

## UNHP 1100 HONORS FORUM TOPICS - FALL 2025

### **BOB DYLAN'S ART OF SELF-INVENTION**

**Thursday, 11:20 am-12:15 pm (Section 301, CRN 82068)**

**Antonio de Velasco, Communication and Film**

What does it mean to be a self in the world? Throughout his career, Dylan's music and identity have gone through multiple changes. From folk to rock, from "Robert Allen Zimmerman" to "Bob Dylan," from being bar mitzvahed in the 1950s to being re-born as a Christian in the 1980s, Dylan offers us a dynamic figure of constant reinvention. Drawing from a combination of sound recordings, videos, and written bio and autobiography, the course will ask freshman to consider Dylan's many changes in contrast to our ordinary conceptions of what it means to be an authentic, consistent "self" at all. At the core of the course is an invitation to see Dylan as a rhetoric of identity, in which the "self" is constantly rediscovering its fundamental relation to others, to truth, and to the past. Particular areas of emphasis will include key songs, poetic and musical influences on Dylan's art (from Rimbaud to Woody Guthrie), the social and political context of the 1960s, and fictional accounts of Dylan's life.

### **MEMPHIS SOUL MUSIC FROM THE 60'S**

**Wednesday, 9:10 am – 10:05 am (Section 302, CRN 82072)**

**Joel Roberts, Music Librarian Assistant Professor, University Libraries**

While soul music might not be the genre of music most frequently associated with Memphis, the music that was issued on the Stax, Hi, and Goldwax record labels is some of the best and most respected music of the genre. Alone, Stax Records is an iconic piece of Memphis music history, as well as a key component of the Memphis tourism industry. The museum is one of the more recognizable Memphis landmarks, and Stax has recently attracted new interest by way of the HBO documentary *Stax: Soulsville USA*. As a result of this film series, people who were previously unaware of the record label's history have become interested in its history and music. But Hi Records and Goldwax Records are also key examples of Southern soul music. As part of this Honors Forum section, we will learn about the history of all three of these record labels, in addition to some of the artists who issued records on them. The goal of this class is to familiarize students with artists who are mostly new to them and representative of one of Memphis's most important musical contributions.

### **SOCIAL PHOTO: THE SELF AND SOCIETY (CLOSED)**

**Monday, 9:10-10:05 (Section 303, CRN 86960)**

**David Horan, Associate Professor of Practice, Photography**

Since the mid-19th century, photography has been shaping the way we see our culture, our society and ourselves. Yet, it has become so prolific that we often lose sight of its power to inform and transform the world around us. From the earliest documentary photographs, to portraiture, self-portraiture, to contemporary conceptual work, this course will examine and explore the photographs ability to both inform and deceive. Students will engage the photographic medium by both studying the work done by others, and by making photographs of their own that explore contemporary issues.

### **TIGERS WITHOUT BORDERS**

**Wednesday, 1:00 pm-1:55 pm (Section 304, CRN 86802)**

**William Thompson, World Languages and Literatures**

In this forum students will explore the world today through a discussion of major global events and issues, and through an examination of cultural phenomena from a variety of regions across the planet. The course encourages students to discover new aspects of their world and to become more engaged

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global citizens. Each week we will find out what is going on in the world and focus on unique cultural practices, with students encouraged to explore topics that they find personally relevant.

### **PUZZLES, GAMES, AND REASONING (CLOSED)**

**Thursday, 2:40 pm – 3:35 pm (Section 306, CRN 89943)**

**William Alexander, Chemistry**

This Honors Forum invites students to investigate connections between mathematical ideas and concepts, logical frameworks and reasoning, and the structures and patterns found in games and puzzles. We will examine the concepts of proof, evidence, truth, and theory in various disciplinary contexts to build a foundation for inquiry. Through analysis of the most popular portals for wide access to puzzles, such as the New York Times (US), the Guardian (UK), LogicMastersDeutschland (Germany), Logic Masters India, and nikoli (Japan), learners will investigate why particular puzzles rise to prominence in different cultures and historical backgrounds. With a particular focus on the Crossword (American vs. Cryptic), Sudoku, and Wordle, as well as various logic and pencil puzzle genres popular worldwide, learners will come discover the intricate logical structures in these puzzle games. While the classic Sudoku logic puzzle tasks solvers with the simple task of placing digits into a grid while obeying certain other rules, such as not repeating a digit within a row or column. In this course we will explore the expanding world of modern "variant" sudoku puzzles which expand the potential rulesets and logic that can be embedded into the grid. The central focus of this course is on students creating their own puzzles in a variety of genres, eventually creating puzzles with rules they make up themselves. No previous puzzle solving experience is necessary.

### **ACTING TRADECRAFT FOR PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING (CLOSED)**

**Wednesday, 10:20 am-11:15 am (Section 305, CRN 89944)**

**Gregory Boller, Marketing**

Elevate your professional speaking skills with the artistry and skill of an actor. Drawing from the world of theatre and film, we will work on voicing, movement, expressions and gestures, staging, characterization, audience engagement, and empathy. Learn how to turn your public speaking opportunities into vibrant, memorable performances through the art of enacted storytelling. Designed for those without previous acting experience and all majors are enthusiastically welcome.

### **SURVIVAL (CLOSED)**

**Monday, 10:20 am – 11:15 am (Section 308, CRN 89946)**

**Ryan Parish, Earth Sciences**

Survival is a class that will showcase the adaptability of the human mind, body and spirit in situations that might be scary because in them we are deprived of the modern-day comforts that our culture affords. Survivalist skills such as constructing shelter, making fire, finding and accessing potable water, acquiring food, land navigation, first aid, and "street smarts" are skills taught through hands on activities. Do you have a phobia of bugs, the outdoors, downtown Memphis? The course is designed to teach you some skills and an appreciation for environments and situations outside of your day-to-day life. The greatest human adaptation is our mind, will and spirit to thrive in some of the harshest conditions and situations. This class is geared to the study of us embracing these moments.

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### **WICKED WOMEN, WITCHES, & MONSTERS – ANCIENT & MODERN (CLOSED)**

**Wednesday, 11:30 am – 12:25 pm (Section 310, CRN 89948)**

**Chrystal Goudsouzian, History**

Wicked women, witches, and female monsters abound in ancient Greek myth. These women and feminine creatures were sinister, dangerous, and unnatural. Their plights and punishments served as cautionary tales for women in the ancient Mediterranean, pushing them to comply and conform to societal norms. This class seeks to explore these ancient, wicked women and monsters and use them as a lens to discuss and understand negative perceptions of women in our society today. Our readings will include ancient Greek myths along with modern mythic retellings and short essays from prominent feminist novelists and writers. Our ancient, monstrous characters will teach us how to better see ourselves and, perhaps, to find power in the past. For students who are interested in the topic, you can also register for the companion Honors general education history course, HIST 1110: Women, Gender, and Family in the Ancient World. HIST 1110 will meet MWF at 10:20am in Mitchell Hall 223, Prof. C. Goudsouzian.

### **GHOSTS AND HAUNTINGS (CLOSED)**

**Tuesday, 11:20 am – 12:15 pm (Section 311, CRN 89949)**

**Ted Maclin, Anthropology**

Ghosts are culturally universal. They haunt our houses, our fields, our parks, and our dreams. Anthropologists studying hauntings have found repeating patterns as well as unique threads. In this course we will explore ghosts, ghost stories, and hauntings from an anthropological perspective. We will focus on the ways that stories (including ghost stories) shape our lives, the effects of hauntings on people's wellbeing, and the ways that ghosts are accepted and rejected culturally. Readings, podcasts, and videos will draw from anthropology, philosophy, popular culture, and current events. Along the way we will look for traces of hauntings in our own communities, our technology, and ourselves.

### **GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**Tuesday, 2:40 pm – 3:35 pm (Section 312, CRN 91511)**

**Ryan Crews, Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality**

This course will explore the science of happiness and how it can be applied to the workplace and to individual careers. We will learn about the factors that contribute to happiness at work, such as job satisfaction, relationships with coworkers, and work-life balance. We will also explore ways of finding our purpose in work and translating that into career exploration. Together we will discover and apply strategies for increasing our own happiness at work and in life, as well as how to have a more impact on others.

### **EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEMPHIS (CLOSED)**

**Thursday, 11:20 am – 12:15 pm (Section 313, CRN 89951)**

**Deborah Thompson, Hospitality & Resort Management**

For newcomers and native Memphians alike, this course provides all the destination knowledge you'll need to know if you want to deliver Authentic Memphis Hospitality like a pro. Explore iconic Memphis attractions and history, discover neighborhood-based amenities, and learn all the ways you can have fun when you're visiting Memphis! Along the way, you'll develop your own list of personal recommendations and Memphis facts to impress your guests. For this honors forum, students will study the First Impressions and Insiders Recommend training series developed by Welcome to Memphis for hospitality industry professionals.

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### **EARTHQUAKES IN HOLLYWOOD**

**Thursday, 2:40 pm – 3:35 pm (Section 314, CRN 89952)**

**Thomas Goebel, Center for Earthquake Research and Information**

This Honors Forum will focus on plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes and how science is depicted in disaster movies. Disaster movies have a long tradition in Hollywood filmmaking; and although special effects significantly improved much of the science remains flawed even in present day films. You will learn to critically evaluate movies in light of basic scientific theory. For instance, we will discuss the mechanisms that lead to the formation of ocean tsunamis and contrast these with the depicted tsunami in the film “San Andreas (2015)”. Other films that will be discussed are “Earthquake (1974)”, “Volcano (1997)”, “The Core (2003)”, and “2012 (2009)”.

### **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN THE HERFF COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING (CLOSED)**

**Friday, 9:10 am – 10:05 am (Section 315, CRN 89953)**

**Isaiah Surbrook and Betsy Loe, Herff College of Engineering**

Becoming a successful engineering student is something every student should strive for in the Herff College of Engineering. The goal of this forum is to empower students with the skills needed to be successful both inside and outside of the classroom. We will review study strategies, test taking strategies, and note taking tactics to help you become a better student. We will look at career assessment tools, personality types, leadership styles, and conflict management skills in an effort to prepare you for life after graduation. In addition, we will encourage you to “be your own brand” by exploring personal values, interests, and skills while reviewing comprehensive career development tools in order to help you make informed career decisions and find post-graduation success.

### **BEING A FAN OF DISNEY (CLOSED)**

**Wednesday, 11:30 am –12:25 pm (Section 316, 89954)**

**Cody Havard, Sport & Leisure Commerce**

In this forum, we will discuss what it means to be a fan of the Walt Disney brand. Discussions will focus on the history, technology, and innovation of Walt Disney and the Walt Disney Organization, and how the global brand fits into contemporary society.

### **AI AND BIG DATA IN CANCER BIOLOGY**

**Wednesday, 10:20 am –11:15am (Section 317, 93994)**

**Yongmei Wang, Chemistry**

Course Description: This honor’s forum will explore how artificial intelligence (AI) and big data revolutionize cancer research and treatment. Designed for freshmen interested in biology, biochemistry, medicine, or medical technology, the course introduces fundamental concepts in cancer biology, next-generation sequencing, and the analysis of publicly available genomic and transcriptomic data for independent research in cancer biology. No prior programming or advanced biology knowledge is required —just curiosity and a willingness to explore how data-driven approaches are transforming and shaping the future of cancer treatment.

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### ENTERING THE TWILIGHT ZONE

**Monday, 11:30 am – 12:25 pm (Section 318, 89956)**

**Tonyaa Weathersbee, Journalism and Strategic Media**

In October of 1959, the first episode of “The Twilight Zone,” a science fiction anthology created by Rod Serling, aired on CBS. While the series, which lasted through 1964, was largely known for its surprise endings, many of its episodes, such as “The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street,” in which neighbors turn on each other after believing that one of them is an alien forcing their lights to go off as the real aliens are watching their scapegoating with glee, had themes that dealt with scapegoating, prejudice and other social and moral issues that society was grappling with then and continues to grapple with now. Through viewing selected episodes in class, among other things, the course will examine how Serling used the lens of science fiction to make those issues resonate then and the ways in which they resonate now. It will also explore the context of the time in which The Twilight Zone was created, and how it is gaining a new relevancy – as exhibited by political memes and other cultural references. Lastly, the course will examine Serling’s storytelling style, why it has been tough to duplicate and why his influence endures – in the form of an annual SerlingFest in Binghamton, N.Y., and the New Years Eve marathons on the SciFi Channel.

### DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: AN ACADEMIC ADVENTURE

**Wednesday 12:40 pm – 1:35 pm (Section 322, CRN 93987)**

**Will Robertson, Anthropology**

(Experience with roleplaying games is not a requirement for the course.) The table-top roleplaying game *Dungeons & Dragons* (D&D) has recently surged in popularity and is increasingly becoming an object of academic interest. D&D involves a group of people engaging in cooperative storytelling guided by the luck of rolling dice to shape the direction and outcome of player actions, sometimes moving the story in surprising directions. While D&D is a lot of fun to play, it’s also an excellent opportunity for thinking about and studying human relationships and social structures. In this course, we will use D&D as a tool for exploring several topics of interest in the social sciences and humanities by considering D&D as both a producer and product of culture and using it to consider what it means to be human.

### MYSTERIOUS UNSOLVED MANUSCRIPTS IN THE WORLD

**Monday, 2:20 pm – 3:45 pm (Section 328, CRN 92043)**

**Leah Windsor, Institute for Intelligent Systems**

Have you heard of Linear A? What about the Rohonc Codex? Or Medieval diplomatic ciphers? Or Rapa Nui, the Indus Script, or the Voynich Manuscript? In this class we will explore the world of unsolved alphabets and written messages from humanity's distant past. How did this information get “lost”? Are petroglyphs “language”? Who wrote, read, and spoke these forgotten languages, and what do they *mean*? In this class, we will explore how modern scientists research unknown languages, how breakthroughs in solving other previously unknown languages have transpired (like Egyptian hieroglyphics or Linear B), and what the properties and rules of languages shape written communication between humans. This class is for people who like science-informed mysteries, and tackling hard problems that currently don't have solutions - is this you?