

Honors College Summer 2026 and Fall 2026 course descriptions packet includes:

- 1) Summer 2026 Honors College Courses (starting on this page)
- 2) Honors 210G Intermediate Seminars for Fall 2026 (starting on page 3)
- 3) Honors 290-level Courses for Fall 2026 (starting on page 4)
- 4) Honors 380 Junior Colloquia for Fall 2026 (starting on page 9)

Summer 2026 Honors College Courses
(Summer Session 1, June 2nd - July 9th, 2026)

Honors 293 (1): Sexuality and Social Histories (#1002)

TuTh 1:30 - 4:30pm

Jason Roush, Honors College

Human sexuality is continually evolving within cultural contexts. Widespread social factors like economics, education, family, geography, religion, and law shape how we come to perceive sexual identity and ourselves. In turn, sexuality is equally powerful in shaping society and social norms, both through organized political/community movements and through interpersonal relationships. How have our understandings of sexuality and gender identity shifted over the past fifty years? What will be the future of sexuality in coming decades?

Through historical readings and contemporary theory, along with films and other media, this course explores the changing social constructions of sexual identity and pivotal moments in LGBTQ history, as well as examining how heterosexuality and LGBTQ identities influence and interface with each other. Some specific topics that we will study and discuss include:

- community organizations and social events related to sexual identity
- same-sex marriage equality and alternative families
- the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the 1980s and beyond
- changing conceptions of bisexuality and "heteroflexibility"
- social activism focused on issues of gender and sexual identity
- emergence of transgender and intersexual identities and communities
- issues surrounding asexuality, consent, disability, race, and sex education.

In addition to writing some short in-class response papers (1 - 2 pages each) based on course topics, students will write one final essay (5 pages) on a relevant community organization or social event of their choice. A brief class presentation (10 minutes) on that organization or social event will also be required.

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement. (NOTE: If you're interested in taking the course as an HONORS 380 exception with an additional assignment instead, please just email Jason when you register for the class!)

Honors 380 (1): Exploring Psychological Identities in TV and Film (#1708)

TuTh 10:00am - 1:00pm

Roxann Harvey, Honors College

In our rapidly changing cultural landscape, popular movies and TV series serve as powerful mirrors reflecting societal values, norms and struggles. This course examines the psychological themes present in contemporary media, including reality television, K-Pop dramas, modern series and popular movies. Through the lens of psychological theory, we will explore the practical implications of character portrayals, emphasizing how they can inform our understanding of real-world issues such as social influence, stigma, identity formation and mental health challenges.

By critically analyzing peer-reviewed research articles and media examples such as *Bridgerton*, *Sex Education*, and *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*, students will explore the intersection of psychology and culture, enhancing their ability to connect psychological theories to everyday scenarios. These analyses offer insights into how media shapes perception of self and society, providing valuable lessons on the psychological processes that govern human behavior.

This course encourages students to become more discerning consumers of popular culture, equipping them with the tools to analyze and interpret the psychological narratives embedded within entertainment. Students will gain a multifaceted understanding of how media both reflects and shapes societal and individual identities, enhancing their ability to apply psychological concepts to real-world contexts. Course requirements will be as follows:

- Attendance, active class discussion & leading class discussions
- Weekly 2-page reflections related to the episode, including an in-depth analysis of at least one related peer-reviewed research article on the psychological concept of the week.

- A 10-minute presentation with slides on a topic of your choice that provides an in-depth analysis of a chosen psychological concept as represented across multiple media formats. The presentation must include analysis of at least five peer reviewed articles on the topic.
- 2-page written feedback on two peers' presentations.
- Final 10–12-page paper on a psychological concept of your choice analyzing how the concept is portrayed in two different TV shows or movies across different cultural or geographic contexts. The paper must reference at least eight peer -reviewed journal articles and draw connections between psychological theory and the media examples. The project includes a 5 -minute in class summary presentation with slides.

Fall 2026 Honors College 200-level Courses

Honors 210G (1): “The Personal Is Political”: Reproductive Justice on Film (#10816)

TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am

Carney Maley, Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies

The reproductive justice movement was developed by a group of Black women activists in the 1990s as a way to merge their advocacy for both reproductive rights and social justice issues. Using this intersectional framework, we will examine how ideas about reproduction have evolved in the U.S. from pre-Roe vs. Wade to the overturning of the Supreme Court case in 2022, to today. Reproductive Justice allows us to explore not only the evolution of abortion rights, but also the right for people to have children and to parent them in a safe environment. Therefore, we will investigate topics such as maternal healthcare, foster care, LGBTQ+ family building, new reproductive technologies, sterilization, and contraception. Students will read the works of legal scholars, activists, historians, and journalists to chart how people’s reproductive decisions are shaped not only by gender identity but also race, socioeconomic class, and sexuality.

The course will also focus on how issues of reproductive justice are represented in contemporary American film. Analyzing both narrative and documentary films from the 21st century can provide us with insights into how society views certain reproductive choices (i.e. what is considered socially acceptable, legal, desirable, etc.), and how these individual and structural decisions change over time. Assignments will include written analyses of contemporary documentary and narrative films and a final research project that investigates a current activist organization committed to one of the reproductive justice issues covered in the course.

This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.

Honors 210G (2): Foot Traffic: The Socio-cultural Dynamics of Travel and Tourism (#10817)

MW 4:00 - 5:15pm

Jennifer Skinnon, Honors College

Travel and tourism comprise more than personal experiences; they also have profound social, cultural, economic, and environmental consequences. This course will introduce students to sociological and cultural perspectives of travel and tourism. Students engage with literature and multi-media content such as film, advertisements, and social media, as well as personal experiences. We examine how increased mobility created conditions for travel-as-recreation, and the ways the travel industry has changed over time, shaped by, and shaping societal values and cultural norms.

Throughout the semester, we will address questions such as: How are meanings attached to places? How are tourist attractions created, sold, and consumed? How are narratives about place, history, and community constructed? What are the costs and benefits of tourist-driven economies? Assignments include response papers, a small group project in which students design a tourist destination and create an advertisement for it, and a final research paper. The course culminates in academic forums with students presenting their research findings to the class.

This course fulfills the Intermediate Seminar (IS) requirement.

Honors 291 (1): Psychoanalysis, Beauty & Horror (#2616)

TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm

Avak Hasratian, English

Psychoanalysis is both a clinical reality and a theory of art, allowing us to access and heal our internal psychic lives through aesthetic experiences that bridge desire with frightening over-fulfillment. These forces shape our ethics—codes that shift across time and cultures yet drive art and us to reclaim the traumatically unrepresentable: The Mother, The Dead, The (No)Thing, The Double, The Object.

This course examines how great Beauty emerges from this longing to reconnect with Loss, and why it can veer into Sublime horror. We'll begin with Freud's "The Uncanny," exploring the eerie in the familiar, then Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw," where we doubt the line between the living and the dead. Then, Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* intensifies this unease, while Lacan's "Kant Avec Sade" ties pleasure to terror. Patrick Süskind's *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* weaves obsession into an

attempt to both cause and transcend death. Hitchcock's *Psycho* allows us to touch and disconnect from our own terrifying attachments, while Pedro Almodovar's *Volver* restores through beauty's maternal return. Supplemental texts from film critics and possible works in sculpture, architecture, and other media deepen our view.

Why do we seek both wonder and dread? How can psychoanalytic approaches to art allow us to detach from our increasingly superficial society of the spectacle? This course uncovers how beauty soothes and horror renews us. Expect rich discussions as we trace these thoughts through narratives, films, and ourselves. Assignments include short response papers and small group presentations.

This course fulfills an Arts (AR) distribution requirement.

Honors 292 (1): Spiritual, Not Religious: Secularism and Spirituality in America (#2617)

TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am

Michael Motia, Classics & Religious Studies

In 2000, only about 5% of Americans said they had no religious affiliation. Today, that number is about 35%. Demographers predict it will be more than half the country soon. And yet, only about 5% of Americans are currently atheists. Most of the "nones" believe in some higher power; nearly all of them also have some set of practices that ground them and put them in touch with that higher power. Americans might not go to church or call themselves religious as often, but they're not done with religion or spirituality or transcendence. They're improvising and trying to find new "remixed" ways of finding meaning, purpose, ritual, and community.

This class tracks how this incredibly fast shift in American life happened. What does America's present religious landscape look like today? Then we will work backwards to understand, as Talal Asad put it, "the contingencies that have come together to give us our certainties." How did institutional religion become so optional? Where do people find community? Where do they find meaning? What moral and ethical guidelines govern their lives? How do they learn what matters? How do they develop rituals? Those questions had been the realm of religion. Are they now?

Through reading ethnographies, watching films, writing papers, and in-class presentations, students will grapple with contemporary spiritual and religious America.

This course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.

Honors 292 (2): Satire (#3050)
MW 2:30 - 3:45pm
Keyana Parks, English

This course examines the literary genre of satire, considering both its form and function in art and popular culture. In this course, you will study the distinguishing characteristics of satire including but not limited to parody, irony, exaggeration, use of stereotype, and absurdity. We will examine how satire has evolved to contemplate its place and import in the twenty-first century. We will consider and attempt to answer the following questions: What is satire?; What constitutes the difference between humor and satire?; How does humor and satire endow authors and artists with the ability to address issues of race, gender, identity, class, politics?; How do different forms—novels (Paul Beatty’s *The Sellout*), films (Jordan Peele’s *Get Out*), and dramas (Douglass Turner Ward’s *Day of Absence*), etc.—and modes of satire shape its production and reception?; How does audience reception reflect the efficacy of satire? Our readings will reflect the disparate nature of satire as we read science-fiction, epic, horror, and satirical realism.

This course fulfills a Humanities (HU) distribution requirement.

Honors 293 (1): Economics and the Friction of Psychology (#4236)
TuTh 4:00 - 5:15pm
Michelle Jiang, Economics

Economics assumes rational agents, but human beings are not always rational. To better understand this conundrum, we take a behavioral economics approach to classic economics problems. This course provides an introduction to behavioral economics, combining theory with real-world application and policy issues. We begin with an overview of neoclassical rational expectations, before introducing behavioral elements such as information costs, confidence, and risk aversion. We’ll review classic perception errors such as reference dependence, rational inattention, and choice paralysis. We’ll explain how this leads to frictions in economics such as monopoly and monopsony.

Classes will be a combination of (1) lecture and (2) group discussion on the assigned readings. The course will place a strong emphasis on thoughtful critique and engagement with the materials, and focus will be given to new research to expose students to the frontier of behavioral and experimental economics. The purpose of this course is not to provide “yes” or “no” answers, but to teach you how to engage with economic models, analyze experimental evidence, and reach informed opinions. We’ll end the class with an exploration of how behavioral economics intersects with current events such as the rise of AI.

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement and can also be applied to the minor in Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity.

Honors 293 (2): Understanding Behavior: Psychology, Brain, Identity, and Society (#4237)

TuTh 2:00 - 3:15pm

Roxann Harvey, Honors College

This course examines how human behavior is shaped by the interaction of biological processes, learning environments, social identities, and institutional systems. Drawing on insights from psychology, neuroscience, behavioral science, and interdisciplinary social research, students explore how individuals learn, express, and regulate behavior within families, peer groups, organizations, media environments, and public institutions.

Throughout the semester, we explore topics such as social media, mental health, disability, and inequality to better understand how behaviors are reinforced, constrained, or marginalized in everyday life. Scientific readings introduce the neurological and behavioral mechanisms that influence human behavior, while interdisciplinary works on technology, race, and neurodiversity examine how social norms, digital media, and institutional structures shape opportunities and expectations. The course emphasizes discussion-based learning, critical engagement with research, and collaborative inquiry. Students will analyze and synthesize scientific research to better understand how biological, psychological, and societal factors interact to shape human behavior.

This course fulfills a Social/Behavioral (SB) distribution requirement.

Honors 294 (1): Motherhood & Culture: Why Mothers Die, a Global Overview (#2618)

MWF 11:00 - 11:50am

Abiodun Baiyewu, Global Governance and Human Security

Despite general improvements in life expectancy globally, many women still die from preventable causes. For example, every 2 minutes, somewhere in the world, a woman dies from childbirth-related complications - that is approximately 287,000 women annually.

This course provides a comprehensive examination of the biological, social, and systemic factors that contribute to maternal mortality on a global scale. We will move beyond simple statistics to understand the "why" behind the numbers, exploring the

intersection of healthcare infrastructure, social determinants of health, and governance systems.

This course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement and can also be counted towards the Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity Minor.

Honors 294 (2): Health beyond Borders (#2619)

TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm

Satwika Paramasatya, Global Governance and Human Security

As health issues transcend beyond borders, global health aims to improve the wellbeing of individuals and populations around the world. The project of global health is fundamentally linked to human development, social structures, and systems, including health systems and policies. At its core, global health is concerned with equity and social justice through supporting the capabilities of individuals and groups.

This course explores the multifaceted landscape of global health further by emphasizing the disparities between the Global North and South that render border irrelevant. Students will acquire knowledge of concepts such as equity and equality by examining the social determinants of health and analyzing the historical and systemic forces that perpetuate health issues.

Through case studies, discussions, and simulations, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of global health challenges and cultivate the skills to advocate for effective solutions.

The course is designed to be accessible and relevant to students from all majors, including but not limited to nursing, STEM, political science, economy & business, and humanities.

This course fulfills a World Cultures (WC) distribution requirement and can also be counted towards the Wealth, Poverty, and Opportunity Minor.

Honors 295 (1): History, Ethics, and How They Impact Engineering (#10818)

TuTh 9:30 - 10:45am

Mariah Arral, Tufts Visiting Scholar

This discussion-based course examines the historical, ethical, and legal dimensions of science and engineering practice. Students analyze real case studies involving engineering failures, regulatory responses, medical research ethics, and inequities in scientific recognition. Topics span public harm and regulation, industry profit and

unequal protection, human subjects research, and the erasure of marginalized scientists.

Through structured debates, written analysis, and oral presentations, students develop the ability to evaluate ethical dilemmas, apply ethical reasoning frameworks, and communicate evidence-based arguments to diverse audiences. The course also addresses the responsible use of AI tools, reflecting professional standards of transparency and accountability. Assignments entail think-pair-share reflections, reading responses, a presentation, a paper at the end of the semester, and a mid-term exam. Students leave with historical literacy and ethical reasoning skills. This course is designed to help you think through real-world problems. Many of the questions asked do not have a right or wrong answer, but are justified by ethical and philosophical grounds. In many ways, this class will likely be quite different from most classes you have taken or will take.

This course fulfills a Natural Sciences (NS) distribution requirement.

Fall 2026 Honors College Junior Colloquia

You must have completed at least two HONORS 200-level courses to register for the Junior Colloquium.

Honors 380 (1): Drug Action and Discovery (#1458)

Tuesday 12:30 - 3:15pm

Paul Bauer, Honors College

This course will introduce you to the concepts of drug action and discovery and focus on two central questions: First, how do drugs interact with the body and cause their positive and/or negative effects? Second, what are the different types of drug therapeutics, and how are they discovered & developed?

We will start with an overview of drug properties and targets and then review the basic principles of drug pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, pharmogenomics, and safety through lectures and scientific publications. You will select a drug of personal interest and create & present a scientific profile of its properties based on class discussions. The overall goals are to give you the full picture of drug action and the knowledge to understand drug information in medicine.

In the second part of the course, we will discuss our knowledge of drug action to explore drug discovery processes and create a proposal for discovering a new cancer drug. Working in teams, you will select a disease area and drug target and build a lead discovery funnel. We will then develop pre-clinical and clinical strategies and create a target product profile as a class. Lectures will focus on key concepts and team presentations will assess understanding, and the course concludes with a presentation to UMB faculty.

The goal is to give you an overview of industrial drug discovery and the processes, decisions, and challenges involved in discovering a new medicine. Students should have a solid foundation in biology and completion of a course in cell biology, biochemistry, and/or nursing pharmacology. In addition, a basic ability to read scientific publications is important for understanding the concepts discussed in the course. The course reference book will be on Course Reserve at Healey Library: Rang & Dale's Pharmacology (10th edition).

Honors 380 (2): Anarchism and Order (#2615)

TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm

Todd Drogy, English

When One hears the word anarchy, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Disorder? Rebellion? Destruction? Chaos? Or freedom? Gaiety? Spontaneity? Resistance?

In Anarchism and Order we will explore the philosophy/practice of anarchism, both as a socio-economic critique and evolving expression of culture. We will trace the origins of anarchism, exploring its permutations through modern history and into the present. We will interest ourselves in the idea of the human, asking what it means to be free, what it means to be equal, and what it means to live in mutuality and reciprocity with others.

We will engage with multiple texts: essays, pamphlets, fiction, film, and music. Additionally, we will read chapters from Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*. Our objective is to explore how anarchism has shaped and continues to shape the world around us. More specifically, we will consider how anarchistic thought and practice have impacted the following movements: abolitionism, labor, land reform, feminism, civil rights, the anti-war movement, LGBTQ rights, educational reform, and environmentalism. The complex relationship between anarchism and technology will also be explored.

This is a discussion-focused class, with a strong emphasis on class participation. Students will compose three (500-600 word) mini-essays on readings/films/discussions. You will also keep a journal of reflective, informal writing. A thesis-driven research paper (12-14 pages) will be due at the semester's end.

Honors 380 (3): Climate: Science to Action (#3609)

Wednesday 1:00 - 3:45pm

Reinmar Seidler, Biology

Climate change is the biggest challenge of the 21st century. The issue has just begun to figure a bit more prominently in the US media and public discourse, yet many of us are still confused about the details. We may feel overwhelmed by the apparent complexity of the climate problem, and by the technical nature of the arguments. However, this course requires no advanced scientific background. The emphasis will be on critical thinking, critical reading, imaginative engagement, and clear communication.

We will begin by examining the evidence for the claim that human actions are causing significant changes in global climate patterns. We will then explore some of the ways people from different backgrounds and different walks of life are thinking, talking, and writing about climate change today – in America and in the wider world. We will focus especially on the “social imaginaries” around climate change, such as:

- how people see the future under expected climate change;
- how politics plays into our fears and imagination;
- how we can assess historical and current responsibilities for climate change;
- how climate questions compete with other issues in media and public awareness;
- how – armed with knowledge – we can help move society onto sustainable pathways.

Readings will include peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, book chapters, fiction, news reports, and supplemental materials. There will be weekly writing assignments, student presentations, group collaborative work, and a major individual research paper in which each student will analyze and report on a proposed solution to anthropogenic climate distortion.