



Spring 2024 Social Science Colloquia

S.T.E.M. in the News Title

Carrie Tomko, MWF, 10:45am - 11:35am

HONOR 340 - 001

Students in this colloquium have an opportunity to reflect on innovations, such as: The latest in available smart phones... The ongoing discussion of global warming... The usage of self-driving cars... The challenges of feeding a growing population through technological advances in agriculture...! As new research and technology emerge, resulting innovations enter our ever-changing world. How are these innovations communicated to the general public? The mass media is the place where the general population learns of innovations. Students in this colloquium will engage in the analysis of the media's reporting and then the population's reaction to S.T.E.M.'s impact on society, discerning how emerging research and technology are embraced or refused by society via communication and the media's role in construction of a new reality.

The Honors Tradition

Carrie Tomko, MWF 11:50am – 12:40pm

HONOR 340 – 002

In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the Honors at The University of Akron, students who enroll in this colloquium will have the honor to research the history of The Williams Honors College, formerly known as the Honors College and the Honors Program. Using archival historical documents—digital and hardcopy—a timeline of key events will be developed, along with key moments and key people in the history of Honors, key faculty and staff, key alumni, keynote speakers, key events, and key individuals who have propelled The Williams Honors College to academic successes through its 50-year history. The information that is gathered by the students in this colloquium will be used to document the history and aid in celebratory plans for the year 2025.

Democracy, Objectivity and the US Constitution

Nathaniel Blower, MWF 9:40am - 10:30am

HONOR 340- 003

How should we read the United States Constitution? As a 'living document' whose meaning can change and grow alongside changes and growth in American democratic society? Or as something whose meaning is more 'static', more 'objective'? Recently more than ever, perhaps, it seems to be the second option that is preferred by justices of the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). But is it even possible to interpret the Constitution without injecting any life into it? And if it is possible, do the recent decisions of SCOTUS (on abortion and gun control, for instance) actually live up to this ideal? These questions, and a number of related political, social and philosophical questions, will be our focus in this colloquium.

Courageous Conversations Promoting Inclusive Excellence

Sandie Crawford, MW 3:30pm – 4:45 pm

HONOR 340- 004

This course is designed to foster a collaborative and reflective thinking process via discussion and assignments in order to facilitate a better understanding of people from a diversity of perspectives. Students will exhibit culturally responsive practices as they learn about different people and how to honor diversity in society.



Anthropology of Europe

Elena Popa, TTH 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

HONOR 340- 007

What is Europe? What are its cultural, political, and physical boundaries? How can we conceptualize Europe? In this class, we explore Europe, as a modern concept, understood in relation to transformative events that occurred during the 20th century, such as the two World Wars, the dismantling of the Soviet Union, the creation and expansion of the European Union, and the more recent migrant/refugee “crises.” Rather than adopting a country-by-country approach, we will draw on theoretical and ethnographic studies to reshape our perceptions of Europe and explore ways of thinking about it. We will challenge conventional definitions of what it means to be European through debates about nation and nationalism, postcolonialism, and postsocialism. The course will also examine complex dynamics of migration, religion, ethnicity, and more to unravel the fabric of Europe’s cultural, social, and political landscapes. Students will gain a deep understanding of how anthropology and other related social sciences have contributed to our comprehension of Europe’s ever-evolving identity.

The Willpower Superpower: The Epic of LeBron James

Tim Gabel, W 3:05pm – 5:35 pm, Online Synchronous

HONOR 340- 504

This course conceptually focuses on the intersection of psychology and storytelling, more specifically how the dimensions of willpower create self-understanding when life is viewed narratively. In this sense, we think of willpower as an agentic force for not only accomplishing external goals, but also how we, as individuals, can transform our inner selves and society as a collective. While *The Willpower Superpower: The Epic of LeBron James* is naturally about a basketball icon, it is more about how his journey, discovery and application of willpower—for better and worse—informs the development of our own. It is a unique, and surprisingly local, paradigm to analyze these concepts. In fact, the willpower and personal story we all have, when understood and applied, is a force as prodigious as LeBron James' basketball ability.

Winning Combinations in Health Behavior: Combating Obesity

John Roncone, Online Asynchronous

HONOR 340- 505, 506

This social science discipline colloquium examines health behavior in an exploration to combat obesity. Areas that will be carefully examined include: Current obesity trends, assessment of body weight and body composition, etiology of obesity, health and economic consequences of obesity, dietary interventions for obesity prevention and new insights and looking into future insights. We will engage in meaningful online discussions as well as assignments, learning from other's experiences and guidance from the professor, whom has an extensive knowledge in health education and promotion. Our main book will be, *Nutrition and Obesity: Assessment, Management, and Prevention*, by Alexandra G. Kazaks, and Judith S. Stern. Other secondary resources will be provided to the students from the professor. Assignment readings, HW/Labs, behavior change models/theories, online discussions, and other assignments will be assessments utilized in the course. Brightspace will be utilized to deliver this online asynchronous course for content, grades, communication/announcements, communication/class roster and emails, assessments/assignments, and communications/discussions and course materials/calendar. Students will leave the course with a sound knowledge of health behavior and exploring areas in combating the obesity epidemic in the U.S.



Winning Combinations in Health Behavior: Exploring Health Priorities

John Roncone, T 5:15 pm – 6:30 pm, Hybrid

HONOR 340- 801

This social science discipline colloquium examines health behavior exploring health priority areas, such as, physical activity, stress management, and other dimensions of health-related physical fitness. The priority areas explored will be beneficial to students reflecting on their own health behavior(s), quality of life/healthy life years/lifestyle management. Students will leave the course with a sound knowledge of key health components related to mind/body health, research as well as health behavior models/theories.