Course Description

Honors 201H: Ideas That Change the World

In this class, students will examine books and other works that have profoundly shaped the world we live in. Students will also discuss their own potential for leadership and innovation.

This course will address questions such as:

1. Why do some ideas become influential?
2. What social conditions tend to foster creative thinking?
3. Under what circumstances can creativity transform societies?
4. Across disciplines, what do innovators have in common?

Upon successful completion of Honors 201H with a grade of B or better students will satisfy the first part of requirement 4 of Commonwealth Honors College and receive a University General Education I (Interdisciplinary) credit.

Honors Seminar 1 was designed in a collaborative process by the honors faculty over several years. The texts in this class are meant to be exemplary for honors students who have the potential themselves to achieve outstanding things. A close connection is maintained in the course between the concept of the historical innovator and the concept of the student as potential creator. Also important is maintaining a spirit of critical inquiry in which students may debate the merit of the “great ideas” and the persons who authored them.

Syllabus Template

Template for Honors 201 Ideas that Change the World

Required Items for Syllabus

The following paragraphs must appear in the syllabus for your section:

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Absentee Policy and Extenuating circumstances (illness, death in the family, etc.) for which students must miss a class meeting

While attendance is crucial to participation in Honors Seminar 1 and therefore a
significant factor in calculating your final grade in this course, extenuating circumstances may require you to miss a class meeting. Whether an absence is “excused” or counted in calculating participation grades is largely at the discretion of the instructor. Any student absent—whether the absence is “excused” or not—should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss assignments missed, class discussion, etc.

Student athletes, members of the band, and on occasion, students who are members of other groups will be allowed to miss class for games and other special events and make up work will be assigned. (See http://www.umass.edu/umhome/events/religious.php for University attendance policies and religious holidays.)

EXAM CONFLICTS

University policy on exams scheduled at the same time a student’s Honors Seminar class meets

Evening exams (7-9 p.m.) have priority over all courses on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings.

Exams scheduled for 6 p.m. or earlier do not have priority over Honors Seminar. If you have an exam scheduled during this class, you must be given the chance to make it up by the professor of the other course. If you miss a class because of an exam that has priority over this class, you will be given the chance to make up any work you have missed.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Documenting the Writing, Speaking, and Thinking of Others

In all your writing, and in oral presentations too, it is essential that you acknowledge the ideas of others upon whom your own thinking depends, including ideas obtained from such non-written sources as lectures, interviews, class discussions, and even casual conversations with colleagues and friends. Give credit for ideas that are not your own as well as for passages of text that you summarize, paraphrase, or quote.

If material possessions are the property of our community at large, thoughts and ideas—expressed in speech or writing—constitute the “intellectual property” of our academic community. To take the words or ideas of another and present them as your own is to commit plagiarism, an act of academic theft, and the punishments can be severe (cf. University of Massachusetts Amherst Academic Regulations, “Academic Honesty”).

UMASS ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic
dishonesty.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT:**

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

**Commonwealth College Class Profile**

[Click here for information about entering and continuing students who participate in Commonwealth Honors College.](#)

**Teaching Honors**

Honors pedagogy is always evolving and looks much different in different contexts depending on the goals of its faculty and institution. Honors courses across the country vary widely in their learning outcomes and designs. The National Collegiate Honors Council's monograph, *Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students* points out several common themes, though:

One is the groundswell of interest in reflective practice and all of its implications: critical thinking, problem solving, and ethical and moral reasoning. A second is the emphasis on faculty development and pedagogical innovation and creativity ... Curricular, program, and institutional reform is a third ... The compelling power of integrative learning is another: collaborative learning, cooperative learning, team-based approaches, interdisciplinarity, and synthesis of knowledge... (Clark and Zubizaretta 5)

We provide links to sources regarding honors teaching and learning at this location as a way to begin a conversation about honors education and its role, not as an endorsement of any particular view. Please feel free to contact us if you would like additional information, including a copy of the NCHC monograph or would like to suggest a link to post here.

**NCHC Web site - What is honors?**

[Community or Contact Zone? Deconstructing an Honors Classroom by Phyllis Surrency Dallas and Mary Marwitz](#)

**Logistical FAQs**

**ENROLLMENT**
Where do I get my SPIRE roster?

All instructors have SPIRE access, through an account and password issued by OIT. (If you have not received, or have lost or forgotten your account name and password, OIT staff in A107 Lederle will issue you a new one. Just be sure to bring along a valid ID.) Log on to SPIRE and click on “Class Management” in the drop-down menu to the left of the screen, then on “Class Rosters” and the appropriate term. If you encounter difficulty, call or visit us in Commonwealth Honors College for help.

How do I know who is enrolled in my class?

Your SPIRE roster contains the names of students officially registered for your class.

What if a student is present in my class but not on my roster?

If any students are present in your class but missing from your roster, make sure they are in fact registered for your class (and not another). If they are not on your roster but wish to enter your class now, if you wish, you may add them to your section as long as (1) they are Commonwealth Honors College students (and 2) they have not yet fulfilled their Honors 201H requirement. To add students to your section, submit their names—along with their student ID number (absolutely essential) and class year—to Roland Packard (rpackard@honors.umass.edu), again either by e-mail or in person.

How and when do I turn in my final grades?

Instructors enter their own grades directly through SPIRE at the end of the regular academic semester. Only at that time does SPIRE accept grades, again through “Class Management” and then “Record Grades” for the appropriate term.

AUDIO-VIDEO EQUIPMENT

How can I reserve audio-visual equipment for student presentations?

Most sections of Honors 391AH are scheduled in AV-equipped “smart” classrooms. To access audio-visual (AV) cabinets in auditoria and technology-enhanced classrooms, instructors are now using lock combinations instead of physical AV keys. Lock combinations are available in SPIRE to those instructors teaching in classrooms equipped with AV cabinets. This change went into effect in Fall 2013.

**Cabinet keys are no longer in use. Please do not contact the Provost's Office to request a key.**

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OBTAIN YOUR LOCK COMBINATION

1. Log in to SPIRE at http://www.spire.umass.edu with your IT Account NetID and password.

2. In the top navigation bar, go to Faculty Home > Classroom Locks.

3. On the Classroom Lock Combinations screen, in the Lock Combination column, you will see a 4-digit lock combination if you are teaching in a classroom equipped with an
AV cabinet.

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For questions and issues with lock combinations, please contact AIMS at 413-545-5768. For more information on multimedia equipment loan and support, see:

http://www.oit.umass.edu/multimedia-equipment-loan

Academic Instructional Media Services (AIMS) in 302 Goodell (545-5765) will deliver TVs, DVDs, VCRs, data projectors, video recording equipment, tape/CD players, etc., to classrooms during regular daytime class hours. (No laptops are available through AIMS.) For evening classes, instructors may pick up equipment from AIMS before 4:30pm; equipment must be returned to AIMS by 9:00am the following morning.

COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

When do I distribute course evaluations?

Course evaluations will be distributed to you before the final meeting of your section. Evaluations should be completed by the students at the final class meeting.

As an instructor, you are not allowed to hand out or collect the student evaluations – please have a student volunteer distribute and then collect the evaluations. You cannot be present in the room while students are completing evaluations. Please emphasize to the student volunteer that he/she must return the envelope with completed evaluations (and any extras) to Reception at Commonwealth Honors College room 301 within two days. Also please note that evaluations are required for all Commonwealth Honors College classes.

HONORS SEMINAR SERIES CONTACTS

General Inquiries: honorsseminar@honors.umass.edu

Course Web site:  http://www.honors.umass.edu/honorsseminar

Brion Dulac:  577-3913, abdulac@honors.umass.edu; Honors Seminar Series Coordinator; contact for technical assistance and general academic and administrative questions.

Roland Packard:  545-0136, rpackard@honors.umass.edu; Contact Roland about reserving laptop/projector.

Teaching Resources by Course Unit

“APOLOGY” and “CRITO” links

Assignments
**Contemporary Socrates** This assignment asks you to compare a real life individual to Socrates.

(1) Begin with a brief character sketch of Socrates. What kind of person do you think Socrates was? Imagine that you have to both defend and condemn his character.

(2) Locate a video clip of a contemporary individual, a real person or a character, who bears similarities to Socrates.

(3) Following the *Ideas* for Class guidelines located on MOODLE, write a discussion of your Contemporary Socrates selection. Use ideas and brief quotes from the “Apology” to explain how this person represents aspects of Socrates’ thinking. Be sure to explain how the video clip illustrates the similarities to Socrates.

-Submitted by Susan McKenna

**Readings**

Wisdom, Moderation and Elenchus in Plato’s “Apology”


Encountering Socrates in “The Apology”, by James Tucker


Philosophy as an Art of Dying by Costica Bradatan


Citizenship and Socrates in Plato’s “Crito” by Michael J. Rosano


“The Arguments I Seem to Hear”: Argument and Irony in the “Crito” by Mitchell Miller


Plato’s “Crito” As a Defense of Critical Inquiry by Steven M. DeLue


**SILENT SPRING links**

Trashing Rachel Carson by Carl Pope
Assignments

“Pay It Forward” Two Parts

Part One  Gandhi famously stated, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Pay It Forward asks you to do something nice or helpful for someone in need, and then, ask them to Pay It Forward. Do the following for Part One and bring your notes to class:


2. Explore the idea of Pay It Forward online and locate one Pay It Forward initiative that is exempletive of Gandhi’s ideas. Be sure to include the URL for the example.

3. Develop a Pay It Forward initiative that you can accomplish in your everyday life. It could be something as simple as holding the door open for someone else a little longer than one would normally, or clearing the snow off someone’s car, but try to come up with inventive ways to fulfill this portion of the assignment. Then, after our class discussion, you will Pay It Forward for three days. The goal is to do something for someone that might not only make their day better, but also lead to further random acts of kindness.

4. Identify three short quotes from the Gandhi readings that demonstrate something about your Pay It Forward initiative.

Part Two  Following the Ideas for Class guidelines located on MOODLE, write a discussion of your Pay It Forward initiative. Explain how your initiative illustrates Gandhi’s directive to live one’s everyday life in a way that might change the world. Support your ideas with examples and quotes from Gandhi as well as from the film, Pay It Forward.

-Submitted by Susan McKenna
Readings

Non-Violence and The Other: A Composite Theory of Multiplism, Heterology, and Heteronomy drawn from Jainism and Gandhi by Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad


Political Engagement and Service Learning: A Gandhian Perspective by Dilafruz Williams


The Origins of Gandhi’s Emergence as a World Historical Figure by Sener Akturk


Mahatma on Violence and Peace by Douglas Allen


CITIZEN KANE links

Smoke and Mirrors by Gary Simmons


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