



Summer Honors Institute

July 10-16, 2022

Course Descriptions

Honors Core Course

Every student will participate in the Core Course each day.

Public Good versus Private Investment? A Debatable Point

Kathy Clarke (JMU Libraries) and Dr. Michael Davis (Office of the President/Honors College)

Students who participate in this course will develop critical arguments that explore a debate over the future of a fictitious public park. A private investor has expressed interest in acquiring the park to locate her newly acquired company's corporate headquarters. The new company will offer lucrative jobs in the local community. Students will form teams to explore the pros and cons of each possible choice.

Subject Area Courses

Offered twice each day during the week for 90-minutes each. Students will choose a selection of classes that fit their interests and goals.

Philosophy & Religion – God on the Defensive?

Dr. Mark Piper

I begin my presentation by noting that religious belief has been becoming less popular, especially in the last few decades. I then consider a variety of philosophical reasons for why this might be the case. I hope that the presentation results in an engaging and robust discussion of the philosophical arguments for and against belief in God.

Psychology - Decision Making 101

Dr. Daniel Holt

We will explore well-established factors that influence our everyday choice behaviors as they relate to the ideas of self-control and impulsivity. We will end the session with a focus on strategies we can all easily employ to improve our longer-term success in virtually any aspect of life.

Political Science - Identity vs. Democracy: Competing Visions of the Post-Cold War World

Dr. John Hulsey

The 20th Century was dominated by ideological contests on a global scale, but how do we understand geopolitics since the end of the Cold War? We'll discuss some of the big ideas and

evaluate for ourselves which ideas do the most to explain the most important events of the last 30 years.

Honors College; Interdisciplinary Liberal Studies – Volunteer Spark!

Dr. Alysia Davis

Volunteers are the lifeblood of nonprofits. Volunteers can make or break an organization's ability to make meaningful progress towards their mission, but volunteer management is a tricky balancing act. We'll talk about how to empower, retain and reward volunteers. This is great content for students interested in nonprofit careers, and/or those currently engaged in service activities/clubs/orgs in their school or community.

Economics – Money, Debt, and Higher Education

Dr. Andre Neveu

Debt plays an important role in our modern economy. Have you ever wondered how money came about or what it means? Is our government on the edge of bankruptcy? Does one always have to repay their debts? We will explore these questions and more in this short-form course designed to introduce you to the concepts of money, banking,



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and credit. These ideas will be applied to a short advocacy exercise related to higher education, tuition, and student loan debt. While you can probably see how money and debt play an obvious and important role in economics and finance, they also play a key role in the study of politics, psychology, literature, and art. We invite you to come learn a little about how money and finance affect your world.

Sport and Recreation Management – *What Do You Think When You Think Sport and Recreation?*

Dr. Emeka Anaza

This session will introduce the foundational areas of both the sport and recreation industries to students. Students will partake in group activities that will lead them to understand how their passion/interest for sport and recreation can help them better conceptualize careers in the industries.

Political Science - *Religion and Politics: The Free Exercise Clause*

Dr. Martin Cohen

They say religion and politics are two things you don't discuss in polite company. Well, I teach a whole class on them, and today we will explore the two subjects through a combination of lecture, group discussion, and group presentations. Our focus will be on the Free Exercise Clause, which can be found in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Some of the most controversial issues in American politics today hinge on the interpretation of this section of our founding documents.

Computer Science – *Python Programming*

Dr. Chris Mayfield

Discover a new world of creativity and fun with computer programming. Using Python code, you and a partner will program Finch robots to do a dance, avoid obstacles, and react to light. We will

sharpen your problem-solving skills and introduce you to the basic building blocks of computing. Come see why Python is the most popular language for teaching introductory computer science at top-ranked universities. No experience necessary... anyone can learn!

Honors College – *Global Citizenship through Self, Others, and the Larger World*

Dr. Felix Wang

This session explores the concept of global citizenship by examining interactions with the self, others and the larger world. Students will have the opportunity to identify how our worldviews are shaped by beliefs and values that are influenced by our environment. Students will participate in activities and dialogues on the construct of global identity and citizenship.

Independent Scholars – *Demystifying Creativity*

Dr. Phil Frana

Creativity can be learned! This class will show you how to nurture the hidden habits of highly creative people. Along the way, we'll dispel some common myths about creativity, learn about the latest scientific research on the subject, and discuss the limits of standardized tests of creativity and intelligence.

Geology and Environmental Science – *How are Humans Becoming a Geologic Force?*

Dr. Ángel Garcia

During this short course we are going to be discussing the human contribution to important systems in our planet such as: the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere. This course is designed to provide you with a comprehensive introduction to the debated topic of the Anthropocene (as a theoretical framework) and the introduction as a geological time unit. Topics include the origin of the scientific debate, humans



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within the scale of geologic time, human influence of geological processes, and climate change, among others.

Center for Global Engagement – *Storytelling for Change*

Dr. Vesna Hart

Get to know your peers through story exchange! We will use methodology of Narrative4, a global nonprofit harnessing the power of story exchange to equip and embolden young adults to improve their lives, communities, and world. You will be asked to prepare to tell your story, and then exchange it with another person. Never heard of the story exchange? [This short 3-minute video will help.](#)

Student Leadership Center – *Leaders Lead, Don't They?*

Michael McCleve

Quick, define leadership. Seems simple enough, right? After all, leaders lead, don't they? In this class session, you will both explore and be exposed to concepts and definitions of leadership that may not have ever crossed your mind before. Through interactive learning activities, dialogue, and discussion we will wrestle together with the fundamentals of what is required to change others' lives and change the communities they live in.

College of Visual and Performing Arts – *Drawing Down the Moon: A Global Survey of Spirituality in Art and Architecture*

Dr. Wren Stevens

Human societies create spaces and objects that symbolically connect the world of the living to that of the ancestors and the gods. This session will explore several global sites and cultures to better understand and appreciate the diversity of the human experience in terms of one of the most fundamental questions, "Why?"

Communication Studies - *Decoding Culture in Family Communication: Telling Stories of Trouble*

Dr. Carlos Aleman

In the animated film, "Encanto," members of the Madrigal family know something about Bruno that nobody is supposed to talk about. The truth is that in most families there are often stories told about the time a family member got into trouble. In this 90-minute learning activity and conversation, we focus on stories told within families about trouble or embarrassing situations to explore how they communicate family values of culture, identity, and role behavior.

Philosophy & Religion - *What's in the Word 'Feminist'? Philosophy & Feminism*

Dr. Pia Antolic-Piper

What's in the term 'feminist?' In the word 'woman' or 'identity' or 'oppression'? Even though, according to recent polls, many people view 'feminism' as having achieved its goals and some people consider it as harmful to society, recent controversies about the feminist movement, women's rights over their bodies, or identity, to name just a few, seem to prove otherwise. These public debates suggest that people will do well to come to terms with these controversies and articulate their own positions on these matters – individually, collectively, and ideally in dialogue with other. In this subject area class, you will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning activities on feminism and feminist philosophy and learn more about these controversies and some of their philosophical underpinnings.