HON 1010 Ideas and Society Descriptions by Instructor

**Glenn Sheldon**

**About the Course:**

My sections of HON 1010 take a historical view of the twentieth century to the present. I agree with Eric Hobsbawm, author of our text *The Age of Extremes*: "There is no getting away from the past." Rather than taking a strictly “name-year-event” approach common to historians, we look at the ideas that shape those events as well as investigate their relevance to our present. The course mantra, by Ludwig von Mises, is: “Ideas inspire action. Action shapes human history.” This gives you the overall structure of this class, *Ideas and Society.* “By investigating and interrogating past events, students can more effectively think and express opinions in terms of and about the present and its concerns” (Hobsbawm). Additionally, this is global history restored to its “proper central place, neither within the humanities nor the natural and mathematical sciences, nor separated from them, but essential to both” (Hobsbawm). I teach from this perspective coming from a background in the editing of political journalism, so I closely follow geopolitics, current national and global events, and culture.

Much of global history in the twentieth century revolves around tensions between capitalism and communism; thus, we begin with reading *The Communist Manifesto.* The course material ends a few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. A cornerstone of the course is undoubtedly student research presentations, but what is most unique is the incorporation of poetry, where possible. As a published poet and a scholar of modern/contemporary American poetry, I carefully address students’ deep seated “post-traumatic poetry disorder” from high school poetry classes and even the grades before high school. Not only do we learn a revised way to read history, but also we learn a new way to read poetry.

**About the Instructor:**

Before becoming a humanities professor, I was an editor of political journalism; in my career, I have covered many different areas from metro-Boston’s culture scene to Milwaukee’s African-American community, Chicago’s performance art community to Pittsburgh’s LGBTQA+ community, the Illinois state legislature to Latin American politics. After my career took me to the University of Pittsburgh, I changed careers and entered academia. I am a published poet and scholar of modern and contemporary American poetry. Coming from a direct-action activism background, I am now a leader and activist in The University of Toledo’s LGBTQA+ community. In my personal life, I support animal rights and environmentalism, as well as travel often to Chicago – in particular, to indulge my “culture vulture” temperament.
Daniel McInnis

About the Course:
HON 1010 is an incredible opportunity for our first-year students to actively explore contemporary issues and theories. The main goal is to encourage students to become more visually literate by the end of the term. We explore issues of representation within photography, meaning in visual imagery, and the concepts behind valuation (art, labor, and ourselves). We also explore the act of looking, and how image interpretation informs our attitudes toward consumption and the environment.

Our sections of HON 1010 are unique in that we want to make sure the students have a proper balance of participation and knowledge gathering. One of our goals is to make sure each student enjoys a safe space for discussion surrounding timely issues. Covering areas that involve visualities, such as photography, film, and social media, allow students a voice from the “get-go.” As they’ve already had experiences with these types of media, another goal is to refine and expand the awareness they hold.

About the Instructor:
My undergraduate degree focused on both film and photography (both production and theory). Motion pictures (especially documentaries), hold a special place in my heart. My graduate work focused more on still photo images, and I have continued as a practicing photographer during my mid-career. I’ve been fortunate to show my work nationally and internationally, including a recent five-museum tour conducted by the Smithsonian Institution’s National Portrait Gallery. I continue to work with the Jesup Scott Honors College on UToldeo’s Visual Literacy initiatives.

My outside interests overlap with my practice and teaching. I love keeping up with best practices in teaching, especially as they relate to technology. Finding places where art, communication, and science overlap is much more of a focus since coming to UToldeo. I have amateur interests in both astronomy and meteorology, and have a deep respect for the natural sciences. When I can, I love to travel, and to spend time with my wonderful family.
Mary Templin

About the Course:

The theme of my HON 1010 course is “Who Am I and What Am I Doing Here?” It will focus on questions of identity and purpose, both in a larger, philosophical sense and in terms of our own actual lives. Human beings have been asking these questions for thousands of years; we will explore some of the many answers that have been proposed and will offer some answers of our own.

Starting with some of the creation myths that different cultures have produced to explain human origins, in the first half of the class we will read and discuss a variety of philosophical, religious, scientific, and literary texts from the past that offer competing models of human nature and explanations of human behavior. In the second half of the class, we will turn to more contemporary aspects of identity and purpose, including gender fluidity, studies of how the brain works, and the role of technology and media in the development of identity. We will also consider how all these theories apply to our own sense of self and the decisions with which we are currently faced. Students will write two short papers as well as weekly responses to the reading and will participate in a variety of small-group activities and class discussions.

About the Instructor:

I am a Senior Lecturer and have been working in the JSCH since 2002. I earned my Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializing in 19th-century American Literature. I am the author of Panic Fiction: Women and Antebellum Economic Crisis (2014), a study of novels about economic panic and loss by American female authors of the 1830s-1850s. In addition to teaching HON 1010, I teach HON 1020 (Innovation and Society), HON 2020 (Multi. Lit.: The North American Experience), HON 2030 (Multi. Lit.: The Non-European World), and HON 4950/4960 seminars on Utopia and the Harlem Renaissance.

In my free time, I like to travel (mostly in the U.S. and preferably by train), do puzzles (word, number, and jigsaw), garden, spend time with family, and, of course, read.
Leslie Chambers

About the Course:
My HON 1010 sections explore a range of theories concerning what it means to be human. Through close reading, writing, and discussion, we work together to understand each theoretical argument we read as well as what each of those arguments reveals about the human condition. Because close reading, writing, and discussion are so foundational to work in the humanities and to this course in particular, participation and journaling make up half of the points my students earn toward their final grade.

One of the things that makes my sections of 1010 unique is that, in addition to reading texts, we also watch a few episodes from science-fiction television series, using them as primary-source examples as we practice applying the theories we’ve discussed to analyze the human behavior exhibited in them. These exemplars help prepare my students for one of the major projects of the course: a group presentation involving the analysis of a set of characters from a film or television show, using theoretical concepts from our reading as lenses and reflecting on the real-world implications of the story.

About the Instructor:
I have been teaching with the JSHC since 2015 and mainly teach HON 1010 and HON 1020. Prior to teaching at UToldeo, I taught Composition I and Composition II for six years at The Ohio State University. I hold Bachelor’s degrees in Philosophy, English, and Music from UToldeo and a Master’s as well as a doctorate in English from OSU. My research interests center around rhetorical theory and analysis, including feminist and Burkean rhetoric, rhetorical grammar, and the rhetoric of narrative in general as well as science fiction and fantasy narrative in particular.

In addition to teaching for the Honors College, I also work as a copyeditor and as an AP Exam Reader. In my free time, I enjoy reading (with a goal of at least 100 books a year!), watching the latest critically acclaimed television, playing complicated board games, and gathering together my family and friends as often as possible.
**Alysha Cook**

**About the Instructor:**
My sections of HON 1010 will focus on the idea of the monstrous. Despite the simple title, monsters are often complex, transforming right along with society. Furthermore, the notion of monsters and the monstrous challenge us. We will explore the ways that fictional monsters reflect society’s ideas about others versus ourselves. After evaluating various forms of literature and media, we might question what it means to be human and understand how cultures create fictional monsters as ways to define what it means to be civilized.

Students who are enrolled in my sections of HON 1010 guide the course by creating the questions and topics that will help us navigate each class period’s discussion connected to a reading or movie/documentary, allowing them to create an environment that is both influenced by their personal and academic interests and is challenging. It is the goal of these discussions to encourage your peers to think about new ideas and gain new perspectives. While I often bring ideas and questions to the table during these discussions, successful and meaningful discussions flourish when you and your peers take the lead.

**About the Instructor:**
I have been a Rocket since 2006, when I began as a College Credit Plus student, enrolled in both high school and college courses. I went on to earn my B.A. and M.A. in English Literature at UToldeo and haven't left since! Along with being an instructor in the JSCH, I am also the Programming Coordinator for the Honors Learning Community. I sincerely consider UToldeo my second home! As a student, I was particularly interested in works from the Medieval and Renaissance periods, focusing my writing and research on gender, marginalized peoples, and mental illness. While I certainly bring those ideas to the classroom, I am also interested in all things pop culture: anything from music to movies and memes. As a proud Toledoan, I also make an effort to help students who participate in the Honors Learning Community discover the wonders of Toledo, including Toledo Symphony Orchestra concerts, Toledo Mud Hens and Walleye games, the Metroparks, the Toledo Zoo, and much more.

Outside of work, I spend a majority of my time with my family – my husband Patrick, who I actually met in a Shakespeare course here at UToldeo and who is also a teacher, and our one-year-old daughter, Willow. As a family, we enjoy listening, singing, and dancing to our large record collection and spending as much time outside as possible. If I’m not spending time with my family, you can find me painting, reading books about the history of food, baking, or binge-watching entirely too many shows at a time.
Catherine Chengges

About the Course:

My section of HON 1010 is titled, “Intertextuality: A Twice-told Tale.” We will look at pairings of works that tell the same story from different points of view. Just as in life, this approach reminds us that our personal perspective influences opinions and judgments, which are often challenged and even changed when someone else introduces a different perspective. An example of one of the course pairings is the Old English epic *Beowulf* (circa 1000 CE), which includes the hero’s victory over the mindless monster Grendel, and John Gardner’s *Grendel* (1971), which tells the background, thoughts, and motives of that monster. The course’s other pairings will be via a specified combination of books and film versions, which students will view outside of class. In addition to discussing the material, students will be required to write weekly e-mails about our material, to do an in-class presentation on an assigned pairing, to write a research paper on that assigned pairing, to meet for a one-on-one conference about the draft of that research paper, and to participate in regular in-class group workshops.

About the Instructor:

I have been teaching for the Honors College at UToldeo since January 1999. Since 1993, I have been an administrator in the Department of English Language and Literature. Too, since 1997, I have compiled the annual “Checklist of Welty Scholarship” for the internationally-circulated *Eudora Welty Review*, which focuses on the 20th-century Mississippi writer (1909-2001). In 2014, I was awarded a College of Languages, Literature & Social Sciences Dean’s Recognition. More recently in 2019, I was again honored – this time with an Outstanding Staff Award for my work as Administrative Coordinator in the Department of English Language and Literature.