Honors General Studies Course Descriptions:

Fall 2017

These course descriptions are directly from the instructors of these Honors General Studies classes. All of these courses count in some category of UNK general studies requirements.

**English 101H: Introduction to Academic Writing: A Language-Based Approach**

*01/Jane Christensen*

This course seeks to introduce students to academic discourse through writing. A focus on language awareness reacquaints students with the various ways we use language. We will study not only the elements of academic writing but also seek topics of current cultural contexts on which to base these writings. In order to become better writers it is essential to read good writing, and in order to become better readers it is essential to develop critical reading skills to better understand what we read. Language culture is all around us every day—print, television, internet/social media—media in general. Most, if not all, of the pieces we’ll read in *Language Awareness* reflect current contexts, many of which are found in American popular culture, and these will spark ideas upon which students may then write their own analytical reflections based on personal experience and also the language-using culture at large. Categories for each discussion are: the power of language; making sense of the world through language; propaganda and doublespeak; the language of discrimination and hate; the language of gender; and technology and language. Students will share their writing in discussion and in peer revision. The emphasis is on discussion not lecture.

**English 102H: Academic Writing and Research: Semiotics: Examining American Popular Culture**

*01&02/Jane Christensen*

As suggested by the title of this course, the focus will be on written exposure of ideas within the context of semiotic analysis of American Popular Culture. Presumably through intense and careful examination of the elements and phenomena of American popular culture we can learn more about different levels of our culture and what the popularity of certain elements says about us as a culture. Readings from *Signs of Life in the U.S.A.: Readings on Popular Culture for Writers* include topics such as consumer behavior, advertising, television, film, and iconic figures real and imagined. Semiotics is a particularly effective methodology for analyzing popular culture—semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, and of locating meaning in any sort of text: print, images, and other media. Students will share their writing in discussion and in peer revision.
Language development as well as writing practice by critical analysis with research is the focus of this course with emphasis on discussion.

**Speech 100H: Fundamentals of Speech—01/Fletcher Ziwoya**

This course will introduce you to the history, theory, and practice of rhetoric from which modern day public speaking emerged. Accordingly, this class is as much a theory class as it is a performance class. In our journey through various theories related to public communication we will explore opportunities for applying those theories in the professional context and in our own classroom. Through various assignments, students will learn the principles of researching for, developing, organizing, and delivering different types of speeches. Upon completion of this course you should have accomplished the following objectives:

1. Define and explain basic communication terms and principles that serve as a basis for competent public communication.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of theories related to public communication, listening, analytical reasoning, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, gender communication, intercultural communication and research skills.
3. Research, prepare, and deliver well-organized informative and persuasive presentations that contain effective supporting materials and conform to audience members’ needs and/or expectations.
4. Analyze and critically evaluate public communication attempts including speeches delivered by others as well as mass-mediated messages.
5. Apply principles of diversity to public communication situations and demonstrate competent communication practices that respect diverse perspectives.

**Music 100H: Music Appreciation—01/James Cook**

This course features works of the master composers in numerous historic video recordings and documentaries of great performers, conductors, symphony orchestras, and choruses within the context of a fully illustrated overhead lecture. The objective of Music 100H is to teach students to be more musically informed through the introduction of western music. While the course focuses primarily on western music, some discussion also includes the music and folk instruments of India, Nepal, Vietnam, China, and Turkey. Students will work toward achieving the following goals: (1) familiarity with some of the world’s greatest composers, concert artists and ensembles; (2) ability to make a critical assessment and comparison of the quality and effectiveness of various musical performances; (3) ability to place an unknown musical work in a particular tradition and period; and (4) increased understanding of the cultural and historical background of the various styles of music. In summary of the overhead lecture, students are provided with a set of notes complete with hyperlinks to all
overhead videos and reference articles. Periodically, the instructor will perform selected musical excerpts that correspond to the historical period being discussed (https://www.youtube.com/channel/US1Y976odQQx5JT9Ji5BYw).

**English 280H: Literature Special Topic: “The Mask of the Hero: From Medieval Warriors to Dark Knights and Jedi Knights”—01/Rebecca Umland**

In this course we will focus on the many incarnations of the warrior hero in literature and film. We will consider why the hero’s journey—what Joseph Campbell identifies in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949) as the “monomyth”—has endured, despite apparent paradigmatic shifts in taste and cultural values. We will examine archetypal heroes of the past: ancient Greece, the medieval warrior as exemplified by Beowulf, and typologies of knighthood embodied in Sir Thomas Malory’s Arthurian romance, *Le Morte d’Arthur*. Using these models, we will relate them to modern texts and view films that recast this heroic ideal to appeal to a new audience, while still preserving certain essential features of the mythic hero of past ages. As Robert Ray explores in his work, *A Certain Tendency in Hollywood Cinema 1930-1980* (1985), some heroes achieve and sustain an “official” status, while others represent the rebel or “outlaw hero.” But we can discern a third type, the “liminal” outlaw hero, also derivative of an earlier mythic archetype.

What does the continuity of this myth (its mythopoeic quality) suggest about human nature and life experiences? What is important about the mask the hero wears at the time of his inception—how does each incarnation of the hero serve as a *speculum* or mirror for the culture that creates it?

In addition to selections from the works of Lord Raglan, Joseph Campbell, Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), and Ray’s text, we will read from other contemporary critical works that pertain to particular texts we will study. This course focuses on primary texts (creative and critical) and written work to evaluate student progress: short critical responses, short answer essay exams, and a final critical essay.

**History 250H: American History 1492-1865—01/James Rohrer**

This course provides an overview of the development of American culture and society from the period of first contact between Native Americans and European colonists up through the Civil War. Attention will be given to cultural patterns and social, economic, and political institutions. Special attention will be given to the contact between various cultural groups in the Americas, and the role of intercultural relations in shaping the contour of early American society.

Texts include Jules Benjamin’s *A Student’s Guide to History*, and Richard Godbeer’s *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692*; also we will read actual early American documents and sources. Weekly logs + critical book review + research paper will comprise the written assignments.
Philosophy 100H: Introduction to Philosophy—01/David Rozema
This course seeks to both convey a sense of what the discipline of Philosophy is and to engage students in a philosophical dialogue concerning perennial and contemporary questions centered on what it means to be a human, to be a person, and to live a meaningful and good life. Among topics dealt with are reality, morality, justice, and freedom.

[The following course is open to Junior rank and above or those within 6 hours of completing all General Studies categories.]

PE 388H: Capstone Course: “The Living Dead in Fact & Fiction”—01/Greg Brown
Zombies, Vampires, and other Living Dead creatures have permeated literature since medieval times (at least). There have been innumerable movies and TV shows about the living dead as villains as well as heroes. Indeed, the popularity of the Living Dead can be well illustrated by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention developing a Zombie preparedness webpage to raise public awareness of the need for being prepared for emergencies and natural disasters. This course will use fictional novels, movies, and television shows to identify the characteristics of the Living Dead in regards to human physiology and disease. Internet sources, such as the WebMD Symptom Checker, will be used to associate the symptoms displayed by the Living Dead to identify possible diseases, and then peer-reviewed scholarly articles gleaned from the PubMed database will be used to identify further information on the medical conditions or diseases that might give someone symptoms of being a Living Dead. Information on disease transmission and prevention also will be reviewed.