

Spring & Summer 2027

Honors College Seminars

1 First-year Seminars (HON 1515)

Living Mindfulness

Course number: HON 1515-101

Gen Ed: First Year Seminar

Instructor: PJ Nelsen

Instructor email: nelsenpj@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 9:30 - 10:45, AH 186

Course description: This seminar invites students to explore mindfulness as a way of living rather than as a social media theme or a stress-reduction technique. Through guided meditation, reflective writing, dialogue, and collaborative inquiry, students will practice paying attention to their inner lives while also developing the capacity to listen deeply, speak authentically, and stay present in moments of tension. The course emphasizes learning by doing: students will experiment with meditative practices, explore how mindfulness influences being in community, and engage in both research and collaborative inquiry into the ethics and practices of mindfulness. Students will be expected to develop a meditation practice both inside and outside of class. Students will also participate in a semester-long project where they meet weekly with a small group of peers to dive deeper into the mindfulness practices we explore together. This seminar will be one in which we spend a lot of time talking, experimenting, meditating, and deeply listening to one another. I hope this nontraditional format will be engaging. Our aim is not just to think about what "living mindfulness" might mean. We will explore through experience and live mindfulness.

Teach It!, Love It!, LEAD It!

Course number: HON 1515-102

Gen Ed: First Year Seminar

Instructor: Paige Sturgill

Instructor email: mathesonsturgillcp@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 9:30 - 10:45, AH 085

Course description: Teach It, Love it, LEAD It! will allow participants to explore an understanding of varying aspects of leadership and how it applies to the role of a teacher within a school. Using current research and frameworks, students will examine teacher

leadership and engage in opportunities to promote teacher leadership within themselves and with others. ***This course is restricted to members of the Appalachian Community of Education Scholars (ACES) program who are also in the Honors College.**

2 Sophomore Seminars (HON 251X)

For students with catalog years beginning before Fall 2025, HON 2516 and HON 2517 will substitute for HON 2515 in your Honors and General Education program of study (as a General Education Liberal Studies Experience course).

Shakespeare on Trial: Shakespeare's use of the Law and how it impacts the Authorship Question

Course number: HON 2515-101

Gen Ed: Humanities and Its Systems

Instructor: Garrett Jackson

Instructor email: jacksonwg@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 2:00 - 3:15, AH 161

Course Description: Two-thirds of Shakespeare's plays have trial scenes, and many deal specifically with lawyers, judges, courts, and constructs/points of law. This class will explore the legal issues and aspects of Shakespeare's works and discover parallels with many legal and social questions of the present day. The Elizabethan age was just as litigious as our own, and Shakespeare was familiar with the language and procedures of court. This course will examine the ways in which Shakespeare used the law for dramatic effect and incorporated the passion for justice into his great tragedies and comedies and considers the modern legal relevance of his work. The course will also use this analysis to delve into the profiling of the type of person who could accomplish such masterful works.

Art and the Brain

Course number: HON 2515-102

Gen Ed: LSE / Humanities and Its Systems

Instructor: Mark C Zrull

Instructor email: zrullmc@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 12:30 - 1:45, AH 161

Course description: We can sculpt and paint, compose and make music, choreograph and dance. Brain processes allow us to do these things. We see and appreciate collages and watercolors, hear and "are moved by" concertos and rock-and-roll, watch and appreciate ballet or modern. Our brain processes produce these experiences. So, we will ask about the process of making "art" as well as learn about and discuss brain processes that let people

do art. We'll also consider the process of perceiving and appreciating art as well as investigate and talk about neural processes that let people have those experiences. In the style of a seminar, I hope we can gain and assess firsthand information about doing and experiencing some of the arts as well as make a serious effort to investigate and discuss some of the related brain structures and neural processes.

Competence @ AppState for Convergence (COM A CON): Storytelling Frameworks for Teams, Data, and Big Ideas

Course number: HON 2515-103

Gen Ed: Humanities and Its Systems

Instructor: Jason Cury

Instructor email: curryjm2@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: Wednesday 5:00 - 7:30, RCOE 229

Course Description: What if you could create a character, build a team, enter an imagined universe, and use your big idea to help solve a real-world problem?

In this immersive Honors seminar, students learn how convergence teams bring together different forms of knowledge, perspectives, technologies, and ways of knowing. The course begins with interactive foundations in convergence, team science, critical and creative thinking, communication, and storytelling.

Students then enter an educational fan-fiction laboratory. They create characters, assemble teams, and investigate a fictional universe facing a complex system-wide crisis. Using Paul-Elder critical thinking, SEE-I, team-based learning, CATME, Qualtrics, OSCTII, Data Storytelling, digital media, and peer feedback, students analyze the fictional problem and design an imaginative response.

The course then moves from fan fiction to real-world inquiry. Teams select a convergence or wicked problem connected to science, technology, the environment, organizations, communities, or professional life. The semester culminates in a comic convention-inspired showcase where teams present their characters, storyworld, team, data, problem, and proposed response.

This is a course about bold ideas, creative teams, and learning what becomes possible when people think and build together.

Climate Wayfinding: Discovering Your Path in Climate Action

Course number: HON 2516-102

Gen Ed: Sustainability and Climate Literacy

Instructor: Laura England

Instructor email: englandle@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 9:30 - 10:45, AH 162

Course description: The enormity and complexity of global climate change can make it hard for those who want to make a difference to know where to start. That said, creating a safe climate future is an “all hands on deck” situation, and each of us has an important role to play that can bring us into community and help us create purposeful lives. *Climate Wayfinding* is a navigational process for clarifying your path in positive climate action that was developed by climate visionary Dr. Katharine Wilkinson and is being implemented on university campuses around the country. Students in this course will explore the *Climate Wayfinding* program, which includes learning about the wide, cross-disciplinary range of climate solutions and accelerators of change. Students will create a vision for their own unique climate engagement path and work together to practice planning for positive climate action that can be done in community. The course’s ultimate goal is to empower students to chart a course for meaningful climate engagement, now and into the future.

From Picture Books to Dystopia: Youth Literature and the Climate Imagination

Course number: HON 2516-103

Gen Ed: Sustainability and Climate Literacy

Instructor: Jewel Davis

Instructor email: davisja5@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 11:00 - 12:15, AH 162

Course Description: How do stories shape the way we imagine climate futures, environmental responsibility, and collective care? This seminar explores how youth literature, from picture books to dystopian young adult fiction, helps readers understand climate change, environmental justice, and human relationships with the natural world. Through literary analysis, scientific and environmental readings, collaborative discussion, visual journaling, and systems mapping, students will examine how narratives communicate complex environmental challenges across childhood and adolescence.

Together, we will explore topics such as climate change, environmental inequity, climate migration, infrastructure collapse, Indigenous ecological knowledge, and community resilience through picture books, speculative fiction, and contemporary nonfiction. Throughout the semester, students will maintain a visual journal that combines observation, reflection, mapping, sketching, and multimodal analysis. For the final project, students will design a project that helps others engage with climate issues through research, storytelling, and creative communication.

What Do We Owe Each Other?

Course number: HON 2517-101

Gen Ed: Intercultural Literacy

Instructor: Ellen Lamont

Instructor email: lamontec@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 3:30-4:45, App Hall 161

Course description: What do we owe each other? The question of individual liberty versus civic duty is at the heart of many of the debates that currently polarize us in the United States. But this question also speaks to a larger issue of what it means to invest in the common good and why this is of value to society. This course will investigate both the moral obligations of citizenship and the social scientific data that shape current thinking on the benefits of public investment and collective problem solving. In doing so, we will draw on theories, concepts, and readings from both the humanities and social sciences, including philosophy, sociology, political science, history, environmental studies, international relations, law, and public health. You will have the opportunity to ask and consider big questions about your role in society, investigate debates about pressing topics of our time, including public education, public health, the welfare state, immigration, and the environment, and develop and present your own avenues of inquiry about what we owe each other as members of a society. In the process, we will consider our societal obligations at the local, national, and international levels. This course will enable you to evaluate and present answers to some of society's most pressing social problems.

3 Junior Seminars (HON 351X)

For students with catalog years beginning before Fall 2025, HON 3516 and HON 3517 will substitute for HON 3515 in your Honors and General Education program of study (as a General Education Liberal Studies Experience course).

Tycoons, Titans, Founders, Financiers and Blaggards - ONLINE

Course number: HON 3515-101

Gen Ed: Humanities and Its Systems

Instructor: Leigh Dunston

Instructor email: dunstonle@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 9:30-10:45, **ONLINE**

Course description: This course is anchored in the idea that the well-informed person should be familiar with the broad business history of America. The format for the course is to utilize select portions of the biographies of the most impactful persons in American

business history. Through those lives and stories, the student will learn the principles and history of business as it evolved in America and tangentially in the world from 1770 through 2008. This will be a broad overview focusing on the exploits, successes, failures and the ethical and leadership challenges of persons such as Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Jay Gould, Diamond Jim Brady, J.P. Morgan, Henry Ford, Franklin Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, Paul Volcker, Alan Greenspan, Warren Buffett, Sandy Weill, Bill Gates, Jack Welch, and Steve Jobs in an effort to provide a broad contextual framework within which to begin to know, understand and appreciate the history of the most dynamic business environment in the history of the world. **This course is offered synchronously ONLINE.**

Crossroads: Deals with the Devil in Popular Culture

Course number: HON 3515-102

Gen Ed: Humanities and Its Systems

Instructor: Derek Davidson

Instructor email: davidsonds@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 2:00 - 3:15, CW 6A

Course description: What lies behind the idea of “selling your soul?” This course traces ‘bargains with the devil’ as represented in sacred texts, fiction, drama, film, and music. Students will read and watch a wide selection of materials from the Book of Genesis to Doctor Faustus to “The Crossroads Blues.” In-class writing sessions, discussions, and experiential learning assignments will help students analyze the human tendency to engage in transactions while postponing payment for immediate, short term goals.

Meditations on the Past

Course number: HON 3515-103

Gen Ed: Humanity and Its Systems

Instructor: Brad Phillis

Instructor email: phillisbj@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: TR 11:00 - 12:15, AH 161

Course description: By the time you read this course description, I might be dead (though I’m not planning to be!): that is, I may be a thing of the past. Our lives and experiences are constantly in a process of slipping irretrievably into the past. But what exactly **is** the past? It’s not a place, though we do write fiction about visiting it. Is it a time, or an idea, or an illusion? Or something else entirely? In this course, we will explore the concept of the past, trying first to determine what precisely it is and then to what degree we can know it. We will draw on insights from physics, literature, history, drama, psychology, and philosophy as we wrestle with the past and the degree to which we are beholden to it.

Nature and Wellbeing

Course number: HON 3516-101

Gen Ed: Sustainability and Climate Literacy

Instructor: Denise Levy

Instructor email: levydl@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: MW 2:00 - 3:15, AH 161

Course description: This interdisciplinary course explores the relationship between nature and mindfulness, health, well-being, and individual and community resilience. Together we will examine how nature is defined and experienced, the role it plays in our own lives, and what can emerge when spending time outdoors. We will also explore how connections to the natural world foster community building, healing, and resilience.

Through critical discussion and reflection, we will review topics such as equitable access to nature, efforts to make outdoor spaces inclusive, the social and environmental impacts of “natural” disasters, and innovative approaches to preservation and conservation. Students will also investigate a range of nature-based practices and interventions that support health and well-being, and will have the opportunity to explore areas of personal interest such as ecopsychology, horticulture therapy, herbal medicine, indigenous traditions and rituals, and more.

Alongside theoretical discussions and inquiries, this class emphasizes experiential learning through individual and group outdoor activities. Students will engage directly with natural environments as they experience firsthand how nature can support personal and community well-being and development. This will include writing and following personal nature prescriptions as well as visits to our campus labyrinth, university nature preserve, local gardens or farms, and other outdoor spaces. Through these experiences, students will cultivate deeper ongoing relationships with the natural world and develop individual and community resilience.

King Arthur (Required Spring Break Study Abroad – Apply through OIP)

Course number: HON 3517-101

Gen Ed: Intercultural Literacy

Instructors: Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand and Tirumular Narayanan

Instructor email: hellenbranda@appstate.edu, narayanantc@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: MW 3:30 - 4:45, AH 162 + Spring Break travel to Great Britain.

Learn more and apply: https://appstate.via-trm.com/program_brochure/38905

Registration Note: Students must apply and be accepted to the program to be able to add this course to their schedule. While the application deadline is December 1, students will not be able to register for the course until their application is approved, so we encourage students to submit applications for review in advance of early Spring 2027 registration (beginning Nov 2 for seniors).

Course description: In this course, we are going to explore the legends and the figure of King Arthur that have fascinated audiences across time, across genres (epic, novel, film, art, music), and across national boundaries.

The story was originally part of the heroic “history” of Britain (Geoffrey of Monmouth). The legends captivated poets and audiences across Europe; new versions of Arthur’s story appeared in France and Germany and Scandinavia in the thirteenth century, giving rise to a new genre of literature that became known as Arthurian romance. The versions have not stopped appearing since then! For Thomas Malory, the story of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table offered a model for how kings and courtly society should be in 15th century England. Later, Alfred Lord Tennyson used Arthurian legends to create a vision for Victorian society, while TH White did the same for a Great Britain (with modern Europe) that was standing on the brink of a second world war and in need of leadership to defend its values against its enemies. Finally, the Arthurian narrative has provided fertile ground for modern story telling in film from the *Sword in the Stone* to *King Arthur* to *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. And, of course, no modern discussion of Arthurian Legends would be complete without Monty Python and *Spamalot*.

Though there are elements of the legends that remain constant through time, each new writer interprets the Arthurian story anew for his/her own audience in a unique time and place. Thus, the legends of Arthur not only tell us about the Round Table and the Grail, but they also reflect our visions of ourselves. Furthermore, these legends reveal our hopes for the future, as they continually re-invent for us the story of the once and future King (*rex quondam et futurus*).

This Faculty-Led Study Abroad Course includes required travel to Great Britain during Spring Break at a cost of approximately **\$4,700** (includes round trip airfare, lodging, in-country travel, and museum entry/ activities).

Sensing Culture: Visual and Multimodal Studies

Course number: HON 3517-102

Gen Ed: Intercultural Literacy

Instructor: Garrett McDowell

Instructor email: mcdowellga@appstate.edu

Meeting times and location: MW 11:00 - 12:15, AH 161

Course description: In this course, we will explore the history of ethnographic filmmaking; visual and sensory research methods; authorship, power, and representation of culture, and indigenous and activist media. Students will critically examine the role of the visual, as well as other sensory modes, in communicating culture. The course will be experiential; students will make photographs, films, dance, or other multimodal or autoethnographic expressions of culture as an exercise in relating to other humans and as contemplative practice. Students will propose, research, and develop their own individual visual or multimodal project. These projects will either be studies of visual or other sensory aspects of culture, or they will utilize visual or multimodal mediums to communicate about culture. Final projects will involve the production or study of visual (or other sensory) modes of communication including any of the following: film, photography, dance, media, new media, material culture, art, dance, body art, and/or body language. **This Honors College seminar can be designated to meet the International Education requirement as long as students pick an internationally focused theme to explore as part of the course.**

Tentative Summer 2027 Honors College Faculty-Led-Study-Abroad Seminar Offerings

These are tentative offerings. Each has a minimum enrollment and the course cannot be offered if that minimum enrollment is not met. Also, note that these are summer courses and therefore you will be responsible for paying summer tuition in addition to the listed program fee. Read the cost and funding tab of the program website carefully to determine if airfare is included in the program fee (some trips include airfare and others do not).

Peacebuilding and the Arts in Ireland and Northern Ireland (HON 2515 + HON 3517)

Travel to: Ireland and Northern Ireland

FLEAP leaders: Belinda Walzer and Jessica Martell

Instructor emails: walzerbl@appstate.edu, martelljl@appstate.edu

Description: Our program in Ireland and Northern Ireland explores how societies once divided by violence use literature and the arts to facilitate self-expression, peace, and reconciliation. We will visit peace walls, museums, and other cultural sites in Dublin, Belfast, and Derry/Londonderry. We will also take a grassroots peacebuilding workshop and travel to the iconic Giant's Causeway on the north Atlantic coast. Against a backdrop of stunning scenery and historic architecture, students will witness how legacies of conflict are etched into everyday spaces, such as the political murals of Belfast's sectarian

neighborhoods, the elegant curves of Derry's Peace Bridge, and Dublin's General Post Office, the site of the 1916 Easter Rising. In post-conflict societies where there may be no shared stories about what happened, it is crucial that we listen to multiple viewpoints, dwell in gray areas, and acknowledge differing opinions even in the search for consensus. Students will be encouraged to think critically about the power of narrative, learn about the delicate process of peacebuilding, and appreciate the importance of trust and tolerance in divided political settings.

Learn more and apply: https://appstate.via-trm.com/program_brochure/22477

Meaning and Fantasy in Japan (HON 2517 + HON 3515)

Travel to: Japan

FLEAP leaders: Jack Kwong and Cuong Mai

Instructor emails: kwongi@appstate.edu, maict@appstate.edu

Description: This study abroad program explores the themes of meaning and fantasy through the lenses of philosophy and religious studies. The program has two main objectives. The first is to examine some central philosophical problems related to the nature of meaning and fantasy, and study how these phenomena shape our identities and contribute to human flourishing. The second is to investigate these twin themes in the context of Modern Japanese society, culture, and religion. Particular attention will be paid to how meaning and fantasy can explain social and cultural phenomena in Modern Japan, such as literature, popular media, internet culture, cosplay, fantasy, sports fandom, and renewed interests in the occult and spiritualism, and religious apocalypticism.

Program Details: <https://www.cuongtmai.org/japan-study-abroad/program-description>

Tentative Itinerary: <https://www.cuongtmai.org/japan-study-abroad/itinerary-2027>

Learn more and apply: https://appstate.via-trm.com/program_brochure/31325

Experience the Past and Present (HON 2515 + HON 3517)

Travel to: London, England

FLEAP leaders: Paulette Marty and John Marty

Instructor emails: martypjw@appstate.edu, martyjt@appstate.edu

Description: In this program, we will study London in the past and present. One course will focus on what it was like to live in the city at the turn of the 17th century. We will examine this place through the lens of acting troupes who lived and worked in it at the time, because actors interact with and tell the stories of people from all walks of life, so are a valuable social group for this sort of inquiry. The second course will explore how human experiences are intentionally crafted and interpreted across different cultural contexts in contemporary London. In visits to museums, historic sites, theatrical performances, street performances, sporting events, walking tours, and other cultural events, we will examine

how storytelling, spatial composition, and audience response can shape our sense of place, identity, and engagement.

Learn more and preliminary program application:

<https://martypjw.wixsite.com/ukstudytour>

Additional information and OIP application:

https://appstate.via-trm.com/program_brochure/38393

Culture and Arts in Vienna (HON 2517 + HON 3515)

Travel to: Vienna, Austria

FLEAP leaders: Reeves Shulstad and Alexandra Sterling-Hellenbrand

Instructor emails: shulstader@appstate.edu, hellenbranda@appstate.edu

Description: This summer study abroad program, Culture and the Arts in Vienna, consists of two interdisciplinary honors courses that focus on the art, literature, and music of Vienna from around 1700 to the present. Special attention will be given to fin de siècle Vienna (1880-1917), as the effects of that time still shape the cultural life of the modern city. Students will examine Vienna's unique urban landscape as well as its rich artistic, literary, political, and scientific traditions through numerous texts and site visits. In addition, day-long excursions to the concentration camp memorial at Mauthausen, the Baroque Monastery at Melk, and Schloss Esterházy in Eisenstadt are included in the program.

Learn more and apply: https://appstate.via-trm.com/program_brochure/23540