

Fall 2025 Humanities Colloquia



Religion East and West: The Big Questions (and Answers in Words and Art)

Paula Levin

HONOR 350 – 001

TTh 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm

We will examine the teachings of Eastern and Western Religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam - in their attempts to guide us to answers to The Big Questions: What is the meaning of life, how should I live, what happens after life, what is God. We will experience the great world of artistic expression of religious ideas through literature, virtual tours, visual media, and music. Guest lecturers will enhance our understanding of religion as it is practiced today. The emphasis of the course is on class discussion of what we experience and react to.

Forever Young: Looking at Popular Culture Through an Intergenerational Lens

Lisa Rhoades

HONOR 350 – 002

TTh 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm

“Beta babies” made their debut as we welcomed 2025. Following on the heels of Gen. Alpha, this newly minted generation and their anticipated trends in popular culture and technology is expected to carry us through the next 15 years. What does this mean? Can we identify people and their characteristics by virtue of their birth year? In this course, we will examine many dynamic facets of popular culture, viewing them through an intergenerational lens that asks us to reconsider what it means to be a baby boomer, a Gen-Xer, or a Millennial. How do the recent trends in popular novels, films, and social media transcend these boundaries and ask us to redefine who and what we are? Can both you and your grandparents be Potter fans? Are you reading the same novels you see on your mom’s nightstand? Have Disney movies finally embraced a diverse world? Class discussion of these and other compelling questions will lead students to complete short response essays, mini presentations, and a final project.

Humanitarian Social Media-Yes or No?

Carrie Tomko

HONOR 350 – 003

MWF 9:40 am – 10:30 am

Social media brings instantaneous news, information, and entertainment. Is it accurate in detail? Is it even true? Is it responsible "journalism"? Does it benefit humanity? Does it require accountability? This colloquium looks at the good, bad, and even the "ugly" of social media, studying the impact on culture.

Fall 2025 Humanities Colloquia



Are We Our Brains?

Nathaniel Blower

HONOR 350 – 004

MWF 10:45 am – 11:35 am

In this class we will discuss a number of topics related to the question: Are we our brains? The central focus of the course will be a dispute between Peter Hacker and Daniel Dennett. Hacker argues against the habit in neuroscience of treating brains as though they were people: assuming that brains think, feel, perceive, intend and do all manner of things that ordinarily we say people do, not their brains. Daniel Dennett defends the neuroscientists, claiming that Hacker pays too much attention to what we ordinarily say. As we discuss this dispute, we will touch on a number of traditionally philosophical questions about free-will, the afterlife, morality, subjectivity and more. On the more scientific side, we will discuss topics in neuroscience, computer science, mathematics, linguistics and more.

The Play's the Thing

Dane Leasure

HONOR 350 – 005

MW 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

TBD

Adapting the Mystery: The Mystery of Adaptation

Matthew Wyszynski

HONOR 350 – 801 (Hybrid)

M 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

The classical mystery story/novel is a genre known for its strict conventions and the obligation of the author to “play fair” with the reader. This colloquium will examine some of the works of a few canonical mystery writers (Doyle, Christie, Stout), analyze how these authors establish, reinforce, and expand the limits of the genre. We will also move on to adaptations of these well-known works—as TV shows, films, podcasts, and even board games—to study how one genre and medium is adapted to other forms. There will be class discussion, several exams, and a final project.