Contemporary Topics Honors RAP

Contemporary Topics Honors RAPs

Contemporary Topics Honors RAPs are located in Oak Hall and Sycamore Hall, both in the Commonwealth Honors College Residential Area.

Contemporary Topics is a category of Honors RAPs, each consisting of 18 students enrolled in two shared courses. Each Contemporary Topics Honors RAP includes a course that has a focus on a specific subject, and will emphasize thematic topics in the news, paired with a course that explores progress and change. Both classes satisfy first-year requirements and are designed for students in any major. All students in this program live together on the same floor, and are required to be roommates with others in this program. Specific thematic areas will be available in April.

Course descriptions are included below.

Related Courses:

Honors 191FP: Front Page Seminar

An opportunity to discuss current state, national, and global issues and events with talented faculty AND distinguished community members and influential alums. Class time will be devoted to vibrant and challenging discussions based on critical reading and analysis of newspaper articles on current issues Requirements: Reading the front page stories from the New York Times and the Boston Globe daily. Supplemental reading as needed. Objective: Training students as opinion leaders; to encourage them to be steadily engaged in the social, political and economic concerns of their time; to provide a context for interaction with experts and significant community members, and prepare them with verbal skills that are important in interviews for scholarships, graduate and professional schools, and employment.

Honors 201H - Commonwealth Honors Seminar - Ideas that Change the World

In this interdisciplinary, discussion-based seminar, students will examine innovative thinkers, groundbreaking ideas, and the strategies that transform these ideas into effective actions.

The course explores dilemmas addressed by the sciences, the arts, and the humanities. In each of these broad areas, the course focuses on questions about human nature, the sources of our knowledge, and the application of that knowledge to the solving of perennial and contemporary problems. The semester begins with inquiries into the nature of truth, of particular relevance in our era of debates over
“alternative facts.” Then the course considers ongoing problems of violence, injustice, and environmental crisis. Our inquiries will establish a dialogue between past and present as we examine historical figures such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Rachel Carson, along with present-day innovators such as Temple Grandin and the Dalai Lama.

[More details about the course](https://www.honors.umass.edu/contemporary-topics-politics-honors-rap)