

HONORS COLLEGE

Fall 2023 Course Description Booklet

Graduating seniors in the Honors College at UMass Boston at the 2016 Medallion Ceremony.



Honors College

Honors College Summer 2023 and Fall 2023 course descriptions packet includes:

- 1) **Summer Session 1 2023** Honors College Courses
- 2) **Honors 210G** Intermediate Seminars for **Fall 2023** (starting on page 3)
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***Summer 2023 Honors College Courses
(Summer Session 1, May 30th - July 13th, 2023)***

Please note: If you're interested in registering for either or both of our Honors College courses in Summer 2023, ***please email Jason.Roush@umb.edu directly, and he'll be happy to add the course to your summer schedule!***

Honors 293 (01A): Sexuality, Culture & Community (#1801)

TuTh 1:30 - 4:30pm

Jason Roush, Honors College

Human sexuality is continually evolving within cultural contexts. Widespread social factors like economics, education, family, geography, religion, and law shape how we come to perceive sexual identity and ourselves. In turn, sexuality is equally powerful in shaping society and social norms, both through organized political/community movements and through interpersonal relationships. How have our understandings of sexuality and gender identity shifted over the past fifty years? What will be the future of sexuality in coming decades?

Through historical readings and contemporary theory, along with films and other media, this course explores the changing social constructions of sexual identity and pivotal moments in LGBTQ history, as well as examining how heterosexuality and LGBTQ identities influence and interface with each other. Some specific topics that we will study and discuss include:

- community organizations and social events related to sexual identity
- same-sex marriage equality and alternative families
- the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the 1980s and beyond
- changing conceptions of bisexuality and "heteroflexibility"
- social activism focused on issues of gender and sexual identity
- emergence of transgender and intersexual identities and communities
- issues surrounding asexuality, consent, disability, race, and sex education.

In addition to writing some short in-class response papers (1 - 2 pages each) based on course topics, students will write one final essay of 5 - 7 pages on a relevant community organization or social event of their choice. A brief class presentation (10 - 15 minutes) on that organization or social event will also be required. Active local engagement with community-based organizations will be highly encouraged, and we will hope to attend a relevant event together outside of class if possible.

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement.

Honors 380 (01A): Why Memoir Matters (#1802)

TuTh 10:00am - 1:00pm

Lisa Greggo, Honors College

In *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir* (1998), William Zinsser states that "Memoir is how we try to make sense of who we are, who we once were, and what values and heritage shaped us. If a writer is seriously embarking on a quest, readers will be nourished by the journey, bringing along many associations with quests of their own" (p. 6).

Today, technology and social media in particular allow people a platform to share their opinions, perspectives, and experiences with a global audience. Memoir, however, is not limited to 280 or even 2,200 characters; instead, memoir can

give us an infinitely broad insight into history and culture from the perspective of someone who was a witness to or participant in the experience. Memoirs can teach and inspire us through accounts of resourcefulness and courage. And most importantly, reading memoir is a way to walk in “someone else’s shoes,” which can lead to greater empathy (something needed now more than ever) and possibly even a better understanding of what it means to be human.

In this course, we will explore why memoir matters, the difference between memoir, biography, and autobiography, and the relationship between creative non-fiction and truth. We will explore together a variety of memoirs (essays and excerpts/chapters from larger works) with a keen eye to their value and importance in today’s world. Through close reading, we will gain an understanding of the process of writing a memoir, learn how memoirs may be constructed or structured, and what makes an effective memoir.

Students will read a memoir of their choosing from the list provided, and write a 12-15 page final paper on the memoir. The paper will consist of a personal analysis of the memoir’s structure and effectiveness, as well as a contextual analysis of how the memoir fits in with the time and place of its events (e.g. social, political, economic, and historical factors of the times described in the memoir).

Fall 2023 Honors College 200-level Courses

Honors 210G (1): Learning Biology through Reading Fiction & Non-fiction (#9639)

MWF 2:00 - 2:50pm

Megan Rokop, Honors College

This course is designed to be an introduction to many current and relevant topics in biology, but with a twist – namely that these topics will be introduced and discussed as they come up in popular and highly regarded books written for non-scientists. In this course, we will use the reading of three books (including fiction and non-fiction), in order to guide our learning of topics in biology. Possible books might include: *Lightning Flowers*, *The Collected Schizophrenias*, *Cured*, *The Inheritance*, *Perfect Predator*, *Epic Measures*, *In Pain*, *When Death Becomes Life*, and *Happiness*.

The instructor’s current plan for these books (though it is possible that these selections may change before the first day of class) means that our class will focus on the following topics in biology:

- **Bioethics:** DNA testing, “designer babies,” informed consent, and animal research
- **Human disease:** Cancers, infectious diseases (such as HIV and malaria), single-gene disorders (such as cystic fibrosis and Huntington’s), and common complex disorders (such as heart disease and schizophrenia)
- **Discovering cures and treatments:** Drug development, clinical trials, the cost of drugs, placebos, funding and patenting scientific discoveries
- **Public health:** Vaccines, antibiotics, and medicine in the US & around the world

This course will **not** involve textbook readings, exams, advanced calculations, or memorizing terms. The in-class activities will focus on class discussions, and your grade in this course will be determined by:

- Attendance & class participation
- Nine short (300-word) writing assignments
- A 1500-word paper on a topic of your choice relating to the 1st book
- A 1500-word paper on a topic of your choice relating to the 2nd book
- A 10-minute oral presentation on a topic of your choice relating to the 3rd book

This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.

Honors 210G (2): The Science & Social Impact of Baseball (#9640)

TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm

Steve Ackerman, Honors College

Baseball has both reflected American society and left its imprint on American consciousness. This course is designed for all students, regardless of background knowledge of science or social science. Science concepts discussed in class will be general and explained in everyday language. The course emphasizes class discussion, thinking, and critical reading/writing assignments.

Although baseball has more superstition and “magic” than perhaps any other sport, there is real science involved, which is often ignored or misunderstood. Baseball also impacts our social conscience and attitudes such as class issues, gender issues, equality among ethnicities, etc. In this course we will examine scientific elements such as physics (what happens when a ball is thrown/batted/fielded, curve balls, rising fastballs), biology (sports genes, anatomical construction), math and sabermetrics/statistics, as well as the impact of baseball on society and how baseball reflects societal norms.

Students will have six writing assignments: three brief written responses (1 - 2 pages), two short papers (2 - 3 pages), one longer paper (> 5 pages, with five references required), as well as an oral class presentation.

This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.

Honors 210G (3): The #MeToo Movement in Film & Literature (#9641)

TuTh 12:30 - 1:45pm

Carney Maley, Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies

This course begins with a brief history of the #Me Too movement starting with Dr. Anita Hill, whose experience compelled the country to confront issues of sexual harassment in the workplace in 1991, followed by activist Tarana Burke who coined the hashtag while working with young women survivors of color in 2006, and finally the *New York Times* reporters, Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, who, in 2017, first broke the Harvey Weinstein story that ignited a movement.

Using an intersectional feminist lens, we will examine how #MeToo evolved from survivors telling their stories of harassment and abuse on social media to a more organized movement for social and economic justice. We will consider questions such as: What role do race, class, gender, and sexuality play in whose stories get told? How do those aspects of our identity determine whose stories are heard and believed? Whose voices are still missing from this movement?

Using memoirs, essays, and documentary films, we will examine how the #MeToo movement is represented through contemporary non-fiction forms of popular media, not just in depictions of Hollywood actresses, but also those in the tech industry, music business, and professional sports. Through narrative films and short stories, we will analyze how fictional texts can complicate and illuminate everyday issues of power and consent in a way that is not always possible in the “real life” context of the workplace or courtrooms.

Course assignments will include participating in a memoir book group, two persuasive essays, and a final presentation and paper analyzing a relevant media text of your choice.

This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.

Honors 291 (1): Literature & Biopolitics (#2941)

MWF 1:00 - 1:50pm

Avak Hasratian, English

We live in an age defined by the fragility of human and non-human life and the dependence of both on limited resources. “Biopolitics” describes this process: we are changing into collectively generic masses and bodies that are not equally individuated. Some humans can be animalized and perish, whereas others are elevated. Between the two extremes is life itself, and this is where “biopower” operates.

This is not a purely “negative” phenomenon. Biopower, to quote the man who coined the term, “is the power to make live” as it “literally ignores death” (Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, pp. 247 and 248). As a result of power’s retreat from death and the advance of life, we must wrap our heads around this fact: “[T]oday we may be living in the most peaceable era in our species’ existence.... [This is] an unmistakable development, visible on scales from millennia to years, from the waging of wars to the spanking of children” (Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, xxi). At no time in the history of our species have as many humans been alive, and living generally better, longer lives, more or less free of the constant threat of violent death.

In this same spirit, short fiction, novels, television, and films pick up on these ideas, not to show us how hopeless life is, but rather the opposite. Rather than give in to cynicism or pessimism, art turns against the forces of dehumanization and de-

individualization, because imagining our own destruction is a lot better than experiencing it. Course assignments will include creative writing, critical papers, and class presentations.

This course fulfills an Arts (AR) distribution requirement.

Honors 292 (1): Capitalism, Race, African American Writers & Social Transformation (#2943)

TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm

Joseph Ramsey, English/American Studies

African American writing has long offered a critical window into the fundamental workings of U.S. society. Emerging out of conditions of historical oppression, leading black voices often make available suppressed knowledge and radical critiques, as well as celebrations of life lived against the odds, freedom dreams, and reflections on collective attempts to change the world. How have the literary strategies of such writers evolved over time in relation to changing social conditions, as well as different waves of popular movements? What can those seeking justice and equality today learn from the texts they've left us all?

In this course, students will study a range of classic African American literary works in relationship to the evolving historical conditions that helped give rise to them. Readings will extend from the 18th century to the present, including work by Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, W.E.B. DuBois, Cornel West, Bryan Stevenson, and contemporary Black poets, alongside a selection of popular and documentary films. We will also examine a range of critical perspectives—from intersectionality to Marxism and Afro-Pessimism—engaging ongoing debates about the evolving status of race, class, gender, and anti-racism in U.S. society. Theoretical and historical voices may include Adolph Reed Jr., Cedric Johnson, Theodore Allen, Isabel Wilkerson, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Angela Davis, and Michelle Alexander, Marie Gottschalk, and the "The 1619 Project."

As this will be a discussion-based course rooted in student writing and reflection, students will be expected to produce a bi-weekly critical response (roughly 2 pages each), and to help lead class discussion. There will be two formal essay assignments: a short essay (1,500 words) and a final research paper (2,500 words).

This course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement, and it can also be counted towards the Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity Minor.

Honors 292 (2): Work, Leisure & Play (#3515)

TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm

Alec Stubbs, Philosophy

What is the purpose of work? Is work a necessary evil or important for living a meaningful life? What is the purpose of leisure? Is leisure a pathway to boredom or a key component to a life of meaning? What is the purpose of play in our lives, and what does it mean to live playfully? Should we build a world in which robots replace our work so that we might live creative, leisurely lives? Or would such a world lead to a lack meaning and purpose in our day-to-day?

This course will examine these questions and more as we take an interdisciplinary look at the meaning of work, leisure, and play in our lives. Readings will include selections from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, including David Graeber's *Bullshit Jobs*, Andrea Veltman's *Meaningful Work*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow*, Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844*, Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and more.

This course will function using a seminar-style approach and will therefore be discussion-based. During class, students will engage in lively discussion through simulations, playful activities, student-guided questioning, and debates. Alongside class participation, students will be required to submit at least two essays (one on work and one on leisure), as well as the opportunity for a creative project and oral presentation of your work. The assessment tools used in this class will be designed to not merely test your knowledge but to help you build a philosophy of living a good, meaningful—and perhaps more playful—life.

This course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.

Do you have more than 75 credits?

Then it's time to start talking about your Senior Thesis!

If you have more than 75 credits, it's time to talk with your Honors College advisor about your senior thesis. All Honors College students are required to complete a senior thesis, including both a thesis paper and an oral presentation, or an alternative senior project.

For more information about how the thesis can connect with your major and how the process works, please see your Honors College advisor.

Do you have less than 75 credits, but have thesis questions? See your Honors College advisor and they'll be happy to start the conversation sooner rather than later!

Honors 293 (2): The American Court System (#2945)*(PLEASE NOTE: This course will be offered REMOTE via synchronous instruction)*

TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am

Rosemary Minehan (Justice, ret.), Honors College

This course provides an in-depth analysis of the organization, function, and structure of federal and state criminal courts in

the United States. The foundations and designs of court systems and issues relevant to American state and federal courts will be examined throughout the course, with in-depth analysis of the roles and interactions of courtroom participants, including judges, defendants, victims, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and juries. This course focuses on the role of the Supreme Court of the United States, lower appellate courts, and trial courts, and will include an examination of pre-trial processes, plea bargaining, sentencing, and mental-health courts, drug courts and other therapeutic justice courts.

Students will be assigned two essays (5 pages each) and one oral presentation (7-10 minutes) along with readings from various publications in the legal and public-interest domain. The course includes assignments from the textbook *Courts and Criminal Justice in America*, 3rd Edition, by Larry Siegal, Frank Schmalleger, John Worrall, published by Pearson in 2018.

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement, and it can also be counted towards the Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity Minor.

Honors 293 (3): Human Rights, Human Identity & Human Nature (#2946)

MWF 12:00 - 12:50pm

Daria Boeninger, Psychology

How do we create a livable world? Are humans only competitive by nature, or also empathic and cooperative? How do we decide who owns what, including power? How does our relationship to social power shape our identities? How do we forge positive identities in the face of oppression? Does changing an unjust “social contract” have to involve the use of violence?

These questions form the foundation of the social sciences and social praxis. We will explore these questions through seminal works across the social sciences, including political science, economics, sociology, and psychology. We also will read short stories, poetry, and autobiographical narratives that provide opportunities to “see” these questions and proposed answers from an embodied perspective. We will end the course by hearing from some of the great leaders of 20th-century social change movements across the globe (e.g., Gandhi, Fanon, Huerta, Malcolm X).

This course is highly likely to blow our minds and transform our understanding of and relationship to the world! You will do regular, close reading of the original texts outside of class, so that we can spend our class time in informed discussion. Our class will become a safe community in which to further our intellectual, social, and moral development.

Course grades are based on class participation in discussion, your daily reading/discussion prep journal, a team-based debate, and two analytical papers that synthesize core ideas from across sources (one 5 - 7 page paper, and a final paper of 8 - 9 pages).

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement.

Honors 294 (1): Music Is the Weapon: Afro-Diasporic Experiences of Belonging, Self-Determination & Resistance through Afrobeat(s) Music & Its Derivatives (#2947)

TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am (PLEASE NOTE: This course will be offered **REMOTE via synchronous instruction)**

Deborah Dauda, Global Inclusion & Social Development

Music and dance are universal languages. This course will explore the transdisciplinarity of Afrobeat(s) music through scholarship on its cultural aesthetics, resistance strategies, and its transformative power cultivated from a sense of belonging by communities around the world who derive strength and Afro-diasporic identities and belonging. Issues such as Pan-Africanism, (neo)colonialism, migration, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), climate change, warfare, imperialism, displacement, slavery, resistance, hegemony, oppression, and globalization are common themes.

This course weaves together frameworks and approaches from the humanities, social sciences, and health sciences with various forms of cultural expression/aesthetics/artifacts (e.g., poetry, film, music, dance, fine-arts, and literature). The course places the different theories/strategies in dialogue to familiarize students with transdisciplinarity and tools for shaping their own unique voices, perspectives, and identities through artistic voices and expressions of African and African-diaspora artists from communities in places like Guatemala (the Garifuna people), Nigeria, Bermuda, Kenya, Brazil, West Papua, Colombia, and the United States. Students will develop familiarity with concepts such as post-colonial theory, Africana feminisms, social inclusion/exclusion, cultural musicology, and hybridity.

Class activities will include readings, film screenings, guest speakers, restaurant visits, music listening sessions, as well as global engagements and networking through Worldpulse.org. Students will build their online portfolio through class projects and assignments, including curated discussions and a midterm group multimedia presentation on the role of music and dance as a form of resistance in your assigned country. The final project will be an interactive presentation of your online portfolio, highlighting course themes and how they relate to your respective fields of study and future professions.

This course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement.

Honors 294 (2): African Environmental Politics (#2948)

TuTh 8:00 - 9:15am

Margaret Gatonye, Global Governance & Human Security

This course will examine the various environmental issues affecting Africa. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of environmental politics in Africa, explore the historical context such as the after-effects of colonialism's exploitation of the environment, gain a foundation of the theories used to analyze environmental politics, and highlight the wicked environmental problems such as deforestation, water scarcity, and the continent's vulnerability to climate change.

Using case examples from Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Congo, and Egypt, this course will explore the intersection of politics and environment in these areas, such as the politics of water along the Nile River and its sources, as well as exploring ways to better understand the role of women in environmental politics. The course will also utilize visual texts such as documentaries to study women who have started environmental social movements in Africa such as Wangari Maathai, alongside exploring the role of the United Nations (particularly the UN Environmental Program and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation) and other international organizations for their role in addressing environmental issues in Africa.

Overall, the course will consider ongoing debates in African environmental politics. The aim of the course is for students to gain a better understanding of the intersection of politics and the environment in Africa via our class discussions, written assignments, and class presentations.

This course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement, and it can also be counted towards the Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity Minor.

Honors 295 (1): Unheralded Women of Science & Technology (#9642)

TuTh 2:00 - 3:15pm

Steven Ackerman, Honors College

This course will address the myriad of unheralded women who made important contributions to science and/or technology. We will omit those women who have received historical acknowledgment (such as Marie Curie). Although we will focus mainly on 20th century women of achievement, there are women of science dating back much farther than the 18th century. A good starting place, however, is in the 18th century with Gabrielle Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet, who was a brilliant natural philosopher, mathematician, physicist, and author during the early 1730s.

One of the best and most brilliant scientists of the 20th century was Barbara McClintock, a botanist, geneticist, and cytogeneticist who was both prescient and prophetic. Mary McMillan invented physical therapy as we know and practice it today, and Mileva Maric, Albert Einstein's first wife, was responsible for his famous publications because it was she, a luminous physicist and mathematician, who checked his calculations and made corrections, prior to publication. Other notable women we will discuss are Rosalind Franklin/Florence Bell (biophysics), Ruth Sager (genetics), the Code Girls (who solved the codes the axis powers used in WWII), Grace Hopper/Jean Sammet (computer language and programming), Alice Hamilton/Alice Waters (FDA & food science), Rachel Carson (the mother of environmentalism), Theo Colborn (the successor to Carson), Jane Goodall/Diann Fosse (kinship between humans and animals - animal behaviorists), rocket girls (think *Hidden Figures* - the women who made the space program), Margaret Mead/Ruth Benedict (cultural anthropology), and fly girls (women who pioneered aviation).

Students will have six written assignments: three short research papers (student chooses the topic) and three short response papers to articles or movies, plus one oral class presentation.

This course fulfills a Natural Sciences (NS) distribution requirement.

Fall 2023 Honors College Junior Colloquia

*You must have completed at least **two** Honors courses at the 200-level to take the Junior Colloquium.*

Honors 380 (1): On Theory (#1526)

Monday 1:00 - 3:45pm

Alex Des Forges, *Modern Languages*

This course will examine the functions and discourses of “theory” across a variety of disciplines, including the hard sciences, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and literary and cultural studies. Our aim is to assess the relative significance of theoretical thinking in the different disciplines, reflect critically on the pretexts for and consequences of defining one’s own project as theoretical, and consider the kinds of work that are specifically excluded from or generally understood as complementary to “theory.”

How is theory different from practice? Is it possible to identify a transdisciplinary mode of theorizing, or are the ways in which theories are created inevitably defined by the disciplines to which they belong? How do certain styles of thinking, speaking, or writing suggest to us that they aim to go beyond a data set, individual experience, or personal observation to make more general statements about the world? What is the relationship between theory and methodology? Is theory useful? What are its pitfalls? These are some of the questions that we will address.

Requirements include weekly short written responses, active participation in class discussions, and a final 12-15 page research paper. Preparation for the research paper will include an annotated bibliography and a brief presentation to the class on your work in progress.

Honors 380 (2): The Opioid Epidemic & the Justice System (#2940)

Tues/Thurs 11:00am - 12:15pm (This course will be offered via **REMOTE synchronous instruction)**

Rosemary Minehan, *Justice (Ret.)*, *Honors College*

Across the United States, individuals with serious mental illness and addiction have traditionally faced complex systems of criminal and civil justice that have subjected them to incarceration, involuntary civil commitment to inadequate psychiatric and substance treatment facilities, and to the involuntary administration of psychotropic medication and other invasive treatments for mental illness and addiction. This course will explore how these specialized populations have been managed in the legal system and consider innovative initiatives occurring within the courts, executive agencies, law enforcement, corrections and healthcare that are changing the landscape of behavioral health and treatment.

Students will become conversant in the full panoply of legal issues surrounding the topics of mental illness and addiction including patients’ rights, voluntary and involuntary hospitalization and medical treatment for mental illness and addiction, and will also explore issues presented in the criminal context including the use of psychological forensic evaluations, the insanity defense, competency to stand trial, and sentencing.

Students will write one short paper (1.5 pages), one medium essay (3 pages), and one longer essay (5 pages) and give one oral presentation (15 minutes). The papers and oral presentation should reflect the student’s interest in the topics covered in the course. Students will be assigned readings from leading court decisions, state and federal statutes, and from the assigned textbook, *The Criminalization of Mental Illness: Crisis and Opportunity for the Justice System* (2nd edition), by Risdon N. Slate, Jacqueline K. Buffington-Vollum, and W. Wesley Johnson.

Honors 380 (4): Wake Up! Meditation, Consciousness & Social Change (#9643)**TuTh 12:30 - 1:45pm****Todd Drogy, English**

This course is a deep dive into Eastern philosophies of mind, with a particular focus on the traditions of Taoism and Buddhism. We will explore how ancient models of consciousness/selfhood bear upon issues of mental health, interpersonal relationship, professional ethics, community activism, social justice, environmental stewardship, and artificial intelligence. Connections between ancient wisdom and cutting-edge theories in biology, quantum physics, and brain science will also be explored.

Drawing from multidisciplinary sources, we will study contemporary academic texts and ancient manuscripts; we will read fiction, watch movies, listen to podcasts, and engage with music and art. We will be interested in how the philosophical ideas encountered apply to *here and now* and the challenges we face in our day-to-day personal, academic, and civic lives. Specific philosophical concepts of interest will include *the way* (tao), non-self (anatta), impermanence (anitya), loving-kindness (maitri), right-livelihood (samyag-ājīva), the nature of suffering (samsara), the nature of freedom (nirvana), and cause-and-effect (karma). In relation to these ideas we will endeavor to understand the intention, form, and practice of mindfulness/awareness meditation.

This is a discussion-focused class, with a strong emphasis on class participation. Students will compose three (500-600 word) mini-essays on readings/films/discussions, as well as keeping a journal of informal writing. A thesis-driven research paper (12-14 pages) will be due at semester's end.

Alternative HONORS 380 course:**ASIAN 488L/MLLC 488L (1): The Idea of Asia (#9932/#9933)****TuTh 12:30 - 1:45pm****Teruko Kawashima, Asian Studies**

This course is similar to an Honors junior colloquium and can be taken as an alternative HONORS 380 course in Fall 2023.

Please email the professor directly at Terry.Kawashima@umb.edu to request permission. (An HONORS 380 exception will be submitted to the registrar's office after the student's successful completion of the course.)

This course examines the imagination of "Asia" from a variety of perspectives: historical, economic, religious, philosophical, literary, and artistic. The aim of the course is to consider Asia as a region by exploring texts and phenomena that address issues beyond the boundaries of single national traditions. Through such explorations, we will try to think about how Asia is defined by those inside and outside this large and diverse region of the world.

In the first part of the course, we will look at how, at various moments, specific Asian cultures envisioned themselves vis-à-vis other Asian cultures. Systems of thought, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam, provide insight into how texts, people, and ideas traveled between and within South and East Asia, while a look at conceptualizations of languages, nationalisms, and intra-Asian colonialism affords an opportunity to examine how these "ideas of Asia by Asians" concretely manifested themselves, sometimes problematically. In the second part of the course, we will consider how the idea of a "coherent Asia" was constructed by those outside of Asia. Such ideas about Asia had great influence in both Asian and global history; we will investigate historical and contemporary examples, ranging from European philosophical texts to modern American films and contemporary news media. These investigations will help us situate our own present-day understandings of Asia.