

Honors First Year Seminars for Spring 2012

Honors 101 (1) First Year Seminar:

Imitation, Creativity, and Academic Language, or, "What are you buying into here, anyway?"

Dick Cluster, Honors Program

TuTh 12:30-1:45 p.m.

Almost anything written or performed involves some imitation. Sometimes the imitation is enforced (do it by the rules!) while sometimes it is voluntary ("I'm choosing to work in the genre of ... "). The university is no exception: students find themselves being asked to imitate or conform to styles, vocabulary, methods, and folkways prevalent among their professors and academic departments. In this seminar we'll look at acts of imitation and required behaviors both outside and inside the university, and ask what their causes, functions, advantages, and disadvantages are. We'll ask what room is left for creativity, and when it is more useful to imitate or conform, vs. when it is more useful to strike out on one's own.



A key tool that we'll use in this investigation is translation: translation between the writing style of one writer and another, between national languages, between forms of communication such as news reports, commercials, songs, and statistics, and between the "languages" of the workplace, the family, and the university. Assigned readings will draw mostly from the fields of literature, sociolinguistics, education, and translation studies, but I'll encourage you bring in evidence and perspectives from your experiences in the role of student.

Writing assignments will include a mixture of ungraded work and graded work, and a mixture of creative or exploratory writing and formal essays. You'll be required to share some of these assignments with the whole class, and to comment on what interests you in each other's work. The final project (30% of grade) will be on a text or subject of your choice; it may be either an extended "translation" with analytic commentary, or a research paper related to the themes of the course.

Honors 101 (2) First Year Seminar: *Popular Pathogens Unraveled*

Mara Shainheit, Post-doctoral fellow, Tufts University

MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m.

How scientifically accurate are the movies "Contagion" and "Outbreak"? Is it possible to treat autoimmune diseases with parasitic worms? Can we prevent the spread of malaria by killing mosquitoes with the pesticide, DDT? Or is it better to use a genetically modified fungus to target malaria--carrying mosquitoes? Is it safe to build a laboratory in Boston to study some of the deadliest pathogens known to man? How did the Tuskegee syphilis experiment lead to current scientific ethical standards and informed consent of subjects involved in research studies? Does HIV really cause AIDS?

These are just a few of the questions we will critically discuss and debate during the semester. This course will focus on bacteria, viruses, and parasites of significant historical, cultural, or scientific importance, but does not require any previous scientific familiarity or training. At the beginning of each pathogen block, we will examine the basic biological characteristics of the pathogen, the global distribution of the disease caused by the infectious agent, the populations most affected and potential ways to cure and/or control disease. Additionally, we will also learn about the components of the immune system that aid in fighting off infections, or in some instances, may be responsible for causing the disease itself. Once this foundation has been laid, we will further investigate the pathogen in the context of historical events, bioterrorism, scientific ethics, advances and controversies, or popular culture.

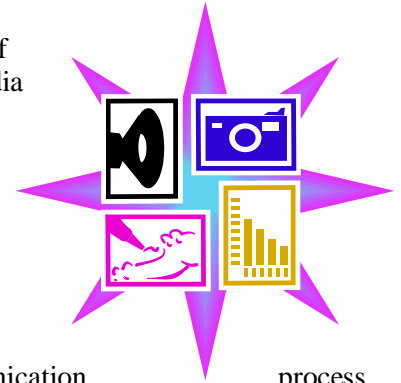
Regular class attendance will be required in order to build a tight-knit environment that fosters the free exchange of ideas and encourages thoughtful discussions among students. Guiding and short answer questions (1-2 pages) will go along with the reading assignments. Midway through each pathogen block, a small quiz will be given to ensure that students are familiarized with homework material or subjects that were covered in class. There will also be two major graded components: 1) an oral presentation and 2) a research paper (8-10 pgs) that will have several evaluated checkpoints over the courses of the semester.

There will be no textbook for this course, but introductory Immunology and Microbiology textbooks will be placed on reserve in the library for reference. Readings will include articles from newspapers, popular and scientific journals, case studies and selected book excerpts. The major aim of this course is to make the world of disease-causing microbes, parasites and their interactions with humans accessible to a broader audience, and will also provide students with the tools to investigate this material in more depth and come to educated conclusions when confronted with scientific issues in everyday life. Students will also gain a working knowledge of scientific terminology such that they will be able to converse with classmates using this language and also describe what they've learned in layman's terms.

Honors 101 (3) First Year Seminar: *Snap, Crackle, Pop Culture: Analyzing Popular Media*
Ashleigh Shelton, Sociology Department

MWF 1:00

What is popular culture? How do mass media and popular culture help us to make sense of our world, identities, and relationships? Do we organize our lives around media or do media shape our lives? Do media technologies make us happier or better citizens in a democratic society? This course will address such questions by applying various theoretical lenses to artifacts and visual messages in media and popular culture, with a primary emphasis on developing a critical awareness of contemporary mass media (radio, film, photography, music, television, fashion, video games, the internet) and their impact on culture.



Since the widespread use of Gutenberg's printing press, there has always been the cultural assumption that information is best communicated through written formats. But since the invention of computers and desktop publishing, the role of visual messages in the communication process is expanding our definitions of popular culture. This course is an attempt to even up the score between words, images and popular culture. It is important to understand, however, that an emphasis on visual aspects does not mean that words are considered less important than images. *The most powerful, meaningful and culturally important messages are those that combine words and pictures in equally respectful ways.*

You will examine your own conceptions and consumption of media through (1) readings and group endeavors that engage and challenge your perspective on our cultural landscape, (2) a service-learning project that integrates the local community with your understanding of course material (3) and writing assignments that allow you to apply the theories and concepts you learn to your own analysis of popular culture.

**Access to a camera is required.



Honors 101 (4) First Year Seminar: *21st Century Writing: Anxiety, Apocalypse, and Terror*
Rebecca Fine Romanow, English Department

TuTh 9:30-10:45

In the first decade of the 21st century, literature from around the globe has reflected a sense of anxiety that is expressed in themes of apocalypse and terror, environmental disaster, and humans who seem to have lost control of their surroundings. The past ten years of global history have seen an explosion in technology, social networking, and global communications. At the same time, we have seen never-ending escalations in violence, political extremism and upheaval, severe climate events, and human suffering.

This course will examine the ways in which writers are exploring and revealing this overriding angst, offering an immediate and contemporary view of how we, as individuals, cultures, and nations, are dealing with these complexities. We will explore the ways in which this global uneasiness contributes to specific constructions of race, gender, power, and the human soul.

This seminar offers a chance to see a snapshot of our world—right now, as it is happening. This will allow us to better understand, cope with, and appreciate, the fantastic, fascinating, and often confusing, time and place that we all share. We will cover five texts from around the world, with some films from matching regions. We will investigate some of the emerging textual formats, such as Twitter novels, and graphic and visual fiction, in order to provide a rounded and in-depth picture of the ways in which literature reflects a global, as well as local, response to the unique, and often daunting, challenges and realities of the 21st century.

Through close readings, we will pay special attention to the authors'/artists' historical and cultural milieus, and the choices of thematics, narrative voice, form and structure. Each student will choose one class time to select topics and lead the discussion. In addition, this course will require two shorter essays (5 pages), and a larger, final essay (10 pages). The emphasis on improving critical writing will be reflected in the "building" of the final essay through revision of the first two, shorter essays.

The 200-Level Honors Courses for Spring 2012

Honors 242 *The Cold War: The Asian View*

David Hunt, History Department

MWF 1:00

The Cold War, which dominated international relations from 1945 to the late 1980s, is often portrayed as a bipolar confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. But it should also be seen as a phase in the twentieth-century history of all the world's peoples, who could not ignore and who and were often deeply affected by the clash between the great powers and who tried within the room for maneuver available to them to chart an independent course. Honors 242 examines the dialectic between big power politics, as embodied in the projects of the Americans and the Soviets, and aspirations for autonomy among Asian populations. It begins with an examination of events that brought about an end to World War II in the Pacific. From there we will turn to the post-war history of Japan up to 1952, when U.S. occupation of that country came to an end. We will also explore the histories of Korea and Vietnam, two countries occupied by the Japanese during the war, then rocked by revolutionary movements in August 1945, and profoundly affected in the following years by the efforts of U.S. leaders to combat what they took to be the threat of international communist totalitarianism. Throughout the semester, we will try to understand the ways that the American struggle against Asian revolutions helped to shape post-war life in the United States in ways that lasted throughout the Cold War era -- and down to the present day. Here is a (partial) reading list for the course: Gar Alperovitz, [The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb](#); David Marr, [Vietnam 1945](#); John Dower, [Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II](#). Students in Honors 242 will write three medium-length papers, each graded 25%, with the other 25% depending on classroom participation.

This course can be used to fulfill a Humanities (HU) or Social/Behavioral distribution



Honors 259, *Addiction*

Alexia Pollack, Biology Department

MWF 11:00



What is addiction? How do drugs such as cocaine, heroin and nicotine affect the brain and cause addiction? Why is addiction so difficult to cure? We will explore these fundamental questions by learning about the structure and organization of the brain, the mechanism of action of different drugs of abuse, and the nature of the changes that take place in the brain following exposure to drugs of abuse. Other topics will include the genetic and molecular bases of addiction, the role of associative learning in addiction, and treatments for addiction. The class will have two lecture hours per week and one hour per week for student group work and class discussions. The reading assignments will include the course textbook, Psychopharmacology, science articles from the New York Times and The Economist, and two non-fiction accounts of addiction: Tweak (Nic Sheff, son) and Beautiful Boy (David Sheff, father). There will be three in-class examinations focusing on biology, and several short (1 page) and medium (3-5 page) written assignments. Students will also create and deliver an oral presentation about drug addiction. Students must have a solid

foundation in general biology (Bio 111 or the equivalent) prior to enrolling in this course.

This course may be used to fulfill an NS distribution.

Honors 290 (1) *Introduction to Biomimicry: What Would Nature Do?*

MW 2:00-3:15

Anamarija Frankic, Earth, Environmental, and Ocean Sciences Department



“Biomimicry” (from *bios*, meaning life, and *mimesis*, meaning to imitate) is a new discipline that studies nature’s best ideas and then imitates these designs and processes to solve human problems. Biomimicry asks the question: What would nature do? The goal is to create sustainable products, processes, and policies by learning from and “listening to” nature, to the wisdom held in biological and ecological systems that have been evolving and accumulating over the past 3.8 billion years.

Natural systems and organisms provide stunning examples of effective communication, resource production and storage, and energy-efficient design. Animals, plants and microbes are consummate engineers; they have found what works, what is appropriate, and most importantly, what is sustainable.

Biomimicry might help create a solar cell that is inspired by a leaf with chloroplast and chlorophyll, a passive cooling system for buildings inspired by a termite mound, or find new strategies for restoring degraded ecosystems. People are nature, too. Human cultures with long term residency in particular ecosystems hold crucial knowledge for living sustainably in place.

My premise in teaching this course is that “*The environment sets the limits for sustainable development.*” The class will explore past, present and future examples of biomimetic solutions to human problems. We will learn how experts in the field use nature’s organisms and ecosystems as model, measure and mentor to discover sustainable engineering, architectural, design, business operations, management, and product development solutions. We will then have the opportunity to apply these methods ourselves. By the end of the course, students will be able to explain what biomimicry is to a variety of audiences in a clear and concise manner, and will be able to effectively apply biomimetic techniques to arrive at sustainable design solutions.

Students will spend as much as possible class time in the field: e.g. boat trips, beach and marsh visits. The major assignments, in addition to readings, will be three written case studies in which you practice applying the principles of biomimicry to specific examples that you choose, and group work will produce a final oral and visual presentation in which each group will present a biomimetic solution to a problem.

This course may be used to fulfill a Natural Science (NS) or Social/Behavioral Science (SB) distribution requirement

Honors 290 (2) *Kicking Away the Ladder: The ‘Real’ Economic Relationship Between Poor and Rich Countries*

Aduana Lemi, Economics Department

MWF 10:00 a.m.

This course is a study of the interaction between international economics and international politics as influenced by international institutions, multinational corporations, local businesses and workers’ unions, to name just a few. We will discuss issues from developing countries’ perspectives and cover international trade and finance theories, and the political economy of policy making process. The role of key players in the international economic and political relations (i.e. World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, multinational corporations, and non-governmental organizations, among others) in shaping the trade, investment, and financial policies of developing economies is emphasized. Specific topics include economic rationale of trade and analysis of trade and financial relations, winners and losers in international trade, domestic politics of international trade policy, multilateral trading system, regional economic blocs, developing and transitional economies’ policy options, exchange rate politics, foreign aid, debt crisis, and the side effects of globalization. The course will start with introduction of basic economic tools.



Should the WTO change its principle from free trade to fair trade? Should international rules override domestic rules when it comes to MNCs? How can you determine citizenship of a MNC? Should the G8 countries give preferential treatment for the exports from poor nations? Are China and India considered poor nations? Who makes decisions at the IMF, the WB, and WTO? Who is getting foreign aid and how much? Which comes first to give aid, donors’ national interest or recipient countries’ priorities? Should odious debt of poor countries be forgiven?

Final grades are determined based on students’ performance on reading assignment (30%), research project and presentation (30%), and final exam (30%). The reading assignment involves answering specific questions based on one or two journal articles. The research project is a paper on topics of interest to students. The remaining 10% of the grade is based on class activities and participation.

This course may be used to fulfill a Social/Behavioral Sciences (SB) distribution.

Honors 290 (3) *Beethoven*

Jon C. Mitchell, Music Department

TuTh 12:30-1:45



This course deals with the music and times of Ludwig van Beethoven, the assumption of his break from classical period influences, and the establishment of a unique style which bridged the gap between the classical and romantic eras. The course includes not only Beethoven's music, but also his role as a composer in an ever-shifting society. The time period covered (1770-1827) saw a change in Europe from absolute monarchy to the after-effects of the American and French Revolutions. General questions to be discussed include the following: (1) What was the nature of the art music of the Holy Roman Empire during the late eighteenth century? (2) What was musical romanticism and how did it start? (3) Regarding the first two issues, in what ways was Beethoven the beneficiary of the past?

How did he deal with it?

(4) Regarding the first two issues, in what ways did Beethoven extend the music of the past? In what ways did he break away from it? (4) What roles did Beethoven and his contemporaries play in the ever-changing societal world of 1789-1827?

Students are responsible for listening beforehand to available recordings of the music covered in class. The purchase of CDs is encouraged; also, downloads are available through the Naxos Music Library database offered by Healey Library.

The course will be set up chronologically. For each session, we will listen, read, and discuss the topic at hand as well as a number of related sub-topics. Students will do additional research on certain aspects of two of the above issues and write two comparison papers. The course grade will be based on the two papers (30% each), class discussion, a take-home final examination (30%), and attendance and participation (10%).

Primary sources will include copies of some of Beethoven's manuscripts, reflections by his contemporaries, and a number of recordings of Beethoven's works. Secondary sources will involve articles and texts written by Beethoven scholars as well as recordings and videos.

This course can be used to fulfill an Arts (AR), Humanities (HU), or Social/Behavioral Sciences (SB) distribution requirement.

Honors 290 (4) *Institutions and Transitions Over the Life Course*

Stephanie Hartwell, Sociology Department

TuTh 11:00-12:15



Does the old adage, "the more things change, the more they stay the same" have any relevance? The classic sociological study of Middletown suggests that institutional memory is short lived and cultural histories forgotten over transitional periods (Lynd and Lynd 1929 & 1937). Conversely, Putnam's (2000) relatively new notion of communities giving way to free agents in *Bowling Alone* suggests that some institutional transitions result in life course and cultural shifts. Yet there remain blueprints and case studies for institutional transitions and transitions from institutions.

This course adopts the framework of the life course to view institutional transitions at the macro, meso, and micro levels. Macro level issues include global change, the politics of war and peace, religion, technology, and the environment. Mid or meso level institutional transitions include those influenced by healthcare, the family, aging, and education. Finally, micro level transitions analyzed from a psychosocial perspective include changes to master statuses such as prisoner reentry, becoming homeless, a veteran, parent, or survivor of homicide, and retirement. Through course lectures, readings, discussion, seminar guests, and field visits we will consider the impact of transitional issues and institutional change. Course requirements include the creation of a project portfolio on a student selected topic of institutional transition including its scope, place in history, and impact as related to students' experience. Students will also be expected to lead a section of the course on the topic of their portfolio.

This course can be used to fulfill a Social/Behavioral Sciences (SB) distribution requirement.

Honors 290 (5) *Don Quixote and the World*
Reyes Coll-Tellechea, Hispanic Studies Department

TuTh 11:00-12:15

Don Quixote (1605-1615) has been described as the most important novel in Western literary history, the mother of all novels. It is probably true. Yet what is truly remarkable about this masterpiece of world fiction is its uncanny capacity to connect generations of readers with their own world. *Don Quixote* is the work of fiction that best captures reality. This is the best reason of all to carefully read Cervantes' novel in the 21st century.



This course will combine the reading of *Don Quixote* (in English) with analytical readings of essays devoted to the description and reflection of certain crucial aspects of our world, such as *love, memory, fear, democracy, history*, etc. Analytical essays include works by Thomas Jay Oord, Maurice Halbwachs, Hannah Arendt, Paul Ricoeur, Eric Hobsbawm, Thomas Friedman and Tony Judt.

This will be a discussion-oriented class. Course assessment will be based on class participation, participation in group discussions, two five-page essays that will be expected to provide a more detailed analysis of a topic discussed in class, and five quizzes that will assess the student critical and attentive reading of the main text.

This course can be used to fulfill an Arts (AR) or Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.



Honors 290 (6) *Psychology of Chronic Illness*
Kathryn Kogan, Psychology Department

TuTh 2:00-3:15

This course will examine the biopsychosocial factors that shape our response to chronic, disabling or life-threatening medical conditions, mental illness, and addiction. We will study the phenomenological aspects of illness, in other words, the psychological, social and spiritual experience of patients, their families and care providers and how illness shapes their life course and well-being. We will explore the role that culture and society play in the illness experience, including the influence of the medical model, the medical and psychiatric care systems, and the role of medical and psychiatric professionals in both shaping and responding to these crises in living. We will also consider the effect of illness on families and care givers, as well as how the family system itself influences the illness career of the patient. Our approach will be to look at illness as a multidimensional experience, influenced by multiple factors, thus we will take an interdisciplinary approach that draws from psychology, medical sociology, medical anthropology, medical ethics, and existential philosophy.

Class meetings will include lecture, discussion, film, and guest speakers. Readings will include research articles, scholarly writings, an illness memoir, and articles from The New York Times and other sources. Because of the emphasis on discussion, attendance and participation are mandatory. Students will be invited to share stories from their own experience and those of their families to work towards a deeper understanding of the psychological impact of chronic illness. Students will keep a reading response/personal reflections journal and will complete an interview paper (6-8 pages), an analytic review of a memoir (6-8 pages), and a research paper through which to explore a topic of particular interest (10-12 pages). Students will attend an illness-related self help group in the community and write an essay on the experience.

This course can be used to fulfill a Social/Behavioral distribution (SB).

The Junior Colloquia for Spring 2012

(To be eligible to take the Junior Colloquium, you must have completed at least *two* Honors 200-level courses.)

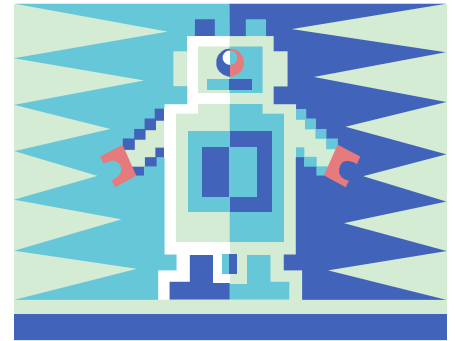
Honors 380 (1) Junior Colloquium: *Theatre of Artificial Life*

Scott Maisano, English Department

Tu 2:00-4:45

“Artificial Life” is everywhere. A phrase which first emerged from collaborations among computer scientists, biologists, and physicists in the 1980s has since been claimed, as an object of analysis and study, by virtually every other academic discipline including history, theology, philosophy, anthropology, theatre, literary studies, and nursing studies.

Historians want to trace the genealogy of artificial life, to find out what experiments, exhibits and inventions preceded and inspired such creatures as IBM’s Watson (the computer that competed against human contestants on *Jeopardy!*) or Craig Venter’s *Mycoplasma laboratorium* (“the first self-replicating species we’ve had on the planet whose parent is a computer”). Theologians, meanwhile, wonder about the relationship between humans, as creators of artificial life, and the God, who, according to the Judeo-Christian tradition, on the Sixth Day created those same humans in His own image. Philosophers debate whether or not computers (or, for that matter, humans) have achieved the elusive state known as “consciousness.” Anthropologists take an ethnographic approach to artificial life, studying either the elite designers of artificial life (scientists at the Santa Fe Institute) or the casual everyday users (“Residents” of Second Life). Theater studies sees everything from the Turing Test (a computer attempts to “pass” for human) to Hollywood’s replacement of human and animal actors with CGI characters as so many opportunities and occasions for posing anew ancient questions about mimesis and its effects on actors and audiences alike. Literature professors find fictional depictions of the creation of artificial life running from Ovid’s story of Pygmalion to Mary Shelley’s tale of Frankenstein. Nurses, meanwhile, must wrestle with the ethical complexities involved with feeding tubes and ventilators.



One definition of the word “theatre,” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is “a book giving a ‘overview’ or ‘conspectus’ of some [multifaceted] subject.” Our class will aim to produce precisely this kind of book, entitled “The Theatre of Artificial Life,” featuring your original contributions, each of which will extend the ongoing scholarly conversations about “artificial life” within and across various disciplines. With that goal in mind, students will write brief (1-2 page) weekly exploratory essays as well as a final research paper of 15-20 pages.

Books for the course will be selected from the following: Daniel Dennett's *Consciousness Explained*; Jacques Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am*; Brian Christian's *The Most Human Human: What Talking with Computers Teaches Us about What It Means to Be Alive*; Stephen Baker's *Final Jeopardy: Man vs. Machine and the Quest to Know Everything*; Gaby Wood's *Edison's Eve: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life*; Minsoo Kang's *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines: The Automaton in the European Imagination*; Noreen Herzfeld's *In Our Image: Artificial Intelligence and the Human Spirit*; Stefan Helmreich's *Silicon Second Nature: Culturing Artificial Life in a Digital World*; Tom Boellstorff's *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human*; Joseph Roach's *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting*; William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Winter's Tale*; Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; and a collection of essays published by the University of Chicago Press, *Genesis Redux: Essays on the History and Philosophy of Artificial Life*.

Honors 380 (2) Junior Colloquium: *Gender, Armed Conflict and Peace Building*

W 3:00-5:30

Carol Cohn, Center for Gender, Security, and Human Rights



The relationship between gender and war has historically been seen as so obvious (men wage war, and women weep) that it has largely been ignored by scholars and politicians who think about war. But over the last twenty five years, the roles of men and women in war-making and peace-making have suddenly become topics for research and knowledge-building. How and why did that happen? How do people develop new questions about something that did not even appear as a topic worthy of inquiry?

This interdisciplinary course will examine various methodological approaches and limitations to understanding the relationships between gender, armed conflict and political violence. Empirical research, case studies, multimedia, drama and in-class simulations will be used to explore multiple perspectives and “ways of knowing” about the causes and consequences of armed conflict, political violence and war.

Key questions posed in the course include: How is what we know about gender and armed conflict informed by mainstream research, ideas and practices? How could these conceptions be altered by incorporating “alternative” or indigenous forms of knowledge? How is what we know and how we think about war affected by where and how we obtain knowledge? Why do we need to pay attention to race, class, sexuality, motherhood, geographic location, and nation in understanding political instability?

Our examination of these questions will center on two main topics. First, we will examine women's participation in political violence, assessing their motivations, forms of violent action, and the conditions under which they engage with politically violent organizations throughout Western Europe, Latin America, South Asia, North America and the Middle East. Second, we will ask how international organizations such as the UN can best undertake humanitarian assistance and "post-conflict" reconstruction activities, and explore the question of why new research would be crucial to improving their policies and practices. Here, our case study will be the development of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sponsored Global Research Centre on Gender, Crisis Prevention, and Recovery.

At the successful completion of the course students should: appreciate why research is important in understanding and impeding the growth of political violence; discern the role that gender plays in the waging of war and conflict; be better able to appreciate and understand the complexities in understanding the use of political violence internationally, and formulate questions about race, class, gender, and sexuality in relation to political violence. **Assignments include:** brief weekly responses to course readings, participation and reflection on in-class conflict simulation, film response paper, development of an annotated bibliography leading up to a final 10-15 page research paper.

Honors 380 (3) Junior Colloquium:

Place-Based Research: Indigenous and Local Analysis

TuTh 11:00-12:15

Christopher Fung, Anthropology Department

This course examines the importance of locations both physical and cultural in which research takes place. This colloquium explores the notion that research is heavily grounded in local conditions and local understandings.

This is particularly the case when one deals with anything to do with human behavior and motivation (such as health research, natural and cultural resource management, anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, town planning etc) but is also important in designing successful field-based research projects in the natural sciences.

In earlier generations of research (particularly from the 1930s on), local factors were seen as logistical issues to be overcome or as "aberrations". In contrast to the positivist mode of inquiry which regards phenomena as universal and therefore amenable to standardized methods of research, this course argues that the local contexts of research are key ingredients in the success of research.

This course will use examples drawn from many different research projects. However, we will particularly focus on Hawai'i as an example of the way in which place is central to research.

The Cross-Cultural Symposium for Spring 2012

(This course is open only to those students who completed the first part of Honors 490 in Fall 2011.)

Honors 490, Cross Cultural Symposium:

International Epidemics: Focus on South Africa

Rajini Srikanth, Honors Program and English Department

TuTh 2:00-3:15



South Africa is a young nation, having gained its liberated status as a multiracial democracy in 1994, less than 20 years ago. It faces many challenges as a result of the legacy of apartheid – gross economic inequalities and unresolved animosities among the many ethnic and racial groups of the country. No sooner did South Africa emerge from the painful rule of apartheid than it was plunged into the equally devastating whirlpool of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Yet, there is a spirit of activism and determined hopefulness that refuses to be crushed. The people of South Africa carry in them the energy of the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, and many of them are using that energy in the service of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

During this semester, we will focus on two themes in relation to South Africa: its efforts to reconcile itself as a nation of diverse peoples, many of whom harbor deep suspicions and hostilities for one another, and its complicated and contradictory stance to the epidemic of AIDS, at the medical, cultural, economic, and social levels. In addition, you, the students, will engage yourself in meaningful community service that draws on what you learned in South Africa. You can choose from among many options we will identify, depending on your schedule and commitments both on and off campus. The service you perform can include such activities as educating young people (middle- and high-school students) about HIV/AIDS, volunteering at an HIV/AIDS support group, encouraging your peers to get tested, or raising awareness about HIV/AIDS on the campus community or in your neighborhood. It should be something that you are excited about and feel passionately committed to making a reality.

There will be three writing assignments during the semester, in addition to your community work. You should plan on making a presentation about your community project no later than May 6.