

SPRING SEMESTER 2025 ANCIENT AND MODERN LEGACIES COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Ancient Legacies: HONR 2000 Section 003–Keith Snedegar

Premodern societies perpetuated their cultural memories in art, architecture, ritual, and literature. In this course we will engage literary reflections on the meaning of life and death from the Epic of Gilgamesh to the essays of Michel de Montaigne, and we will explore the material culture of memorialization from the ancient Egyptians to early modern Europeans. We will also reflect on how these various forms of memorialization resonate with more contemporary events and culture. This is a seminar-style course, which means sharing ideas through reading, writing, and in-class discussion.

Ancient Legacies: HONR 2000 Section 001 and Section 006–Richard B. McDonald

This Course will read a variety of heroic stories from antiquity (Greek, Roman, Indian), and European Medieval and Renaissance literature (English, French, Italian). The books we will be reading are more than “Classics”; the people who wrote “the Classics” read and often revered the works you will be studying. These texts have had a broad impact on literature and thought in the western world. There are many works which are their equal in artistry, but these works constitute some of the most influential literature ever created. They were enjoyed and respected by their contemporary audiences and their effects are often just as strong today. Every work we are reading will be a translation of a great work from another (often ancient) culture. Changes from one language to another and one culture to another sometimes require greater concentration on our part, but you will find that most of what these works have to say is still interesting in our day and easily applicable to segments of our world.

When you complete this class you will be that much more an educated individual. You will have participated in a reading process that began by at least 19 B.C.E in the Western world and which has been observed through the Renaissance and quite obviously up until today. The world changes and what is important sometimes does as well, but the issues important to the contemporary audiences of these works are not that far removed from our own interests: War, love, inhumanity, suffering, faith, honor, compassion, fairness, equality, power, damnation, redemption, and salvation.

Ancient Legacies: HONR 2000 Section X01 and Section X02–Michaela Giesenkirchen Sawyer

Our topic this semester is the history of *ideas of order* in the *Western* world—cosmological, religious, philosophical, social, political, economic, artistic, and scientific—from antiquity through 1500. Our journey will take us from the beginnings of civilization in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia all the way to the High Italian Renaissance of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. Along the way, we will study many foundational written and visual texts, from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* to Dante’s *Inferno* and from the pyramids to the Sistine Chapel. Our emphasis will lie on written texts—literature, recorded mythology, histories, sacred texts, and philosophy—but we will also study what objects, buildings, paintings, sculptures, ritual practices, and performance spaces can tell us about the history of ideas of order, and disorder.

Modern Legacies: HONR 2100 Section 007 and Section 009 – Robert L. Carney

Overview:

“Do you think, then, that we should attempt such a survey? For it is, I assure you, too big a task to undertake without thought.”

“We know what we are in for,’ returned Adeimantus, ‘go on.’” (58)

—Plato, *The Republic*

The questions raised by Plato are some that we will pursue all semester. They’re foundational. The States and possible futures built on that foundation are too many to list, so we’ll focus on a few renowned and lesser-known works in the dystopian genre and ask, “Futuristic fiction: paranoia or prophecy?” This is fun, of course, but not as easy as it sounds. There’s a lot of academic attention paid to these works, and many scholars liken dystopian authors to Old Testament prophets speaking out in the predominant form of our age. Another way to think of it is this: These fictive works are philosophy and social critique done as *demonstration* rather than *discussion*. We’ll be doing a little bit of both as we interpret novels, short-stories, philosophy, and film and do some discussing, group presenting, and writing.

Modern Legacies: HONR 2100 Section 008 – Charles Troy Taysom

Critical Thinking-Troubleshooting Infused with Artificial Intelligence

Critical thinking is the most important soft skill one can have. The workforce is discovering that many college graduates lack these basic skills. This class intends to teach Critical Thinking and, more importantly, how to do it. This class offers a deep dive into Critical Thinking and troubleshooting (what one does with Critical Thinking) and teaches how to leverage the technology flooding the world—Artificial Intelligence. After we learn Critical Thinking, the class will look at historical events through the lens of Critical Thinking. The Battle of the Little Big Horn, Pickett’s Charge, Apollo 13, and even the 2024 Presidential elections. This class will use the Socratic pedagogy—come ready to share and defend your opinions.

Modern Legacies: HONR 2100 Section 006 – Hilary Hungerford

Description coming soon!