**Honors Special Topics Courses for Fall 2018**

**Humanities Disciplinary**

**HONS 281 Myth and War in Context (Professor Samuel Flores)**

This course examines the use and appropriation of Greco-Roman mythology in diverse times and places from antiquity to the present, focusing especially on the stories pertaining to the mythical Trojan War. The assigned readings will focus on the topic of war and suffering in literature, evaluating how the primary sources reflect on this question. We will look at how these the Trojan War myths are adapted to their changing contexts. We will begin with the epic poems of Homer (the earliest literary depictions of the Trojan War) and trace the changes in these stories from Greek tragedy and Roman epic through modern appropriations in World War II era European philosophy, post-colonial Caribbean poetry, American film, and 21st century Canadian novel.

**Social Sciences Disciplinary**

**HONS 282 Language and Culture (Professor Moore Quinn)**

This course is an honors version of ANTH 205: Language and Culture. Students study language in its social and cultural context, stressing the relationships between language and the transmission of meaning, worldview, and social identity.

**Humanities Interdisciplinary**

**HONS 381 Approaches to Religion: Sacred Sites and Sustainability (Professor Todd LeVasseur)**

This course provides an overview of how religious studies scholars have approached theorizing and analyzing the phenomena of “sacred sites.” The course begins with an overview of leading theorists and their theories related to sacred sites, covering Mircea Eliade, Vine Deloria, Emile Durkheim, and others. Key terms and concepts used to analyze sacred sites will be explored, including concepts such as ritual, pilgrimage, traditional ecological knowledge, and axis mundi. Students will systematically explore case studies of sacred sites, including Native American, Hindu, Buddhist, neopagan, and bioregionalist conceptions of sacrality and sacred geographies/sacred places. The course will then use these explorations to evaluate the role religious adherents may play in supporting efforts for sustainability via the protection and management of sacred sites. Students are required to journey to Earthaven ecovillage outside of Asheville, NC over fall break to learn about how this place is sacred to residents, and how these residents therefore manage and interact with it.

**HONS 381 On Thinking (Professor Thomas Nadelhoffer)**

The goal of this course is to explore the nature of thought, broadly construed. In the beginning of the course, we will quickly survey a few revolutions (or paradigm shifts) that occurred in the philosophy of mind and psychology between the seventeenth century and the mid-twentieth century-namely, the development of dualism, behaviorism, mind-brain identity, functionalism, and computationalism. Second, we will briefly discuss the so-called "cognitive revolution" and the birth of cognitive science. Third, we will read two popular press books. The first book is by Daniel Kahneman-a cognitive scientist and Nobel Laureate in Economics. The second book is by Richard Thaler (a leading behavioral economist) and Cass Sunstein {a leading political scientist and legal theorist). During this part of the course, we will explore issues like the modularity of the mind, cognitive biases, heuristics, nudges, and other topics that arise in contemporary cognitive science. Finally, we will explore some recent work in robot {or machine) ethics that covers material ranging from moral psychology and free will to the complex relationship between humans and the ever-more-sophisticated technologies we are inventing. The two central questions for this final stretch of the course are: (a) Do we want {and need) so-called "moral machines"? and {b) If so, how do we go about creating them?

**HONS 381 Memory, Politics, and the Holocaust (Professor David Slucki)**

This course examines different controversies, tensions, and debates surrounding the Holocaust since the 1940s. It will examine ways that the Nazi persecution of the Jews has been interpreted and reinterpreted by survivors, by Jewish communities, by European, American, and Israeli societies, and by scholars across a range of disciplinary backgrounds. Beginning with controversies around Jewish resettlement in the aftermath of the Holocaust, this course will look at a range of issues that arose in the decades after the Holocaust. We will examine the controversy surrounding restitution and reparations in the 1950s, debates around various forms of justice from the 1940s through the 1990s, historiographical debates about the origin and nature of Nazism and Nazi antisemitism, and controversies about different ways that the Holocaust has come to be remembered and represented. Moreover, we will locate controversies around the Holocaust within the broader historical context and wider historical debates that shaped these debates.

**HONS 381 Reading the Landscape: Society and Environment in Antiquity (Professor James Newhard)**

This course provides an in-depth and immersive introduction to the theories and methods of landscape archaeology. Using the Mediterranean world as a laboratory, students will explore the ways in which landscape archaeology is used to interpret social, economic, and political structures of the past, employing applications/techniques from archaeology, anthropology, classics, geology, and other cognate disciplines.

**Social Sciences Interdisciplinary**

**HONS 382 Doing Time: Living, Working and Dying Behind Bars (Professor Heath Hoffmann)**

In this class we will examine how everyday life is organized for those who are incarcerated in state and federal prisons. The organization of friendships, love, sex, food, work, and recreation will be explored as will the changes to self and coping mechanisms that result from being incarcerated. We will also discuss the impact that working in prison has on physicians, nurses, dentists and correctional officers in terms of mental health, their relationships and the “courtesy stigma” associated with working inside prison with offenders. Finally, we will examine how those in prison experience end-of-life, how prisons respond to providing care for those who are terminally ill and the role played by those who are incarcerated in providing end-of-life care to dying inmates.