity, environmental adaptation and human agency and how that understanding can provide new insights into the critical social and environmental problems confronting us in the coming century.