

Spring 2026: University Honors Program UHON 351 Seminars

- One of the perks of being an Honors student is that you get to register early for classes.
- Students must meet with their Honors mentor at least once prior to reserving or registering for an Honors seminar.
- To learn more about the seminars, meet the faculty teaching these seminars at the **Honors Faculty Roundtable, Monday, October 20th from 4-5:30 pm in the Honors Lounge.**
- To register for an Honors seminar, you must reserve a spot or join the waitlist during the **October 21st – 24th online reservation process.** Be on the lookout for details in the 411.
- **Early registration for all classes begins on October 27.** Registration must be completed using Saluki-Net.
- The seminars in **Red** are new to the Honors curriculum.

UHON 111

001	Honors Colloquium	T 1:00-3:30	Morris 610A	Donoghue
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351F- Fine Arts

001	Representations of Civil War in Anglophone, Francophone African Literature and Film	F 9:00-12:00	Morris 722	Cheref
002	Playing with Revolution	WF 12:35-1:50	Morris 610A	Sramek
003	South Asian Film and Politics	M 5:00-6:00 W 5:00-7:00	M Morris 180 W LWSN 121	Rahman & Kapur

351L- Human Health

001	Health Communication	MW 9:35-10:50	Morris 610A	Karan
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351M-Multicultural

001	South Asian Film and Politics	M 5:00-6:00 W 5:00-7:00	M Morris 180 W LWSN 121	Rahman & Kapur
002	Representations of Civil War in Anglophone, Francophone African Literature and Film	F 9:00-12:00	Morris 722	Cheref
003	When We Watch Sports, Who Wins/Loses?	W 2:00-4:30	Morris 610A	Han
004	Playing with Revolution	WF 12:35-1:50	Morris 610A	Sramek
005	Written Language and Literacy, From Cuneiform to Emoji	R 1:00-3:30	Morris 610A	Martin

351O-Social Science

001	Climate Change and Human Civilizations	TR 9:35-10:50	Morris 610A	Gibson
002	Future of Space Travel	TR 3:35-4:50	Morris 610A	Lefticariu
003	Guide to a Good Life: Stoic Philosophy and the Good Life	TR 11:00-12:15	Faner 2065	Punske
004	Health Communication	MW 9:35-10:50	Morris 610A	Karan
005	Arithmetic en route to Cosmos: Behind Infinitesimal	F 2:00-4:30	Morris 610A	Choiy
006	AI Safety and Society	M 1:00-4:00	Morris 610A	Shahid
007	When We Watch Sports, Who Wins/Loses?	W 2:00-4:30	Morris 610A	Han
008	Written Language and Literacy, From Cuneiform to Emoji	R 1:00-3:30	Morris 610A	Martin
009	Playing with Revolution	WF 12:35-1:50	Morris 610A	Sramek

351S1-Science 1

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351U-Humanities

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Representations of Civil War in Anglophone, Francophone African Literature and Film – New!

Based on a selection of literary texts and films on ethnic violence, civil war, and genocide, this course explores Anglophone and Francophone literatures and films from North and Sub-Saharan Africa. We will review some of the major intellectual debates about Civil Wars in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa and learn to analyze textual/filmic representations of men and women and war in works from Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to understand more fully the complexity of conflicts in the Global South and the nuances of literary and filmic analysis.

**-Abdelkader Cheref, Assistant Professor of Africana Studies
(Fulfills: Fine Arts/Multicultural/Humanities)**

Arithmetic en route to Cosmos: Behind Infinitesimal – New!

The concept of the infinitesimal, of a universe unknown to us has fascinated humanity – a fascination now escalated with new discoveries that make us reflect our place in the universe. This course delves into the concept of infinitesimal in both mathematics and cosmology. Introducing students to the philosophical nature of mathematics, the seminar hopes to inspire self-reflections on how we think, re-visit question on the origins of being, and appreciate the mystery and beauty of the cosmos by means of Arithmetic. If you took *Arithmetic en route to Cosmos* in Fall 2023, consider this a sequel to that seminar. Note: no college level Mathematics pre-requirements are necessary.

**-Kwangho Cho, Associate Professor, School of Mathematics and Statistical Sciences
(Fulfills: Social Science/Math 101 Substitute with Department Approval)**

Climate Change and Human Civilizations- New!

Human civilizations have existed and evolved within the context of a changing climate since the Agricultural Revolution. This course will focus on climate change on Earth during the Holocene (i.e., the past ca. 12,000 years) and the societies that emerged, responded, and adapted (or did not adapt!) to changes in climate during that time. The rise and demise of the Indus River Valley civilizations, the Maya, the Mississippian Native Americans, and many other societies throughout the Holocene have been attributed to climatic changes. This seminar will address the following questions: What were the key drivers of past global and regional climate change? How were specific past civilizations impacted by changes in climate? How do the drivers and societal responses to modern climate change compare to the preindustrial past? Students will gain a better understanding of the causes of climate change and how Earth's climate shaped history ... and is shaping the future.

**-Derek Gibson, Assistant Professor of Geology, Earth Systems and Sustainability
(Fulfills: Social Science/Science 1/Humanities)**

The Honors Colloquium

***Participation is highly selective and requires an application essay.**

Learn about the world of opportunities that may support and enrich an undergraduate or graduate education. This course is an introduction to the process of applying for major scholarships; to the elements of writing style for major scholarship applications; and to other aspects typical of scholarships, graduate, and professional school applications. This class will guide you through this process of self-reflection as you craft essays, develop interview skills and discover research opportunities.

**-Elizabeth Donoghue, Assistant Director, University Honors Program
Email Elizabeth.donoghue@siu.edu or stop by her office at Morris 184D**

When We Watch Sports, Who Wins/Loses? - New!

Sports media are everywhere, on big and small screens, across legacy and digital platforms, and embedded in a whole array of activities, ranging from commercials for food services to political campaigning. In this seminar, we will question general assumptions regarding sports media and probe into their social and cultural significance. In an open conversation that has no fixed answers but is driven by curiosity we will ask: what is the function of sports media in our society? Are sports media only a form of popular entertainment? Or, is it a cultural phenomenon that contains within it signs of the tumultuous and fast-changing world we live in.

**-Dong Han, Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Advertising, College of Arts and Media
(Fulfills: Multicultural/Social Science/Humanities)**

Health Communication

In a world where health is a critical issue confronting humanity, the need to increase health literacy to promote healthy lifestyles is urgent. This seminar introduces students to issues related to health, such as risks, behaviors, and global and local large-scale threats that have come to the fore in recent history. Every week, we will discuss a significant health issue of concern, such as exercise and nutrition, healthy lifestyle, child health and wellness, obesity, smoking and alcohol consumption, women's health, spirituality, mental health and others. We will analyze the social, economic, political and cultural issues that impact health practices. We will take up case studies from across the globe to assess the communication strategies and campaigns used to promote better lifestyles, control and prevent social and communicable diseases. Students will learn how AI, new media, and mobile technologies are influencing and impacting health information and health practices. The students will learn how to plan a health communication campaign to create awareness on a health issue of their choice. The aim of the seminar is also to create excitement among students about good health, and for improving their own health practices.

**-Kavita Karan, Professor, School of Journalism and Advertising, College of Arts and Media
(Fulfills: Human Health/Social Science/Humanities)**

Future of Space Travel

In this seminar, students will learn about the past, ongoing, and future space exploration missions led by NASA, ESA, and other space agencies as well as by private companies or mixed state-private endeavors. Themes discussed include: The physical exploration of space by unmanned robotic space probes, human flight in space, and the movements of the planets, moons, and asteroids in the Solar System. This seminar will provide a general overview of the origin of the solar system, the composition of the planets and moons of the Solar System, and the variety of extra-terrestrial objects that are potentially a major source of natural resources. We will discuss the latest technologies to be employed for the colonization of the Moon and Mars, such as extraterrestrial water and mineral mining, soil augmentation and food production, and technologies developed for solar and other forms of energy. Additional discussion will include the legal and political aspects associated with space exploration. The 21st Century is the century of space exploration and colonization of new planets! Students will learn all about it! This is a rigorous academic experience during which the students will develop both theoretical and practical skills, like critical thinking and practical application, which will further help them in their work life as well as personal life.

**-Liliana Lefticariu, Professor, Geology, College of Agricultural, Life, and Physical Sciences
(Fulfills: Social Science/Science 1)**

Written Language and Literacy, From Cuneiform to Emoji – New!

Language is seen as one of the defining characteristics of humans, but language classes typically focus on spoken language and leave written language aside. However, writing is one of humanity's greatest inventions, and is relatively young, with evidence for writing going back only about 5000 years. In this course we will explore the history, evolution, and sociocultural and educational contexts of written language and literacy, beginning with the invention of writing (likely with cuneiform in Mesopotamia) and traveling all the way to modern digital texts on screens with emoji. A variety of units will cover topics such as the origins and structures of written language; how reading and learning to read work; writing skills and how text construction really works; the sociopolitics of literacy and illiteracy in the education system; and digital reading and writing, including the effects of digital versus physical texts and the use of digital conventions such as emoji. In addition to weekly readings, reflections, and discussion, students will complete a selection of mini-projects for those units that most interest them. Students leave class with a better appreciation for this underappreciated human invention, its development, its deployment in various forms, and the social, political, and educational contexts surrounding it.

**- Katherine Martin, Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts, Languages and Linguistics
(Fulfills: Multicultural/Social Science/Humanities)**

Guide to a Good Life: Stoic Philosophy and the Good Life

Stoicism-- an Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy has seen a major resurgence within the last decade. What makes a two-thousand-year-old philosophy so compelling in our modern world? Aaron Beck, the father of Cognitive Behavior Therapy, said of the core of his psychological approach "the philosophical underpinnings go back thousands of years, certainly to the time of the Stoics, who considered man's conceptions (or misconceptions) of events rather than the events themselves as the key to his emotional upsets." In this course, we will examine the fundamental concepts of Stoicism from ancient times to modern interpretations and receptions. We will examine how the various things Stoic Philosophy has influenced from theology to psychiatry.

**-Jeffrey Punske, Associate Professor, School of Languages and Linguistics, College of Liberal Arts
(Fulfills: Social Science/Humanities)**

South Asian Film and Cultural Politics—New!

This seminar explores how South Asian cinema shapes and reflects the region's cultural and political landscapes. Covering films from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, it examines their historical evolution, thematic diversity, and socio-political contexts. Rather than viewing South Asian cinema as a homogenous entity or reducing it to Bollywood, the course will highlight the diversity of cinematic traditions and their representations of nationalism, gender, sexuality, religion, and language. Drawing on key theoretical perspectives, we will analyze cinema as both an artistic medium and a socio-political tool. Key questions include: How has Partition shaped South Asian cinema? How does the cultural hegemony of Bollywood effect other South Asian film industries and narratives? What role does censorship and state policy play? How do regional films challenge mainstream narratives? Through screenings, discussions, and critical writing, students will gain a deeper understanding of South Asian cinematic traditions and their broader significance.

**-Harisur Rahman, Visiting Fulbright Scholar, Associate Professor in Media, Communication, and Journalism, North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh & Jyotsna Kapur, Professor, School of Media Arts.
(Fulfills: Fine Arts/Multicultural/Humanities)**

AI Safety and Society – New!

"AI Safety and Society" explores the ethical, societal, and national implications of advancing AI technologies. It addresses key questions such as: What risks do AI systems pose to society? How can effective governance and ethical practices manage these risks? Why is responsible AI development essential for national security and public welfare? This course is vital for equipping students with the critical thinking skills needed to engage with the challenges of AI ethics, policy, and risk management, shaping a future where technology supports society responsibly.

**- Abdur Rahman Bin Shahid, Assistant Professor, School of Computing, College of Engineering, Computing, Technology, and Mathematics
(Fulfills: Social Science)**

Playing with Revolution

This seminar takes up the theme of revolution in the modern world through two full-length *Reacting to the Past* games, one on the French Revolution (which takes place in 1791-92) and another on the Mexican Revolution (which takes place between 1912 and 1920). *Reacting to the Past*, used at over 500 colleges and universities worldwide including in several major Honors programs, is an experiential learning method that combines deep critical analysis of primary texts with historical roleplaying. Students grapple with major works and ideological conflicts which shaped the world through playing actual historical character and advancing his or her character's ideas and goals through both cooperative and competitive gameplay. In the process, students not only learn about a historical event or major ideas far more deeply than in more "traditional" pedagogies but also appreciate more profoundly than in a lecture or classroom discussion the role of historical contingency in shaping what occurred. They also learn various intangible "soft skills" relating to public speaking, rigorous analysis of primary texts, and the arts of persuasion.

**- Joseph Sramek, Associate Professor of History and Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts
(Fulfills: Fine Arts/Multicultural/Social Science/Humanities)**