



Humanitarian Social Media - Yes or No?

Carrie Tomko, MWF 9:40 am – 10:30 am

HONOR 350 – 001

Social media brings instantaneous news, information, and entertainment. Is it accurate in detail? Is it even true? Is it responsible "journalism"? Does it benefit humanity? Does it require accountability? This colloquium looks at the good, bad, and even the "ugly" of social media, studying the impact on culture.

Forever Young: Looking at Popular Culture Through an Intergenerational Lens

Lisa Rhoades, TTh 12:15pm – 1:30pm

HONOR 350 - 002

The cultural phenomenon that earned the portmanteau, Barbenheimer, resulted in people of all ages flooding theaters in the summer of 23 (and some quickly trending memes). What brought these two seemingly different films together? Was it the confidence of their anticipated independent successes or a well-calculated plan to reflect social struggles of our obviously imperfect world? These films are only one example of the changing face of popular culture and its impact on and reflection of our society. In this course, we will examine many dynamic facets of popular culture, viewing them through an intergenerational lens that asks us to reconsider what it means to be a baby boomer, a Gen-Xer, or a Millennial. How do the recent trends in popular novels, films, and social media transcend these boundaries and ask us to redefine who and what we are? Can both you and your grandparents be Potter fans? Are you reading the same novels you see on your mom's nightstand? Have Disney movies finally embraced a diverse world? Class discussion of these and other compelling questions will lead students to complete short response essays and a final project.

Are We Our Brains?

Nathaniel Blower, MWF 10:45 am – 11:35 am

HONOR 350 - 003

In this class we will discuss a number of topics related to the question: Are we our brains? The central focus of the course will be a dispute between Peter Hacker and Daniel Dennett. Hacker argues against the habit in neuroscience of treating brains as though they were people: assuming that brains think, feel, perceive, intend and do all manner of things that ordinarily we say people do, not their brains. Daniel Dennett defends the neuroscientists, claiming that Hacker pays too much attention to what we ordinarily say. As we discuss this dispute, we will touch on a number of traditionally philosophical questions about free-will, the afterlife, morality, subjectivity and more. On the more scientific side, we will discuss topics in neuroscience, computer science, mathematics, linguistics and more.



Individual and Community in Ancient Athens

Elisha Dumser, TTh 9:15am – 10:30am

HONOR 350 – 004

How does one balance personal choice and freedom against the needs of the greater community? This question, which remains pertinent today, was first explored in ancient Greece. This class seeks to learn more about ourselves by examining the roots of this thorny issue as it emerged in 5th century BCE Classical Athens. Theater, philosophy, history, politics, religious practices, and the visual arts are avenues we'll explore as we discover how the competing needs of the individual and the community were debated in the birthplace of democracy.

Religion East and West: The Big Questions (and Answers in Words and Art)

Paula Levin, TTH 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm

HONOR 350 – 005

We will examine the teachings of Eastern and Western Religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam - in their attempts to guide us to answers to The Big Questions: What is the meaning of life, how should I live, what happens after life, what is God. We will experience the great world of artistic expression of religious ideas through literature, virtual tours, visual media, and music. Guest lecturers will enhance our understanding of religion as it is practiced today. The emphasis of the course is on class discussion of what we experience and react to.