**HONR 392**

**Section 1: Being Human: You as a Biological Being! - T. Dewey**

Have you ever wondered how the evolutionary history of Homo sapiens has shaped you? What are the unique aspects of human brains, language, and culture that have been influenced by our evolutionary history and still impact your life today? Explore the unique biological aspects of Homo sapiens and how our biology impacts decision-making, health, psychology, and interactions with other humans through readings, videos, podcasts, and discussion. Conduct independent research on remarkable or impactful human innovations and how our history of innovation may change the future.

**Section 2: The Beat Generation Writers - A. Merline**

The Beat Generation is a term used to describe both a group of American writers who came to prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the cultural phenomena that they wrote about and inspired. This class will explore the influence of the legendary group of American writers who came to prominence during this era who challenged the values of American society after World War II, and paved the way for the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s. We examine the lives and literature of Neal Cassady (Collected Letters), Allen Ginsberg (Howl, Kaddish, America), Jack Kerouac (On The Road), and William Burroughs (Naked Lunch) and other minor poets and poetry that exemplify this generation of writers.

**Section 3: The Passion Within: Adventures in Creativity - F. Glycenfer**

Consider what life would be like if we truly discovered our passions and were able to share them in a vivid way that captures the imagination of influential people in our lives. This seminar presents ways to rediscover our passions through developing a heightened awareness of creativity in social interactions, scientific investigations, and improvisational settings. Students will begin to reap the benefits of a creative life by experiencing how their creative passions impact the world around us. Students will progress through a series of creative stepping stones in order to build a strong foundation for sharing their passions in a variety of everyday life situations. Creative passions are not just for the talented few – it is an opportunity for adventure we all can share.

**Section 4 and 7: You’d Be Murdered for This: Art, Political Regimes and Morality - S. Zwick-Tapley**

Imagine a painting so scandalous you’d be imprisoned. Imagine a play so threatening you’d be tortured. Imagine a book so controversial you’d be exiled for life. Imagine a film so revolutionary you’d be killed. Throughout history art has challenged dictators, religion and sexual norms and has been blamed for the destruction of morality and civilization. What are these works of art and what made them so threatening? And did these works of art succeed in bringing about the change so feared? This class will explore controversial art from around the world (Europe, Asia, South America and Africa) and look at the political, sociological, and psychological frameworks specific to each culture. Art forms covered will include theatre, dance, the visual arts, film and literature.
Section 5: You Watch While I Revise the World: Investigating the History, Development and Dramatic Cultural Impact of Musical Theatre - W. Longacre

What do you think of when you hear the term “musical theatre”? Jazz hands, box steps, and chorus lines? Or do you see images of protest, productions directly ripped from the headlines reflecting gang violence and war, or musicals that expose the plight of historically marginalized and oppressed people groups? The images that come to mind are often contrary to the deep social, political, philosophical, ethical and historical roots that have established most of musical theatre for its history. Certainly, musical theatre has entertained countless audience members for decades through innovative and exciting choreography, music and dialogue. But this class will explore the ways in which it has adapted and changed according to our political and social milieu, and the ways in which it has commented on, critiqued and shaped that very dialogue. Students will view and analyze—the ways musical theatre has changed since its inception, looking at both the aesthetic innovations and sociopolitical commentary imbedded within each musical we view. In our readings, dialogue and written responses, students will take part in considering musical theatre through multiple theoretical lenses, from postcolonialism to gender/queer studies, Marxism to deconstruction, and others. By the end of the semester, students will have a deeper understanding—and, hopefully, appreciation—for the ways that musical theatre has not only commented on and reflected the times in which it was created, but how it has also contributed to shaping the very development of our cultural history.

Section 6: Myth Busters: Science, Pseudoscience, and Just Plain Nonsense - D. Mykles

What is science? What isn’t? Modern western science is a product of the Age of Reason in the 18th century, but its origins are traced back to the ancient Greeks. Skepticism and the scientific method are critical to modern scientific practice. Throughout history there has always been an uneasy relationship between science and culture. Science as a human activity is influenced by culture and vice versa. The seminar weaves science philosophy, methodology, and history with social and cultural contexts. “Culture wars” centered around heliocentrism, evolution, relativity, genetically-modified organisms, and climate change are examined. A major part of the course is devoted to evaluating claims purporting to use “scientific” evidence. Topics include: vitamin C as a cold remedy, homeopathy, Social Darwinism and Eugenics, detoxification and cleansing methods, nutrient supplements and diets, drugs and the pharmaceutical industry, vaccinations and autism, cancer and electromagnetic fields, placentophagy, and hypnobirthing. Are there common strategies people use? The placebo effect and confirmation bias are discussed. You will have an opportunity to investigate a claim and present it to the class. The goal is to equip you with practical tools for making science-informed decisions, and not simply accept a claim at face value; in other words, being a skeptic. The seminar concludes with a section on bioethics and social policy, using “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” as a resource.

Section 7: See section 4

Section 8: Coming of Age at the Movies - C. Burgwardt

For many children, teenagers, and young adults, viewing films in theatres or homes is a primary method of entertainment and socialization. In a sense, many of us “come of age” at the movies, and
our memories are fused with touching, funny, or enlightening cinematic scenes, as well as real-life rites of passage. Not surprisingly, numerous consequential films depict this poignant transition. As a group, these films form a category, or genre, commonly known as “coming-of-age.” This course will analyze fifteen coming-of-age films from the 1930s to the present. We will explore how cinematic definitions of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood have changed over time and across cultures. In conducting this survey, we will learn the basic principles of film criticism, consider how films are adapted from novels, and appreciate the work of some of the greatest directors in the world, including Fleming, Kazan, Renoir, Fellini, Truffaut, Bogdanovich, Hallström, Malle, Singleton, and Miyazaki, among others. Please note: We will have one required, in-class film screening per week.