

## **Recent Honors Colloquia Courses (HONR 3000, 3020, 3030, 3040)**

### **FALL 2024**

#### **American Conspiracy Theory**

As historians and social commenters have noted in recent years, conspiracy thinking has definitely gone mainstream and transcends ideological positions. Historians, indeed, recognize that most conspiracy thinking evolved (or evolves) from specific events which fall onto soil fertilized by fairly widespread—but differing—social fears. The focus of this course is not to disprove (or worse, prove) conspiracy theories to be true. The focus of the course is to encourage students to analyze historical events to understand the context within which conspiracy thinking develops. In the first instance this is done using documents, audio and video recordings, and pamphlets. Analysis is contextualized using not only the work of historians, but that of psychologists, sociologists, and even recent studies in evolutionary biology. (Humanities & Fine Arts, ACE 5)

#### **Folklore and Literature**

This class will address the relationship between folklore and literature. Following a general introduction to the field of folklore and its history, we will interrogate the ways in which folklore has been represented and used in a variety of literary texts and genres. Central to our interrogations will be the nature of folk performance, in particular how verbalized expressions adapt to and/or resist textualization; to put it more simply, we're going to try to figure out whether or not literature can ever really capture the immediacy of an oral performance. Other important concepts included in the class include authenticity, belief, community and identity, and ethnography. (Humanities & Fine Arts)

#### **Sustenance & Sustainability**

This course will explore perspectives of sustainability from Native American writings and cultural practices including storytelling, the arts, food & cooking, and language preservation/revitalization. On remote reservations and urban communities, collaborations are taking place to claim (and sometimes relearn) how traditional foods are grown, what materials can be used for artistic expression, and how these many skills are spoken of in an indigenous language. Join me to explore some of these traditional practices and learn how you may be able to implement such efforts in your own lives. We will read fiction, cookbooks, essays, look at art, photographs, and try our hand at some traditional skills. Students should be prepared for a day trip to the Macy, NE to meet students at the UmoNhoN Nation Public School. (Satisfies Humanities and Fine Arts reqs.)

#### **Transportation and Mobility**

Ready to get moving? Our course will be an historical and contemporary review of the evolution of our transportation systems and how social, economic, and political influences have shaped the way people travel and stuff gets moved from all over the world to our doorsteps. The course is designed to engage students in thinking about the factors that typically influence our transportation and mobility choices, such as cost, safety, reliability, speed, etc., in the context of broader social, political, and economic influences. We will also explore how technological change created challenges and opportunities for transportation historically and how technological change may shape mobility in the future. We will have lots of great guest speakers and discussions—and get moving. (Social Sciences, ACE 6)

### **The Body, Self, & Society**

This Honors colloquium will challenge students to explore the complex, recursive relationships between biological, psychological, and social aspects of the self, especially as they relate to political ideologies, current events, policy, and practice. Drawing on diverse disciplinary perspectives, students will critically examine the ways in which some bodily characteristics are selected for social meaning, how these constructions are shaped by ideological goals, and how the body is (re)shaped and (re)imagined through interactions with these constructions and ideologies. By centering diverse experiences of race/ethnicity, gender/sex, sexuality, body size, and ability, students will examine the tensions between and the products of biological determinism, social constructivism, and historical realism. Students will analyze how these perspectives influence opportunities, experiences, and outcomes, with particular attention to health, family, education, and implications for policy. (Social Sciences, ACE 6 or 9)

### **Founding Documents and You**

This course is interested in the structure of government, which is integral to our views on what government does and does not do. We hold views of how government is supposed to work because of ideas that were argued about in 1787, in which year the writers of the Constitution spent the entire summer arguing about such structural ideas, and then, in the ratification process, they argued some more. The collected arguments are now known as the Federalist Papers and the Antifederalist Papers. Students and the professor will spend the semester exploring these papers to try to understand how they profoundly influenced our views on the structure of government—and how we have reached the ugly political discourse of our present times. (Social Sciences; ACE 6)

### **SPRING 2024**

#### **Global Poverty & Social Justice**

Nearly forty percent of the global population lives under conditions of severe poverty. Severely poor people are subject to widespread exploitation, chronic malnutrition, and a lack of access to adequate shelter, sanitation, and basic preventive healthcare. How should we respond? We will explore a variety of moral and political responses to severe poverty; for example, is the best way to respond to severe poverty through institutional reform or through charitable giving? Are our obligations to severely poor people outweighed by our obligations to the near and dear (our compatriots and our friends and family)? If we do accept that we have obligations to assist severely poor people, are we morally permitted to pursue our own personal projects too? (*Humanities and Fine Arts*)

#### **Civic Engagement in 21<sup>st</sup> Century U.S.**

Civic engagement, as operationalized in concepts of democracy and voting rights in the United States, is broadly defined to “encompass a wide range of actions and behaviors that improve communities and help solve problems” (Tufts-CIRCLE). We will focus specifically on political participation, its articulation by scholars, and how civic participation has declined. We will explore the fields of communication, public policy, and political science, and students are invited to create a civic engagement action plan for their time at UNO. Experiential activities include partnering with state-wide civic organizations (such as The Nebraska Civic Engagement Table and Heartland Workers Center), as well as national organizations (the American Democracy Project). (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

#### **Modern and Contemporary Art**

A study of the most significant developments in art and architecture dating from the mid-19th century to the present. These works of art will be examined within varied contexts (artistic, religious, political, economic, etc.). The artistic movements covered include Realism,

Impressionism, PostImpressionism, Symbolism, Art Nouveau, Cubism, Fauvism, German Expressionism, Russian Constructivism, Dadaism, Social Realism and Regionalism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Op art, Minimalism, PostMinimalism, Neo-expressionism, and Postmodernism. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*) (ARTH minor/major elective)

### **Pursuing the American Dream**

This course seeks to teach students how the “American Dream”—a concept that pervades American culture—came to be defined by a wide variety of writers, politicians, developers, and others. Second, students will, I hope, learn to question how the concept has been deployed and see that many people throughout American history have sought to redefine the American Dream or challenge its validity. Finally, by course’s end, students should have a greater appreciation and understanding not only of how others have interacted with the American Dream but also of how it affects their own lives. ACE 5. (*Humanities and Fine Arts*) (ENGL minor/major American literature elective)

### **Digital Human Rights**

Mathieson (2014) argued a decade ago that “[w]hile we can approach many kinds of human rights (e.g., the right to work . . . ) from the digital perspective, most obviously we should apply this lens to human rights related to information communication, access, and control.” Digital technologies serve as a facilitator for social inclusion; however, challenges of technological literacy and issues associated with accessibility and internet service have a deleterious impact. Consumable AI is having an impact in the human rights domain. Using the UN Human Rights resolution on Digital Human Rights as a guidepost, we will explore thematic areas such as sustainable development goals and digital divide, privacy, surveillance, and data, civic space and content governance, security and counter-terrorism. (*Social Science*)

### **Child Development, Culture, & Policy**

This seminar will focus on (a) the course of child development (infancy through adolescence); (b) cross-cultural differences in beliefs and practices regarding infants, children and teenagers; (c) how these cross-cultural differences are linked to formal, structural differences in laws/public policy/educational practices/etc. in different cultural groups; and (d) the resulting impact on developmental outcomes. Topics could range from differences in parental leave laws around the world, to the treatment/education of children with disabilities across cultures, to culture linked differences in beliefs about sex/gender, to many more. Students will also do an independent project, focusing on an aspect of “Public Policy, Law, and Societal Practices”. (*Social Science*) (PSYC minor/major elective)

### **LGBTQ+ Health**

What does someone’s sexuality and/or gender identity have to do with their health? What barriers exist for people with a marginalized identity in society, and how might those barriers impact their ability to interact with health care providers? We will explore these questions and more using social science and public health research with an emphasis in human rights. Health will be examined broadly, including mental, physical, and social health. This course will explore individual level health outcomes as well as systems and social level mechanisms that shape how health is experienced and accessed for this population. (*Social Science*) (MEDH elective)

### **U.S. Police, Function & Future**

The police play a crucial role in our society, serving as the first point of contact between civilians and the criminal justice system. We will discuss how our expectations of the police have shaped the police role over time and what the future of policing holds in an ever-changing society. Our

interdisciplinary approach will explore the history of policing in America, strategies police agencies use to promote community safety, factors that impact police-community relations, and much more. Course activities will include students participating in engaged discussions about current events, creating proposed crime reduction interventions, and presenting critical reviews of police reform efforts grounded in a multidisciplinary understanding of the form and function of the police (*Social Science*) (CRCJ 4800 credit for minor/major)

### **Computers and Complexity**

What do busy interstates, immune cells, ant colonies, social networks, and other natural and artificial systems have in common? This course provides an answer to this question by exploring the fundamental principles of Complexity. Topics of study include chaos, evolutionary systems, swarm behavior, algorithmic art, and complex networks, with a special emphasis on biological systems. In this interdisciplinary course, we will cover topics from biology, physics, computer science, sociology, and the arts using Complexity Theory as the connecting theme. Students will have an opportunity to interact with and modify simple computer programs that will help them better understand topics under consideration; we will also use audiovisual media to illustrate the diversity and the emergent properties of complex systems. Students will choose a complex system of their choice and delve deep into it for an end of semester mini symposium. (*Non-lab nat. sci*)

### **Biological History of Agriculture**

Agriculture (etymologically “field culture”) is among the regularly cited features by which civilization is defined; agriculture is part of the answer to the question of how we came to be who we are. This course will present current knowledge of the history of agriculture using questions framed primarily within a biological context. Where do humans, and their technologies, fit into the overall scheme of Earth history? What is “agriculture,” and how does it compare to examples of “cultivation” by other species? How did the biology of pre-agricultural and post-agricultural humans differ? This course will range widely through questions of agriculture and ecology from biological perspectives (and other disciplines too, of course). (*Non-lab natural science*)

## **FALL 2023**

### **U.S. Female Bodily Autonomy**

Recently, the United States Supreme Court overturned a woman’s constitutional right to an abortion (*Roe v. Wade* 1973) in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* (2022). Since then, individual states have been scrambling to either firm up a woman’s right to choose, eliminate it completely, or something in between. How are various interest groups, such as the Christian coalition or Planned Parenthood (and others), trying to impact governments of the states and the nation government? How are these organizations and governments going to lobby and legislate women’s bodies further? This course will explore how we got to this point in our herstory: we will examine governmental and policy documents through time as they reveal changing political, social, and cultural contexts. Join our community of collaboration as we explore the evolution of rights (and wrongs) in self ownership. (*Social Science*)

### **Cross Sector Collaborative Leadership**

This course will prepare YOU to be an effective leader in the 21st century. You will learn how to be successful in working collaboratively across private, nonprofit and public sector organizations while also enhancing your overall development as a leader. Examples of successful and unsuccessful cross-sector collaborations will be explored along with discussions of theories related to cross-sector collaboration. Through case studies, discussions, and reflection, you will learn and grow and become a more effective leader and collaborator. (*Social Science*)

### **The Wire; ‘this is America, man’**

HBO’s *The Wire* is praised for its realistic depiction of the gritty dynamics between the illicit drug trade and the police in impoverished inner-city Baltimore. Across 5 seasons, *The Wire* illustrated myriad social problems through complex and interconnected relationships among criminal networks, police, politicians, the school system, and news media in Baltimore. *The Wire* is fiction, but its content is very much grounded in reality. As a class, we will use the show as a springboard to examine the main topics of each of the 5 seasons. We will also examine overarching themes across the series including dysfunctional institutions and surveillance. (*Social Science*)

### **Politics in the Classroom**

This course is an introduction to the complex and often contested field of politics and education, exploring the forces that impact schools and classrooms across the nation. The U.S. education system is beset by a wide range of challenges: policy, funding, diversity, health education, school safety, technology, school choice, and sexual orientation (to name a few). Education is an integral part of politics; there are politics in the classroom, whether is progressive or conserving. Many would agree that providing a high-quality education for citizens is a worthy ideal. However, there are many diverse viewpoints regarding how that should be accomplished. Understanding the politics of classroom and education issues is important for teachers, students, parents, family members and taxpayers. (*Social Science*)

### **U.S. College Representations**

How often have we (anyone belonging to an institution of higher education) walked onto campus or gone into the classroom with unspoken expectations for the people, ideas, and experiences that we will (or won’t) encounter? College students expect that their degree will result in personal, intellectual, and financial growth opportunities. But what other expectations shape cultural perceptions of college? Images abound all around us of what the “college experience” should be, and those images routinely whittle down university life to parties, sorority or fraternity affiliation, adversarial relationships between students-faculty-administration, and more tropes of our U.S.-based educational context. This course aims to confront these prolific images with the potentially unspoken expectations that they bring with them onto campus and provide some stable footing to build from in terms of crafting their own path forward with the knowledge of our specific campus community and resources. It will be enlightening for all participants in the classroom (students, faculty, and invited guest presenters) to hear what everyone else thinks is “college life.” (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Art and History of the Book**

The book (defined here as any information package used to transmit information through space and time) is utilitarian but also manifests itself in a variety of aesthetic designs. From the earliest Sumerian clay tablets to interactive e-books, the book as an object represents humanity’s attempts to intellectually and artistically express itself. We will study the book as an information package (tablet, scroll, codex, e-book, etc.) from a technological perspective and from the viewpoint of its originating culture or society. The media format (clay, papyrus, parchment, etc.) often reflects a culture’s geographic location, political situation, economic wealth, and social organization; a book also reveals a society’s aesthetic values. (The course will also look at those societies that value unwritten methods of cultural expression, such as the oral traditions of New Mexico’s Acoma pueblo.) Students will have an understanding of humanity’s efforts to preserve and provide access to information of enduring value, and will be challenged to find contemporary exemplars reflecting the diverse human experience locally and/or globally. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

## **SPRING 2023**

### **African American and Jewish Music**

In this class we will use a multidisciplinary approach to examine how African American and Jewish musicians, performers, directors, and agents have influenced each other across time. Hip hop, rap, Broadway, and Tin Pan Alley all emerged from a collaboration between African American and Jewish artists. Performers like Drake represent the complexities of African American and Jewish influence on American music. How did these two groups go from being outsiders to becoming dominant forces in American music? How have religious ideas shaped and influenced African American and Jewish engagement and interactions in the music industry? What is the basis of the relationship between these two groups in music today? As a class, we will both investigate the positive interconnections between the two communities and interrogate the complications of this relationship across time by examining the history of blackface in vaudeville and tensions between performers and record companies. We will analyze performances through texts, films, music videos, interviews, and documentaries. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Everything APIA All At Once**

This course will explore a wide range of prose (novels, essays, memoir, short stories, etc.) written by diasporic Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. While the course will examine the historical, social, and cultural context of these writer's home countries, the focus will primarily be on how those elements have worked through the previous generations in then influencing their American successors. Recently, some elements of Asian and Pacific Islander culture have become incredibly popular in the American zeitgeist: K-pop, anime, clothing, food, films. What does it mean to live in a country and culture that sees you as more of a commodity? That wants to wear your costumes and eat your food but makes it feel like it's indifferent to your survival? Students will leave the course with a better understanding of this moment in time viewed through the lens of some of the most renowned contemporary APIA chroniclers, connecting these readings to broader social, cultural, and literary contexts. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **High Art, Low Art**

In this class, students will explore the meaning and usefulness of attaching the adjectives "high" or "low" to works of art. Students will read and discuss relevant landmark texts on aesthetics, such as Clement Greenberg's "Avant Garde and Kitsch" and Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp," and then, having established a theoretical foundation, spend the rest of the semester encountering a variety of artistic expressions spanning genre and era, works they will discuss in the context of "high" and "low" classifications. The first unit will be "Opera," interpreted broadly, followed by units on "World Cinema," "Fairy Tales," "Pop Art," and "Love Stories." Through this class, students will develop a keener sense of their own aesthetic values, paying special attention to how larger cultural forces shape individual preferences and prejudices. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Sustenance and Sustainability**

This course will explore perspectives of sustainability from Native American writings and cultural practices including storytelling, the arts, food & cooking, and language preservation/revitalization. Native American writers, activists, language teachers, and traditional practitioners are renewing the components of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). On remote reservations and urban communities, collaborations are taking place to claim (and sometimes relearn) how traditional foods are grown, what materials can be used for artistic expression, and how these many skills are spoken of in an indigenous language. Because Climate Change is impacting very old customs and threatening the very lives of many indigenous communities, it is important for all of us to be aware of the variety of

skills that are needed. Join me to explore some of these traditional practices and learn how you may be able to implement such efforts in your own lives. We will read fiction, cookbooks, essays, look at art, photographs, and try our hand at some traditional skills. Students should be prepared for a day trip to Macy, NE to meet students at the UmoNhoN Nation Public School. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Criminal Justice Institutions**

Have you ever wondered how the criminal justice system operates? What does it feel like to visit a prison or juvenile detention facility, sit in a courtroom, or be a police officer? This course dives into the criminal justice system and provides students with a better understanding of how civilians are impacted by, and filtered through, various criminal justice institutions through course discussions, site visits, documentaries, and featured talks. We will discuss the purpose of the police, courts, and prisons, focusing on the public discourse surrounding key events in the media (e.g., gang violence, police violence, serial killers, etc.) and the implications (intended and unintended) of such events on select communities. Students will be encouraged to analyze and evaluate their biases and misconceptions and reflect on their responsibilities in light of present-day challenges. Using a multidisciplinary lens, we will draw from literature across the social sciences to reflect on course content. This seminar challenges traditional teaching approaches by introducing real-world events, experiences, and digital content into the course. These research tools are fundamental for creating an engaged, interesting, effective, and inclusive learning environment. (*Social Science*)

### **Mexican America: From Immigration to Food**

Ever wonder about who invented the taco and how it came to be such a seminal piece of U.S. culture and cuisine? When did Mexicans start coming to the U.S. and what happened to bring us (the United States) to where we are currently vis a viz immigration? The answers to these questions and more are the central part of this course, which will read pivotal books not by academics but by journalists (these books were written for popular consumption and not primarily for the classroom). The class, including the instructor, will fill in academic pieces and answers to these and more questions about Mexican America and the many ways in which Mexicans and Mexican culture have influenced U.S. society. (*Social Science*)

### **Computers and Complexity**

What do busy interstates, immune cells, ant colonies, social networks, and other natural and artificial systems have in common? This course provides an answer to this question by exploring the fundamental principles of Complexity. Topics of study include chaos, evolutionary systems, swarm behavior, algorithmic art, and complex networks, with a special emphasis on biological systems. In this interdisciplinary course, we will cover topics from biology, physics, computer science, sociology, and the arts using Complexity Theory as the connecting theme. Students will have an opportunity to interact with and modify simple computer programs that will help them better understand the topics addressed in the lectures and the readings. In addition to computer programs, we will use audiovisual media to illustrate the diversity and the emergent properties of complex systems. For their final project, students will choose a complex system of their choice and delve deep into it, discussing research results in a mini symposium at semester's end. (*Non-lab natural science*)

### **Comparative Urbanities: U.S. and Norway**

What do we know about a city's history, development, and communities—and how do we know it? This colloquium will explore global cities through a comparative lens. We will begin with the history of cities and their beginnings and organizations, considering the ways in which urban growth through the nineteenth century and beyond has bred its own urban delights—and

challenges. From the history to the present will launch us into a consideration of Omaha particularly, and to an address of contemporary urban issues evident (or absent) in our own city. We will then expand the lens of cities globally, with a particular focus on Norway as a comparative model of urban development, management, and innovation. Students will explore Omaha in person to extend awareness of the city's physical and social structures, and will spend part of May in Norway undertaking similar explorations in person of the city explored digitally and virtually from Nebraska. (*Social Science*)

## **FALL 2022**

### **Cross Sector Collaborative Leadership**

This course will prepare YOU to be an effective leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You will learn how to be successful in working collaboratively across private, nonprofit and public sector organizations while also enhancing your overall development as a leader. Examples of successful and unsuccessful cross-sector collaborations will be explored along with discussions of theories related to cross-sector collaboration. Through case studies, discussions, and reflection, you will learn and grow and become a more effective leader and collaborator.

### **Entrepreneurial Foundations**

Students taking this class will learn how entrepreneurial behavior empowers them to assess risk and take action, leading to the creation of new businesses, social enterprises, or corporate practices that have an impact on themselves and others. The course will explore the many paths available to entrepreneurs and will include a special focus on the Lean Startup methodology. Lectures on management, marketing, human resources and finance are specially crafted to address the entrepreneur's most critical needs. The class adopts a hands-on approach: student teams will apply their learning by consulting for a local business and writing a business development plan, and this class will directly connect them with guest speakers and opportunities to attend local entrepreneurship events and gatherings.

### **Creativity as Survival**

In this course, we'll work together to develop and present examples of our emerging and evolving creative work within our classroom community. You do not have to have mastery of a creative discipline to join our class and engage in this work. If you're willing to dust off something old or try something new (tap shoes, watercolors, ukulele) and learn from each other as you envision, practice, accumulate, and revise—you're in the right place. Mistakes will be made and that's a big part of the process! Employing various methodologies to monitor the effects of creativity on the psyche and spirit—and your own organic methods, including a journal—you will each provide an original answer to this vital question: How and why does practicing creativity make a difference? (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Luxury and Art**

Historically, the work of art is a reflection of its owner, and the twenty-first century has birthed a new Gilded Age. The stark divisions between the wealthy and the rest of the population are celebrated on social media with endless photographs of their luxury goods or their unattainable leisure. This materialistic cult has extended to the art world, with auction houses witnessing record sales, art fairs multiplying around the globe, and the wealthy renting out historical sites and museums for entertainment. This class will offer a global history of art through the lens of luxury. It will focus on the social, economic, and political dimensions of luxury and the motivations for the creation of the work of art. Students will analyze and interpret works of art, taking into consideration the motivations for their creation and the purpose objects held beyond



the aesthetic, while addressing what impact luxury—or aspirational luxury—has upon the construction of our daily visual lives. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Stigma: Barrier to Healthcare**

This class on communicating about stigmatized health issues will explore the concept of stigma from a sociopsychological and sociocultural perspective. We will examine how stigma leads to poor health outcomes through various mechanisms, such as reduced access to material resources, disruption of social relationships, and poor coping behavior. We will explore stigma from multiple dimensions: how it is conceptualized and measured; how stigmatized disorders are portrayed by the media; how individuals with a stigmatized disorder manage this identity; and how interventions can be designed to reduce stigma. This class aims to encourage students to cultivate a thoughtful and nuanced perspective of individuals with stigmatized disorders, and to see them not as problems, but as individuals grappling with a complex issue. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Surveillance Economy**

Using Zuboff's (2019) landmark economic concept—*surveillance capitalism*—as the foundation for this class, we will explore the concepts, attributes, and consequences of the surveillance economy, bringing together multiple disciplines including philosophy, management of IT, economics, and cybersecurity. We will investigate the challenges to humanity posed by this digital future and the quest by powerful corporations to predict and control our behavior. Students will synthesize, evaluate and write about how governments and citizens around the world can protect individual privacy, autonomy and security and we will compare and contrast other countries with the U.S. in their handling of the surveillance economy. (*Social Science*)

### **Covid Auto Ethnography**

Together, we will explore ethnography as a multidisciplinary method to document our social life and culture. Our goal is to understand and practice this methodology, which posits individuals as human instruments, developing rigorous research skills and empathetic understanding in the investigation and documentation of our complex lived experiences with COVID-19. We will explore our experiences, shared and unique, as we consider the impact of the pandemic on the world in which we live, have lived, and want to live. In doing so, we will necessarily cross interdisciplinary boundaries as we discuss our personal stories and public health, politics, education, sociological matters, and so on. (*Social Science*)

## **SPRING 2022**

### **Solving Through Innovation**

The Solving through Innovation course guides students through the process of exploring, identifying, designing and evaluating a new innovative product that includes interdisciplinary fields of study, knowledge, skills and expertise. Students will work in teams to create a low-level new innovative product. The challenge is to create innovative products that are both reliable and flexible, and to do so in a timely way; the course addresses that need through an in-depth practical experience. Students will receive guided, instructional experiences indicative of the challenges and opportunities they will face in the “real” entrepreneurial world – but without the

real world risk. Students are expected to bring knowledge from other courses and disciplines and their own experience. There is no “one right way” to engineer and implement a new innovative product; that innovation design can be approached from different perspectives; and that a variety of disciplines can inform the engineering problem at hand.

### **American Rebels**

Rebellious characters are ubiquitous and sometimes trite in American pop culture; this course will offer students an opportunity to take a deep, interdisciplinary dive into the motivations and methods employed by popular rebel personas. We will look at how a character embodies their rebellion and how that depends on the means available, along with the social implications of the rebel’s agency (or lack thereof). Our efforts will necessarily address the significance of gender, race, economic class, and additional identities that shape a rebel’s worldview and that which they rebel against. Course content spanning film, television, music, literature, and social movements will afford us occasions to consider: does one become a rebel simply because one desires to do so, or because one cannot conform to social expectations, or some combination of the two? Do fictional, historical, and imagined rebellious acts produce change? (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Beyond the One Ring**

J. R. R. Tolkien is best known for writing *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, but the breadth and scope of his work goes far beyond the influence of a novelist of fantasy literature: as a writer, he invented the stories, characters, languages, and deep history of Middle-earth as elucidated in *The Silmarillion* and other works of fantasy history. As a professor of English at Oxford University, he researched and taught British literature and languages, including Anglo-Saxon, Old English, and Middle English; his critical essays, concerning *Beowulf* and other important texts, acknowledge profound influences on Tolkien’s writing and philosophy. This class will examine Tolkien’s life, scholarship, and literary achievements by employing an interdisciplinary approach that will include the study of literature, language, academic criticism, philosophy, mythology, fine art, history, culture, and film. Themes to be examined include nature and technology, courage and warfare, race and gender, fate and free will, hope and death. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Satire and Culture**

Satire is a human mode of expression that lampoons a serious subject or institution through humor and critique. While contemporary satire is perhaps best associated with sketch comedy or political parody, such as on *Saturday Night Live* or the *Daily Show*, there are excellent examples of satirical work in literature and art dating back at least to ancient Greece. This course will offer a deep dive into both silly and serious satire in all its available modes from classical and Renaissance Europe to contemporary America, in written, visual, dramatic, musical, and multi-media formats. Texts include Roman poetry, English and Irish satire from Donne and Swift, and American installments from Dorothy Parker, Keegan and Peele, and *The Onion*. We will ask what has made satire such an enduring mode of critique and resistance as well. We will develop as a class a theory about the role of satire in cultures where there are inequities of power drawn along lines of gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, identity, and class, and we will attempt to identify the limits of the mode before it would seem to become something else. (*Humanities & Fine Arts*)

### **Terrorism in Media**

Terrorism and counterterrorism are regularly discussed—and often misunderstood—topics in media and public discourse. News media regularly discuss terrorism, which can leave the public with an overstated—and inaccurate—view of these threats. At that same time, entertainment media like *24*, *Homeland*, and *Jack Ryan* focus specifically on terrorism and counterterrorism. As a class, we will examine the following broad questions: What are terrorism and counterterrorism in reality? How do news and entertainment media depict terrorism and counterterrorism? How are these media depictions accurate and—more often—how are they inaccurate? And what influence do these media depictions have on the public and on policy? We will draw from literature across arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences to address these questions. Using a multidisciplinary lens, we will analyze media depictions of terrorism and counterterrorism in text, images, video, music, and podcasts. (*Social Science*)

### **Sacred and Violent**

This course investigates the complex relationship between religion and violence by examining historical, political, sociological, and theological reasons behind religion-related violence in a comparative perspective. After being equipped with theories of religion and violence, students will be asked to get a deeper research experience in coordination with the National Counter-Terrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (NCITE) at UNO. The course aims to familiarize students with the sources of violence in religious traditions; to give students a more nuanced and complete understanding of the religion, politics, and violence in a comparative perspective; and to supply students with the theoretical and empirical evidence necessary to evaluate and make critical, analytical arguments about religion and violence in comparative perspective. (*Social Science*)

### **Locating the Zombie in Society**

At a deeply politicized social and historical moment punctuated by collective anxiety around bodies, health, and viruses, the zombie is a useful allegory for exploring pertinent social issues. Using narratives of contagion inherent in zombie lore, this course's foundational question will be, "What does it mean to have a monstrous body?" We will apply classic Gothic texts and film to the study of pertinent social issues such as systemic racism, sexism, and ableism while also addressing both normative and resistant philosophies. To that end, we will ask, "Are zombies a symbol of resistance or oppression?" Likewise, we will use said contagion narratives to critically engage conversations on colonialism and imperialism, with particular foci on queer and trans "containment crypts" in pulp fiction and elsewhere. (*Social Science*)