

HONORS COLLEGE



Course Offerings

FALL 2026

HONORS COURSE OFFERINGS

Fall 2026

Community note: If you are not an Honors College student but would like to enroll in one of our courses, that's wonderful news. Please email honors@bsu.edu for permission.

HONR 176 **Inquiries in the Physical Sciences**

Section 1: Computer Science and Algorithms to Live By (3 credits)

David Largent

Tuesday, 3:30-6:00 PM

CRN: 35666

The major purposes of this course are to help you understand what algorithms are, how they work, and that they exist in your life. What you learn here can apply to virtually any activity you participate in, whether that be in your professional or private life. This course provides a broad survey of computer science including its history, applications, programming languages, and computer architecture. A strong emphasis will be placed on algorithms and the relationships of computer science to human concerns and society, including the social and ethical consequences raised by the application of technology in contemporary society. Class time will be split between small and large group discussions and small group activities that reinforce the course topics. *This course will be of particular interest to anyone curious about how algorithms exist in their life. No prior knowledge of algorithms or computer science is needed or expected.*

HONR 178

Inquiries in the Life Sciences

Section 1: Movement for Health and Wellness (3 credits)

Bridget Lester

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-10:45 AM

CRN: 35669

While it is commonly recognized that regular physical activity and exercise promote optimal health and wellness, most people in modern societies fall short of recommended levels. This course will explore the science behind the powerful benefits of an active lifestyle while also addressing the common barriers that prevent people from moving. We will take an evolutionary perspective, examining how physical activity was essential for human survival and comparing the lifestyles of hunter-gatherer societies with those of modern populations. Our approach to this topic will be to seek joy and meaning in an active lifestyle.

HONR 179

Honors Introduction to Science and Society

Section 1: Unloved and Under-Appreciated Animals (3 credits)

James Rankin

Monday and Wednesday, 3:00-4:15 PM

CRN: 35671

This class closely examines how our perceptions of animals are formed through science, culture/society, and media. Focus will be on animals that are generally viewed negatively by society (e.g., rats, spiders, reptiles, possums, raccoons). Human-animal interaction and conflict with these species will be examined (e.g., societal definitions of pests or invasive species), as well as how these animals are depicted across media forms (e.g., in movies, in news stories, in folklore). Lastly, this class will examine efforts to destigmatize these animals and portray them more accurately and positively.

Section 2: The Body and Culture (3 credits)

Cristina Freiburger

Tuesday & Thursday, 3:30-4:45 PM

CRN: 35673

Bodies offer a wealth of knowledge about the lived experience. Bodies communicate many intriguing and significant ideas about societies and the individuals that comprise them. Ideas around the body are best informed by an interdisciplinary approach that combines biology and social theory. For this class we will focus primarily on perspectives from biological/medical anthropology. Pulling social theory from other humanities and other fields of study this class will provide an effective way of formulating and evaluating how societies view bodies and individuals. Viewing bodies as symbols and forces that retain information about social processes and practices. For this class we will exam both the past and present. We will examine cultural modification of the body including tattoos, dental and cranial modifications as well as the symbolic meaning behind altering bodies and/or body parts. We will look at how bodies are resistance, subjectivity and show their lived experience both physically and socially.

HONR 179 cont.

Section 3: Decoding Discovery: Science, History, & Society (3 credits)

Mahamud Subir

Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00-12:15 PM

CRN: 36759

This course will examine various major scientific discoveries that define our modern era. Students will explore the fundamental principles of these breakthroughs using computational simulations, basic problem solving, thought experiments, and critical discourse. Reading materials from books that combine historical anecdotes and scientific principles will provide engaging discussion. (When feasible, the course can include select laboratory demonstrations). Each topic will be analyzed within its sociopolitical and historical context to evaluate its lasting impact on societal and technological advancement. Students will see how pivotal scientific discoveries shaped society and everyday life.

HONR 189 **Inquiries in Global Studies** **Honors Introduction to Global and Social Issues**

Section 1: Inquiries into Global Studies: Public Health, Culture, and Community (3 credits)

Mandy Brookins

Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00-12:15 PM

CRN: 22238

How do culture, community values, and historical context influence the way a nation cares for its citizens? This course uses a comparative lens to examine how disparate public health systems—ranging from the state-run universal health care model of Cuba, to the publicly funded "free at the point of use" National Health Service in the UK, the statutory social insurance system in Japan, and the employer-based market-driven approach of the United States—reflect deep-seated philosophical underpinnings regarding healthcare delivery, prevention, and equity. Students will move beyond simple metrics to explore the revolutionary ideology that informs Cuban health care delivery and outcomes, the philosophy of "Medical Bushido" in practitioner and patient approach to healing, the social and political movements that birthed the UK's NHS, and the origins of the employer-based insurance model and market-based responses to health care needs in the United States. Students will gain historical insights and work collaboratively to analyze contemporary responses to global crises and will be able to articulate how social determinants—such as education, income inequality, and cultural heritage—shape the lived experiences of patients and practitioners across the globe.

Section 2: Music and Power in a Global World (3 credits)

Galit Gertsenzon

Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:45 PM

CRN: 26963

Throughout history and across the globe, the human impulse toward music-making has provoked continuing discourse over its use in times of peace and conflict. Music is an expression of power, persuasion, resistance, and revolt. This course examines the role that music plays in our individual and collective experiences and considers the intertwined relationship between music and power in a global context. We look at national anthems and national

HONR 189 cont.

identity, protest music, propaganda, and war (past and present). With particular emphasis on regions outside of North America and Western Europe, we aim to broaden the scope of global inquiry beyond the familiar, presenting cultural and socio-political landscapes in China, North and South Korea, the Middle East (Afghanistan, Iran), Russia, and Ukraine. *This course will be of particular interest to College of Fine Arts students and any students with an interest in music and performance.*

Section 3: Mental Health and Mental Illness Across Culture (3 credits)

Molly Ferguson

Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:45 PM

CRN: 25544

In recent years, people in the West may have noticed a huge increase in discussion of mental health in their daily lives—it's on our social media, in our schools/workplace, and in cultural products such as books, movies, and television. Terms like “toxic,” “gaslighting,” and “boundaries” have entered our daily vocabulary. While in the 19th Century a woman experiencing a mental health crisis might be diagnosed with “hysteria” and given a “rest cure,” today they might be referred to therapy and meditation. This course will dig into representations of mental health and mental illness across cultures, to determine how mental health is identified and supported in disparate societies. We will read novels such as *Normal People* by Sally Rooney (Ireland) and *Freshwater* by Akwaeke Emezi (Nigeria), nonfiction excerpts from texts like *The Anxious Generation* and *Burnout*, watch various forms of media, and consult with experts in the field. This content will help us better understand how the way we depict mental illness is changing, and whether those changes improve mental health or make us more anxious. Students in this class will read, give presentations, and complete comprehensive projects about depictions of mental health and mental illness in different cultures.

HONR 199 Inquiries in American Civilization

Section 1: American Families from the Ball Fall Family to the Kennedys (3 credits)

Bruce Geelhoed

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:00-9:50 AM

CRN: 22243

For this semester the course will revolve around the theme of family and history where we will discover how the family has influenced American social, economic, and political life. We will also learn how the actions of several prominent families: the Ball family, the Hepburn family, and the Kennedys, have played major roles in the unfolding of recent American history. We will focus on the interactions between the parents and siblings in these families and how these interactions have influenced the wider society. Finally, we will discover how the family, our culture's most basic social unit, is also a vehicle for the transfer of power throughout the various institutions of modern society.

Section 2: Death and Disease in America (3 credits)

Jim Buss

Monday and Wednesday, 3:00-4:15 PM

CRN: 22244

This course examines the ways in which death and disease have had major influences on social, legal, economic, and cultural practices within the Americas and, later, the United States. We will explore cultural differences related to death between indigenous peoples and European settlers, the influence of smallpox during the American Revolution, the history of gross anatomy in the development of American medical practices, the role of death during the American Civil War in reshaping American concepts of good governance, and the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919. In each of these cases, students will gain a better understanding about how American ideas and ideals, as they relate to death and disease, have shaped the past and continue to influence the present. While the focus of the class concludes in the 1920s, a study of these past events certainly resonates in recent times.

HONR 201 **Inquiries in Earliest Cultures to ca. 500 CE**

Section 1: The Meaning of Life (3 credits)

Matthew Hartman

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:15 PM

CRN: 22248

What is the meaning of life? In this course, we will explore how a range of poets, philosophers, dramatists, artists, and religious figures from early cultures have answered this question and a constellation of related questions: What gives life meaning and value? What does it mean to live a good life? What does it mean to be good? Why do we suffer? Is there a right way to live? How should one act? What is happiness?

Section 2: Wisdom (3 credits)

Bart Huelsenbeck

Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:45 PM

CRN: 22250

The focus of this section of HONR 201 is wisdom. Ancient stories often communicate hard-won lessons. They aim to teach. They pass down knowledge for the ages. In early antiquity, this kind of wisdom is all-embracing—touching on subjects as diverse as philosophy, science, religion, and the arts. Over time, the pursuit of wisdom becomes more systematic and specialized. A wisdom that was once one thing becomes many. In this course, we will explore the evolution of wisdom as expressed in stories, religious and philosophical texts, and other media. Some of our themes and questions: What are the results, both positive and negative, of wisdom's evolution? How do we define knowledge? How should it be used and communicated? What is virtue, and can it be taught?

Section 3: Barbarians at the Gate (3 credits)

Amy Bosworth

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 12:00-12:50 AM

CRN: 22252

In this course we will explore how various societies in the Ancient World turned external and internal “enemies” into uncivilized barbarians through the analysis of written and visual sources. Why were the Celts transformed by Rome into animalistic hordes of marauding maniacs? Why did the Greeks represent Persia as a land brimming with monstrous, bizarre creatures? This class will also look at little-head voices from within these civilizations, such

as women and the unfree. Lastly, we will consider how these deliberate representations of people and places as “barbaric” impacts our understanding of the past today.

HONR 202 **Inquiries in Cultures from ca. 500 to ca. 1800 CE**

Section 1: The Sacred, the Profane, and the Worldly: Forging Modern Life through Religious Conflict (3 credits)

C. Mickey Lorkowski

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10:00-10:50 AM

CRN: 22260

What if the modern world is the masterpiece of heretics? This course provides an interdisciplinary analysis of how the "Worldly," the secular sphere of everyday life, commerce, and individual autonomy, emerged from the sustained dialectic between institutional orthodoxy and heterodox challenge. We will examine how the Sacred (the dominant complex of philosophy, theology, and art that reinforced religious culture) was systematically contested by the Profane (the heterodoxical ideas and expressions that subverted it). Through primary sources ranging from Aquinas's theology and Gothic architecture to the radical philosophy of Spinoza and the gritty realism of Caravaggio, we will trace the production of a new social reality..

Section 2: Demonizing Ourselves: Lives in the Margins (3 credits)

Brent Blackwell

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:15 PM

CRN: 22262

This section of 202 will explore the margins of western culture where those in power hide all their really fun byproducts—its demons and its devils. We'll spend the semester examining this process of marginalization beginning with the barbarians on the edges of Roman society and their Viking inheritors to the Jews and heretics of the later Middle Ages. We'll delve into the many discoveries of the scientific heretics and finish with the emergence of witches, werewolves, and vampires in the early modern period. Students will read primary and secondary sources from these periods that cover everything from folk tales and literature to the transcripts from witch and werewolf trials and even a doctor's field report on his first encounter with a creature called a 'vampyre.' Along the way, we'll incorporate the visual arts, architecture, music, sculpture, and even modern videos and film. *This course will be of particular interest to students interested in race, sex, religion, and gender, as well as those who feel an affinity for many different approaches to understanding and learning from art to science and from music to mathematics.*

Section 3: From Dark to Light: Turning the Old World into The New (3 credits)

Peter Davis

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:00-9:50 AM

CRN: 28928

From the start of the Common Era and the Dark Ages, through the Renaissance, to the beginning of the Enlightenment, we'll explore how the ancient world gives way to world that will soon flourish with technological and scientific breakthroughs. We'll trace the strange journey from medieval battlefields to the crusades to the black plague to the emphasis on science and learning that will begin to transform our world at astounding speeds. In addition to reading some of the great works of literature from around the world, we'll also supplement our texts with some movies, like

Monty Python's Search for the Holy Grail, that will shed light on the past and how we view it from our vantage point today. *This class will be of particular interest to students interested in poetry from around the world and movies about history.*

HONR 203

Inquiries in Cultures from ca. 1800 CE to the Present

Section 1: Elections in America (3 credits)

Chad Kinsella & Jay Bagga

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:15 PM

CRN: 22265

We live in a republic, and it requires the election of representatives to a host of positions at all levels of government. The United States is a federal government, a system where power is divided between the central and state governments. Nowhere is this more apparent than in elections. The central government provides resources and information, whereas the states decide on how to conduct elections. State election policy varies considerably. In this course, we will explore all the different aspects of election administration and technology of elections, including the different types of elections that occur throughout the United States, pre- and post-election activities, and their history and evolution. *This course will be of particular interest to anyone curious about how elections in America affect their life. No prior knowledge of elections or political science is needed or expected.*

Section 2: Same Song, Different Key (3 credits)

Beth Dalton

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 1:00-1:50 PM

CRN: 35728

In this section of Honors 203, we will examine recurring themes in human thought through cultural artifacts that retell or reenvision earlier works of literature and art. You may be surprised to learn that despite the passage of time, the questions we ask, and the kinds of answers we seek, remain unchanging. The themes of Homer are continued in the works of Margaret Atwood and Toni Morrison, for example. The problem of fate and free will continues to be explored Reading Lolita in Tehran. Visual artists such as Kehinde Wiley continue to question the dominant narrative in a neoclassical art. We will join these artists and writers from 1800-present day as they revisit conversations begun by the ancients and explore the Enduring Questions that have intrigued human beings throughout all of history. As a result, we begin to understand how we became who we are and – by extension – who you are.

Section 3: Sources of Meaning in the Modern World (3 credits)

Tim Berg

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 2:00-2:50 PM

CRN: 22267

This course offers an opportunity to feel, and think, and dream, to develop our skills in analysis, critical thinking, cultural awareness, and finally, and perhaps most importantly, to examine our own values, beliefs, and identity and those of others. We will examine a range of ideas and strategies people have used to make meaning in their lives. In examining a range of ideas from the last 200 years or so, we see a continued questioning of traditional sources of meaning along with a larger search for new sources of meaning, whether personal and idiosyncratic or systematic and analytical. The course readings and activities are all chosen and designed to help us engage some critical ideas and questions, and as we go along we'll encounter a range of responses to these questions that will perhaps disturb

our commonly-held notions of who we are and why. I certainly won't be telling what you should value or believe, but our time together offers an opportunity to do work with texts and do some meaning-making in the company of other minds (in our texts' authors and in each other here in the classroom). We'll do that by following poet Mary Oliver's "Instructions for living a life: Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it." Doesn't that sound grand and vitally important?

HONR 390 Honors Colloquium

Section 1: Community & Connection in Muncie: Systems, Spaces, and Civic Life (1 credit)

Heather Williams

Monday, 2:00-2:50 PM

CRN: 26507

This one-hour Honors College colloquium explores the systems, spaces, and social forces that shape community life in Muncie. Through local history, civic systems analysis, and immersive experiences, students will examine how communities evolve, how local government and nonprofits function, and how individuals contribute to community well-being. The course includes a Third Spaces Bus Tour and conversations with local organizational leaders, offering students firsthand insight into the places and people that sustain community connection. Students will analyze the "loneliness epidemic" in contemporary American society and consider the role of community in addressing it. By the end of the course, students will understand Muncie's past and present, reflect on what they value in a place, and identify tangible ways they can help build stronger, more connected communities.

Section 2: Storytelling in 3d Graphics and Virtual World (3 credits)

Michael Lee

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:15 PM

CRN: 26505

This course covers the basic principles and practices of 3D digital modeling, materials, texturing, lighting, camera set up, and rendering. Students will be able to learn skills in 3D design throughout a series of assignments and class projects. This course will guide students through the concept of modeling including rendering, animation, and rigging.

Section 3: Rethinking Normalcy (3 credits)

Courtney Jarrett

Monday, 5:30-8:10 PM

CRN: 26614

What does it mean to be "disabled"? Is it a medical tragedy, a biological error, or a vital form of human diversity? This course introduces students to Disability Studies (DS), an interdisciplinary field that challenges the way we define normal bodies and minds. We will explore the history of the disability rights movement, the distinction between "impairment" and "disability," and the representation of disabled people in the media.

Section 4: Stories That Matter: Community Storytelling for Public Impact (3 credits)

Kelsey Timmerman

Tuesday & Thursday, 3:30-4:45 PM

CRN: 26510

Stories shape how communities understand themselves and imagine their future. In this course, students will not only study storytelling; they will practice it in public, working alongside local partners to elevate interesting, inspiring, and informative voices of Muncie. Drawing inspiration from initiatives such as The Moth, StoryCorps, the Human Library, 826 Valencia, and The Facing Project, students will design and launch annual storytelling events for the Fall and Spring semesters. Through interviews, narrative craft, and collaborative production, students will create publicly engaged storytelling projects that foster connection and deepen civic pride. *This course is supported by the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry.*

Section 5: Citizenship, Community, and Leadership (3 credits)

David Roof

Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:45 PM

CRN: 26511

This discussion-based Honors seminar investigates the ideas and practices that animate democratic life by examining how citizenship, community, and leadership shape one another. Students engage foundational texts in political philosophy alongside contemporary scholarship to explore civic responsibility, ethical leadership, public dialogue, and the moral demands of belonging. Through structured deliberation, analytical writing, and applied civic inquiry, the course asks how individuals cultivate judgment, sustain democratic institutions, and navigate disagreement in pluralistic societies. *This course serves as a foundational course for the Civic Studies Minor and is open to all Ball State students.*

Section 6: Afrofuturism and Black Speculative Fiction (3 credits)

Gabriel Tait

Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

CRN: 26512

This course examines Afrofuturism, a cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual movement that reimagines the future through the lens of Black experiences, histories, and visions. Drawing from literature, music, visual arts, film, and critical theory, students will analyze how Afrofuturist works challenge dominant narratives, integrate technology with tradition, and envision speculative futures rooted in African diasporic cultures. Through the study of authors such as Octavia Butler, Samuel R Delany, and N.K. Jemisin, as well as filmmakers like Wanuri Kahiu, students will explore themes of identity, liberation, and technological utopias, and how these works propose strategies for resistance and transformation. The course aims to foster critical thinking about the intersections of race, science fiction, and future imaginaries, enhancing students' understanding of how Black artists and thinkers are reshaping the world.

Section 7: TBD

TBD

Section 8: Folklore and Nonhuman Animals (3 credits)

Nick Miller

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 3:00-3:50 PM

CRN: 26509

This course explores how different cultures understand and represent nonhuman animals in folklore, myth, and storytelling. Students will examine the many roles animals play in stories—as symbols, teachers, tricksters, moral guides, companions, or even family—and consider how these roles challenge clear boundaries between humans and other species. Drawing on folklore studies, environmental humanities, and animal studies, the course investigates how stories about animals reflect human values, fears, and ethical relationships with the natural world. The course culminates in a research-based, public-facing, or digital humanities project, such as a curated folklore archive, multimedia storytelling project, or interpretive exhibit, designed for audiences beyond the classroom.

Section 9: Women and Design in the Built Environment (3 credits)

Kristin Barry & Megan Phillippe

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-10:45 AM

CRN: 30289

This course examines the often-overlooked histories and contributions of women in design fields—including graphic design, architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, interior design, industrial design, fashion, and emerging digital practices. Through readings, case studies, archival research, and critical analysis, students will explore the social, cultural, and professional contexts that shaped, and at times inhibited, women's work in design throughout history. Emphasis will be placed on recovering and highlighting marginalized narratives, questioning the construction of the historical canons that have shaped a global design history. In addition to individual research projects documenting the life and work of a selected woman designers, students will collaborate to conceptualize, design, and build an interactive public exhibit that showcases these recovered histories. The exhibit will incorporate interpretive writing, visual storytelling, and digital or spatial design elements, enabling students to apply human-centered design methods to historical scholarship. By the end of the course, students will produce both scholarly research and a public-facing, co-created exhibit that expands community understanding of women's impact on the design professions. *This course is open to all majors but may be of special interest to students in the College of Architecture and Planning, School of Art, and Women's and Gender Studies.*

Section 10: The Book is Dead/Long Live the Book (3 credits)

Cassia Stults

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:15 PM

CRN: 36442

In the age of AI, dwindling resources, and short attention spans, is the book dead? In this course, we will go on a global exploration of written communication in all its material forms (from petroglyphs and cave drawings, to print and e-books, to whatever shapes it may take in the speculative future). We will not only focus on the history of the book, but also contemplate the book as cultural artifact. What is a book? What is its significance, to whom? Do books matter in this digital age we live in? Is the book dead, or does it still have something for us? In addition to thinking about the history and adaptability of books across time and place, there will be an emphasis on the practical application of bookwork through a series of hands-on bookbinding projects. Special consideration will be made in doing this work cost-effectively and sustainably. *This course is well-suited for those interested in History, Anthropology, English, Media and Communication, Earth Sciences, and Technology Studies/Computer Sciences.*

Section 11: Bond. James Bond as Cultural Icon (2 credits)

Jackie Buckrop

Wednesday, 3:00-4:50 PM

CRN: 26515

James Bond (007) has been a global brand and hugely popular cultural icon for more than 60 years, currently ranking fourth on the list of highest grossing film franchises. This two-credit hour course examines the original novels, films, and scholarly and popular artifacts to determine why Bond has been and remains popular. No prior knowledge of Bond is needed. The course culminates in a paper/project of the student's choosing.

For More Information

Come see us in the Ball Honors House:

1707 W. Riverside Ave.

Contact us by email:

honors@bsu.edu

Call us:

765-285-1024

