The Honors College Spring 2027 course descriptions packet includes:

1) HONORS 101 First-Year Seminars
2) HONORS 210G Intermediate Seminars
3) HONORS 290-level Courses
4) HONORS 380 Junior Colloquia

## HONORS 101 First-Year Seminars for Spring 2027

PLEASE NOTE: Honors College students are required to take an HONORS 101 first-year seminar, except for those students who transferred at least 30 credits into UMass Boston at the time that they matriculated to the university. (Also, please note that any students who entered the Honors College AFTER already completing a 4-credit 100-level "G" First-Year Seminar are obviously not required to take HONORS 101.)

Honors 101 (1): Lyricism (#1480)
MW 4:00 - 5:15pm
Jason Roush, Honors College

What makes song lyrics poetic and lyrical? Where do songwriting and poetry intersect? In this music listening and appreciation seminar, we will examine lyricism and songcraft, as well as taking pleasure in re-sensitizing the more emotional aspects of popular songs. We will discuss well-written lyrics, along with some smart novelty songs. How do lyrics illuminate and sustain everyday life interpersonally, historically, politically, romantically?

Readings from critical texts will help us explore individual song selections. Brief excerpts are shared for free during class…no textbook! We'll consider many songcraft aspects: rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, anaphora, consonance, assonance, metaphor, economy, and innovations surrounding the traditional verse/chorus/bridge/refrain structure. Artists whose songs and lyrics we'll explore include Tori Amos, Kate Bush, Tracy Chapman, Cocteau Twins, Lana Del Rey, Eminem, Empress Of (aka Lorely Rodriguez), Michael Jackson, Kendrick Lamar, Cyndi Lauper, Lori McKenna, Joni Mitchell, Prince, Bruce Springsteen, Taylor Swift, Allee Willis, Jamie Woon, and many others.

Each student will present two songs selections, to help expand and diversify our listening throughout the course. There are five short in-class response papers (two pages each), as well as a two-page artist's profile submitted to the professor via email with the first song presentation, and a two-page lyrical analysis submitted to the professor via email for the second song presentation. Mainly, our focus will be on cultivating appreciation and depth of attention in relation to the art of music lyricism.

Honors 101 (2): Unequal Colleagues: A History of Women in the Sciences (#1481)
MWF 12:00 - 12:50pm
Lynne Byall Benson, Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies

According to historian Margaret Rossiter, "(A) woman scientist was a contradiction in terms—such a person was unlikely to exist, and if she did…, she had to be "unnatural" in some way… Women scientists were thus caught between two almost mutually exclusive stereotypes: as scientists they were atypical women; as women they were unusual scientists " (Rossiter, Margaret W.; Women Scientists in America. Struggles and Strategies to 1940. (1982: xv).

This course examines, from a feminist perspective, the history of women's struggle to attain entry in the male-dominated field of the so-called "hard" sciences in the United States; among them those fields referred to at STEM: Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Special attention will be paid to the connections between society's assumptions regarding the purpose of women's education, and societal barriers, including race, faced by women who aspired to careers in scientific fields. Seminar participants read, discuss, debate, and make up their own minds on these issues.

Honors 101 (3): The Scandalized Subject: A Story of the Self in Literature, Film, and Theory (#2050)
MW 2:30 - 3:45pm
Christopher Craig, English

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While artistic, philosophical, and religious examinations of the Self have developed over the centuries, ranging from the mythological to the theoretical, the quest to interpret the Self remains. This course considers a number of artistic and theoretical approaches to the Self through a variety of literary and visual texts from the turn of the 20$^{th}$ century to our own historical moment. It examines how the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves position the Self against its dialectical Other—often the monsters we imagine or the technological monstrosities we create—in order to substantiate and at times deny our own existence.

In this course, students will read four novels, watch three films, and read five to seven theoretical essays. Weekly student participation is required, along with two formal presentations. Students will also write three essays. Essays one and two will range from 750 to 1,000 words in length. Essay three will include a research component and should not exceed 2,500 words. In preparation for essay three, students will submit a prospectus and bibliography.

Honors 101 (4): Exploring Human Behavior (#2215)
TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm
Roxann Harvey, Honors College

Why did I do that? How much of human behavior comes from biology, learning, personal experience, culture, or the environments in which we live? This course invites students to explore human behavior through ideas and research from psychology, neuroscience, behavioral science, and the social sciences. Students will consider how behavior develops and changes and how biological processes, relationships, identity, technology, social expectations, and institutions influence the way people behave. Topics may include learning, decision-making, social media, mental health, disability, neurodiversity, and inequity. Students will also consider how the study of behavior connects to a range of careers and professional fields.

Through readings, discussions, group activities, and written assignments, students will examine different explanations for behavior and consider the strengths and limitations of each. The course encourages students to ask questions, evaluate evidence, make connections across fields, and examine assumptions. Students will practice reading and interpreting research and using evidence to develop and communicate their own ideas about complex questions. Students will complete a midterm research paper and a collaborative group presentation at the end of the semester. Rather than searching for one right answer, students will consider how different perspectives can contribute to a fuller understanding of human behavior.

Honors 101 (5): Innovators and Their Creativity (#2350)
TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am
Steve Ackerman, Honors College

Innovation and entrepreneurship are hallmarks of humanity since time immemorial. Most people assume that innovation occurs only in science and technology. Incorrect. We will discuss men and women's creative genius in business, science, technology, music, recreation, sports, medicine, and more. Discussed innovators will include: Clarence Birdseye & frozen food; Franz Boas, who invented cultural anthropology and mentored women & minorities; Effa Manley, the first woman to own a baseball club (in the Negro league) & innovated baseball marketing and competitiveness; Henry Ford & the assembly line; John D. Rockefeller forming the first mega-monopoly; Daniel Kahneman & Amos Tversky on how decisions are made through thinking, fast & slow; Barbara McClintock who invented techniques for genetics and made intellectual leaps into regulatory biology; Rachel Carson & Theo Colborn, environmental movement pioneers; Jane Goodall, Diann Fossey, and Birute Mary Galdikas who transformed animal behavioral science; Ada Lovelace who developed the computer forerunner in the

early 1850s; Grace Hopper who developed computer programming & languages; Walt Disney & Ub Iwerks who invented movie animation; Charles Darwin who explained evolution as natural selection; Lise Meitner who discovered nuclear fission; Rosalind Franklin who refined & defined X-ray crystallography; Frank Ramsey who revolutionized economic thinking; Moms Mabley, Betty White, and Lucille Ball who revolutionized comedy; Julia Child & cooking; Jonas Salk, Alfred Sabin, and Hilary Koprowski & their polio vaccines & variolation; Wright Bros & Glenn Curtiss for aviation; Alice Hamilton & Alice Lakey who created the FDA; Francis Perkins & social security; Oswald Avery, Frederick William Twort, and Felix d' Herelle who studied DNA & phage, and Jerry Lawson & video games.

Assignments include 3 response papers (2 or more pages each) on movies you stream, 3 research papers (2 essays of 3 or more pages each with 3 or more references cited, and a final essay of 5 or more pages with 5 or more references cited) & an oral presentation.

Honors 101 (6): Does College Matter? Access and Opportunity in American Higher Education (#3022)
TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm
Diane D'Arrigo, Honors College

Who can afford a college education, and who can't? Who gets to go to college, and who doesn't? What gets taught in college, and what doesn't? These are all issues with a broader social, cultural, historical, political, and economic context. Come explore the great transformation of American higher education since WWII and discuss the more recent evolution of colleges and universities, as well as many current hot topics in our quest to answer the question: Does college matter?

Some specific topics will include a review of major societal changes and their influence on the increased democratization of higher education such as: the impact of the GI Bill, the civil rights movement, women's movement, student protest movements, and changes in public policy. Using both primary and secondary sources, we will discuss relevant court rulings, state and federal legislation, and various institutional histories. Additionally, we'll explore the origins of UMass Boston, and students will consider its place within the broader history of the American higher education system. Finally, we will review some current trends and debates taking place in higher education such as: affirmative action, student debt and the financial aid system, artificial intelligence, free speech on college campuses, college rankings, the value and purpose of a college degree, how higher education is funded, and current public policy proposals that impact a variety of those issues. Throughout the course, we will consider these issues and the relationship between higher education, access, race, class, gender and economic mobility.

This seminar will emphasize lively intellectual discussions and individually chosen research topics with both individual and group support. Grading criteria will include attendance, class preparation and participation, and a variety of writing assignments and a research project including: an institutional history paper (written on an institution of your choice), four reflection papers, an oral presentation, and a final research project.

Honors 101 (7): Religion, Violence, and Sexual Politics in the United States (#5773)
MWF 1:00 - 1:50pm
Mia Appelbaum, Classical and Religious Studies

This course explores the relationship between religion, sex and sexuality, violence, and non-violence in the United States. How has religion shaped American ideas about sex and sexuality (and vice-versa)? How have those ideas produced or justified various forms of violence? And does religion cause violence—or does that question obscure more than it reveals?

We will take up these questions through a range of historical and political contexts, including U.S. policies toward Native Americans, racial segregation, the AIDS epidemic, abortion politics, and American foreign policy and empire-building. Across each area of study, we will examine how religion operates both visibly and invisibly within a nation that defines itself as a secular democracy, developing a critical vocabulary for understanding how religion and sex interact with power, citizenship, race, and American empire.

This class is facilitated like a seminar with weekly readings and/or films. Students will participate in a midterm reflection exercise and write a final research paper for the course.

## HONORS 210G Intermediate Seminars for Spring 2027

Honors 210G (1): “The Personal Is Political”: Reproductive Justice on Film (#5337)
MWF 11:00 - 11:50am
Carney Maley, Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies

The reproductive justice movement was developed by a group of Black women activists in the 1990s as a way to merge their advocacy for both reproductive rights and social justice issues. Using this intersectional framework, we will examine how ideas about reproduction have evolved in the U.S. from pre-Roe v. Wade to the overturning of the Supreme Court case in 2022, to today.

Reproductive justice allows us to explore not only the evolution of abortion rights, but also the right for people to have children and to parent them in a safe environment. Therefore, we will investigate topics such as maternal healthcare, foster care, LGBTQ+ family building, new reproductive technologies, sterilization, and contraception. Students will read the works of legal scholars, activists, historians, and journalists to chart how people's reproductive decisions are shaped not only by gender identity but also race, socioeconomic class, and sexuality.

The course will also focus on how issues of reproductive justice are represented in contemporary American film. Analyzing both narrative and documentary films from the 21st century provides us with insights into how society views certain reproductive choices (i.e. what is considered socially acceptable, legal, desirable, etc.), and how these individual and structural decisions change over time. Assignments will include written analyses of contemporary documentary and narrative films and a final research project that investigates a current activist organization committed to one of the reproductive justice issues covered in the course.

The above course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) distribution requirement.

Honors 210G (2): The New Eugenics (#5338)
TuTh 12:30 - 1:45pm
Steve Ackerman, Honors College

Eugenics, coined by Francis Galton and promoted by many prominent scientists and policymakers after Madison Grant's book The Passing of the Great Race (1916), was practiced notably from the early 1900s through the 1930s. Schemes depicting which groups fit into different race categories have been developed since antiquity, where the ranking of each race depended on the race of the individual designing the scheme. In reality, genetic evidence is clear there is only one human race. Eugenics is scientifically irrational since it reduces genetic diversity and the variability necessary to adapt to changing environments. It is, therefore, a policy of extinction. Nevertheless, eugenics promoted improving a selected human population by genetically excluding those deemed undesirable, including criminalizing some kinds of marriage, compulsory sterilization, institutionalization, and immigration restrictions. Although some scientists (but not all!) and others argued against eugenics, it was not until the Nazi regime's genocides that these practices fell out of favor.

Presently there is a new, more subtle eugenics being practiced in the U.S. and elsewhere, including immigration restrictions, health care and disability support denial, food and housing insecurity, proposed gene editing or restricting reproductive rights,

facial recognition targeting “undesirables”, A.I. training & minorities, judicial system bias and more. Elsewhere in the world these practices include ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Assignments include 3 response papers (2 or more pages each) on articles or movies, 3 research papers (2 essays of 3 or more pages each with 3 or more references cited, and a final essay of 5 or more pages with 5 or more references cited) & an oral presentation.

The above course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) distribution requirement.

## HONORS 290-level Courses for Spring 2027

Honors 291 (1): Optimism! (#2432)
TuTh 2:00 - 3:15pm
Avak Hasratian, English

In “Of the Logic of Practice, or Art; Including Morality and Policy,” John Stuart Mill writes: “I have observed that not the man who hopes when others despair, but the man who despairs when others hope, is admired by a large class of persons as a sage” (469). To their disappointment, this course’s wager is that nothing has happened that can’t be remedied through artistic inspiration. Realistic optimism, or hope against a backdrop of constraints, is best experienced through aesthetics that can improve our responses to stressors, whether subjectively internal or objectively affecting the planet.

There is nothing that art cannot try and do. To see how this is desirable, we'll ground ourselves in a reflective life based on what Valerie Tiberius calls “realistic optimism”; read a novel about how precarious life increases its value (McCarthy's *The Road*); another that changes how we view the relationship between our inner world and the external experience of daily life (Backman’s *A Man Called Ove*); reflect on claims that we don't have to change the world but instead can live simple lives (Warmke and Tosi's *Why It's Okay To Mind Your Own Business*); and view a film about the quiet and unintentional consequences of going about our lives (Nichols’s *Loving* or Almodóvar’s *All About My Mother*).

Down with the Doomsayers and “No” to the negative Nancys! It’s right to feel good in a time when plenty is wrong.

Course requirements will include short response papers and intense class discussions!

The above course fulfills an Arts (AR) distribution requirement.

Honors 291 (2): Taiko: The Makings of Japanese Drumming Tradition (#5339)
MW 4:00 - 5:15pm
Connie Chow, Honors College

Taiko, traditional Japanese drumming, has both long and recent histories. With roots and traditions in different regions in Japan, taiko performers and ensembles have proliferated around the world, each adopting different missions and styles, sharing common repertoires and creating and exchanging new music. This course focuses on kumi-daiko, or ensemble drumming, to explore several interwoven themes: 1) the evolving and multiple natures of culture and "traditional" art forms; 2) the complexity of and relationship between cultural expressions and (perceived) identity; and 3) cultural practices as the political practice of resistance, reclamation and representation. We will explore these themes through academic texts, guest speakers and artists, documentaries and concert videos/attendance. Taiko is also physical and choreographed, so our time together will include listening to, playing with and creating sounds, rhythms and movements with our voices, bodies and instruments.

In addition to short in-class reflections, you will conduct research on a musical tradition resonant with your cultural experience and relate it to one or more of the themes in the course. The final will be an invite-only concert, where you will perform for each other the ensemble creations that have been workshopped with a guest or the instructor. The research will be incorporated into the concert program, in a format of your choosing. Your final grade will also be based on attendance and participation, demonstration of effort, growth, and willingness to take artistic and intellectual risks.

The above course fulfills an Arts (AR) distribution requirement.

Honors 292 (1): How to Be a Luddite and Why (#2739)
TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm
Nir Eisikovits, Philosophy

"A.I. is here to stay – like it or not. Adapt, or get left behind…" "Smartphones aren't going anywhere. You can't meet professional expectations without one…" "Kids have to learn how to use computers. They have to learn how to code. Otherwise, they are cheating themselves out of their future…"

You've all heard versions of this argument before. Let's call it "tech determinism": once a technology is here, it can't go back in the bottle, and everybody must adapt or surrender to those who have. But what about the possibility of pushing back against technology?

This class will look at the history, philosophy, and politics of being a Luddite. What does it mean to be conservative about technology? Does it really make sense to be skeptical about the necessity and desirability of technological progress? Is that even practical? What are we to make of the fact that people actually are rushing to buy vinyl records and "dumb phones," and that school districts are banning screens one after another? You'll come away with an understanding of how, when, and why it makes sense to be a Luddite.

Course assignments will consist of a combination of short papers, recorded interviews, and oral examinations.

The above course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.

Honors 292 (2): Masculinity: Myths and Meanings (#3716)
TuTh 12:30 - 1:45pm
Todd Drogy and Paul Dyson, English

What does it *mean* to be a man, and how has this meaning shifted over time?

In this course, we will examine both ancient and modern concepts of masculinity in an effort to answer the question: Is there a "boys' crisis," and, if so, what is it and what caused it? Men in America are far more likely to die in combat, at work, or by suicide; men in America also commit the vast majority of sexual assaults, murders, and other violent crimes. Men have increasingly sought refuge and meaning in incel and "Red Pill" communities while leaving home later, attending college and graduate school with decreasing frequency, and struggling to maintain authentic long-term relationships.

Using the works of Robert Bly and Richard Reeves, along with Jungian archetype theory, as our foundational framework, we will explore the nature-versus-nurture question: Is masculinity an essence, a construct, or both? With this question in mind, we will examine the following aspects of masculinity: male archetypes; men and war; male friendships; men and women; queer masculinities; and men in music, sports, and other media. We will read academic texts, essays, poetry, and classical literature. We will watch movies and videos, listen to music, and engage with social media.

This is a discussion-focused class with a strong emphasis on class participation. Students will compose three mini-essays (500-600 words each) on readings, films, and discussions. You will also keep a journal of reflective, informal writing. A thesis-driven research paper (6-8 pages) will be due at the semester's end.

The above course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.

Honors 293 (1): The Politics of Global Agenda-Setting: The UN 2030 Agenda (#2511)
MWF 10:00 - 10:50am
Lilian Sibanda, Global Governance and Human Security

This course focuses on how issues become part of the global agenda and what happens to global goals as they move from international commitments to national and local contexts. Using the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the central framework, students explore how state and non-state actors interact to identify, define, and address global challenges.

This course has five major components: framing, actors, paradigms, translation, and indicators. In *framing,* students examine how problems are defined, priorities negotiated, and policy solutions proposed. *Actors* examines who participates in global agenda-setting, whose knowledge and interests influence global priorities, and how different actors exercise influence within these processes. *Paradigms* introduce students to international development approaches, including human capital, human capability, and human security perspectives, and consider how different understandings of development shape policy priorities and solutions. In *translation*, students examine how global goals are interpreted, adapted, and translated into national and local priorities. Finally, *indicators* introduce students to global social and economic measures of development, inequality, human well-being, and progress toward collective goals, while encouraging them to critically consider what these measures capture and what they may overlook.

Overall, the course emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving, encouraging students to analyze contemporary global challenges from multiple perspectives and examine why global commitments may produce different outcomes across contexts. Through written assignments, in-class discussions, and brainstorming sessions, students will be challenged to consider their own roles within an interconnected global system.

The above course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement and can also be applied to the minor in Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity.

Honors 293 (2): Addicted to Extremism: A Transdisciplinary Analysis of Human Behavior from Radicalization to Recovery (#11058)
TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm
Stephanie Ali, Global Inclusion and Social Development

In this course, we will study extremist movements and fanaticism with a special focus on radicalization, rhetoric, and violence through the lens of addiction recovery. Emerging bodies of research in multiple fields draw significant comparisons between extremism

and addiction in social, neurological, psychological, and sociological settings. Upon taking this course, students will understand and articulate prominent sociopsychological dynamics of both addiction and extremism respectively, and apply critical analyses about where they converge. Building upon this, students will be able to analyze case studies through a transdisciplinary lens of both individual and group dynamics involving addictive feedback loops, applying comparative and critical perspectives. Students will apply psychological, sociological, and critical social theories to assess and contrast diverse aspects of extremist behavior and evaluate both historical and emerging field methods for recovery and reintegration. Significant consideration will be given to praxis and community resources, supporting students to navigate encounters with extremism in professional, social, and online spaces.

Extremism is a prominent global social problem with increasing visibility in the United States. This topic is highly relevant for anyone who seeks to be an agent of social repair and harm reduction. This class blends analysis and praxis and considers students in professional, humanities, and STEM-based academic tracks. Students will engage with the latest research on a transdisciplinary topic with potential to have a direct impact in improving communities. The class also employs a restorative and community-based analytical lens to mitigating extremism in diverse contexts, supporting students who may encounter extremism in their own environments and developing as a practitioner of recovery and an agent of social repair.

Weekly assignments include readings from primary sources (firsthand accounts) and academic articles, with a .5 page written reflection. The course will also include two listening sessions with speakers who have direct experience in recovery, for which a written reflection will replace the weekly homework. Major assignments include a 3 page paper about addiction and recovery paradigms, a 3 page paper analyzing an extremist group or movement, and an 8 page paper which synthesizes the short papers into a critical transdisciplinary analysis of an extremist movement through an addiction/recovery lens. The course is structured with a discussion circle model and participation will be graded for contribution, quality, and inclusion. Students will develop a poster presentation in class to deliver in our final session.

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

Honors 294 (1): Indigenous Community Activism (#2430)
TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am
Christopher Fung, Anthropology

This course examines the ways in which social and environmental justice activism is pursued in three different communities in three different continents. The three

examples are Abahlali baseMjondolo (The Shack Dwellers' Movement) in South Africa, the #NODAPL resistance movement based in Standing Rock, South Dakota, and the Ihumatao Land Occupation in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

We will use a combination of scholarly and popular sources to examine the ways in which these particular examples of activism draw upon important ideas and values based in indigenous and marginalized communities.

Students will be assessed through several short written assignments, and a final project based on an in-depth exploration of a particular example of activism of the student's choosing, using concepts and approaches discussed in the course.

The above course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement and can also be applied to the minor in Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity.

Honors 294 (2): Migration, Memory, and the Mediterranean (#4293)
MW 9:30 - 10:45pm
Claudia Esposito, Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

What does it mean to move across national, political, social, and emotional borders in the 20th and 21st centuries? This course explores the dynamic intersections of migration and memory within the Mediterranean region specifically. Using a wide range of media—including literature, film, visual arts, essays, and critical articles—we will examine pressing contemporary themes related to politics, racial divisions, social upheaval, and integration.

In particular, we will look at the ways writers and artists represent the experience of migration, its historical causes, and its enduring consequences. Through these creative works, students will analyze how artistic expression deepens our understanding of a human phenomenon that is too often simplified in the headlines and statistics of mainstream media.

By tracing the ways memories are preserved, reconstructed, and sometimes silenced, we will explore how the past continues to influence the experience of migration in the present. We will examine the personal side of migration, exploring how individual identities are constructed and continuously transformed in a supposedly increasingly interconnected world.

Course assignments include active weekly seminar participation, close reading responses, a midterm analytical assignment, a collaborative group presentation on a

contemporary media representation, and a final research project focusing on a self-selected artistic work or author.

The above course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement and can also be applied to the minor in Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity.

Honors 295 (1): How to Build Better Molecules (#5340)
TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am
Aritra Nath Chattopadhyay, Tufts IRACDA Visiting Fellow

How have humans used chemistry to improve our lives? This course will take a basic scientific and historical approach to studying interesting biological phenomena through the lens of chemistry and the molecules involved. Through the historical lens, students will grow to understand the importance of curiosity and serendipity in scientific breakthroughs.

The scientific approach will help students break down complex biological phenomena into small interesting molecular interactions and the chemistry that drives biology. This approach will involve learning the fundamental chemistry and biology that is needed to understand the primary scientific literature and the impact of this research on human health.

We will discuss human biology, chemical therapy, the first “designed” molecules, learning from plants and bacteria, and the promises and limits of using engineering and evolution to improve molecules. This course will be discussion heavy as course-related readings will deal with primary literature.

Course assignments will involve answering reading response questions and in-class activities (both solo and group activities) related to the concepts taught, and their real-world applications. Success in the class will require a holistic understanding of course materials without worrying about memorizing every little detail.

There is a final project for this course focused on an oral and written presentation on a scientific problem of the student’s choice. The final project will be short in length, but it will require a good deal of research on your part to identify a scientific topic of interest, critical thinking on that topic, and propose an innovative way to approach that topic in relevance to the main themes of our course.

The above course fulfills a Natural Sciences (NS) distribution requirement.

# HONORS 380 Junior Colloquia for Spring 2027

PLEASE NOTE: Students can take the HONORS 380 Junior Colloquium after completing at least TWO of their four required 200-level Honors College courses.

## Honors 380 (1): Sustainability in Boston (#2130)

Tuesday 12:30 - 3:15pm
Bala Balchandran, Sustainable Solutions Lab

Can we achieve sustainability and make it work for everyone? Dive into this thought-provoking course that explores the delicate balance between sustainability, resilience, equity, and justice. You'll become a sustainability detective, investigating real-world cases at UMass Boston and beyond. Engage with researchers, experts, and practitioners to uncover the hidden connections and conflicts in sustainability initiatives.

Throughout the semester, you'll embark on a series of mini-missions: crafting three short "sustainability snapshots" (2-3 pages each), mapping out key players in the sustainability game, and gathering crucial data. Your ultimate challenge? A comprehensive term paper (10-15 pages) that weaves together your discoveries, existing research, and personal insights.

Fuel your investigation with a mix of academic articles, captivating case studies, and breaking news on sustainability hot topics. Join us for an adventure in critical thinking and problem-solving as we work towards creating a more sustainable and equitable future!

## Honors 380 (2): On Theory (#2351)

MW 1:00 - 2:15pm
Alex Des Forges, Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

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 (3): What Is a Genome? (#3717)
TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am
Brook Moyers, Honors College

The Human Genome Project launched in 1990 and by 2003 the first "complete" human genome was published. Today, over two million human genomes have been sequenced, along with the genomes of many other species. What does that mean for research, health, and society? This course will take a multi-disciplinary approach to studying genomics, starting with a fundamental grounding in the biology, history, and current and emerging technologies of genomic science. We will do some genomic sequencing ourselves. We will connect genomics with applications in individualized medicine, modern agricultural breeding, the new eugenics, species conservation, and more. We will read primary and secondary literature and selections of books and news articles, as well as watch documentary and narrative movies, and take a critical and collaborative approach to discussing them. At the end of the course, we will devote time to individual or small group projects that deepen understanding of one aspect of the course.

Students will write short in-class reflections and keep a weekly response journal. Students will also write one technical summary (2 pages or less) and one persuasive or argumentative letter (2 pages or less). To help prepare for their honors thesis, students will research the expectations for an honors thesis in their chosen discipline and develop an independent research proposal (3 pages or less, using at least 5 primary sources) that aligns with those expectations. Students will give two class presentations: an informal independent research proposal mid-semester and a formal presentation of the course project at the end of the semester.