



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

University Honors Program

Big Brother: Dead or Alive?

Everett Akam

The 1930s and 40s witnessed the rise of an entirely unprecedented evil in the history of humanity—the totalitarian state. With their slave labor and death camps, systems of mass surveillance, and murderous impulses beyond anything the world had ever seen, the Nazi and Soviet regimes plunged the world into a nightmare abyss of madness and horror.

What monstrous evil produced “Big Brother,” the dark presence in George Orwell’s monumental novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*? Is Big Brother alive today in the reincarnated form of Islamist terrorists? Or perhaps even in the modern surveillance state erected to protect us from Al Qaeda? These questions, and others, will be explored through such classic literature as Orwell’s *Animal Farm* and *1984*, Arthur Koestler’s *Darkness at Noon*, as well as other germinal works by authors who each grappled with the persistence of unparalleled evil in the modern world.

Philosophy in Children’s Literature

Constance DeVereaux

Children are natural philosophers in their wonder of the world. Their fresh, insightful, and often sophisticated answers to perennial questions give new perspective to adults as well. In this course we look at philosophy through children’s and young adult literature; everything from picture books to popular teen and young adult novels. The aim is to explore philosophical themes, their use in young people’s literature, and how both of these intersect to reveal significant themes in everyday life

Sustainable Societies

Robyn Slayton-Martin

Why do societies flourish or fail? *Sustainable Societies* is an HON 191 course that examines the influences between the natural, socio-economic, political and cultural landscapes on different societies, both globally and locally, historically and now and how those influences shape a society's success. We'll also analyze how controversial issues facing the United States today may impact our own success in the future.

Students will be challenged to think in new ways as well as to develop advanced skills in reading and writing; a service learning project will be a component of the course grade.

Fears, Hopes and Desires

Kerri Quinn

The Good, The Bad, The Ugly: Writing and Reading about Our Hopes, Fears and Desires. In this class, we will contextualize the themes of fear and hope as we explore, expand, and question the ways in which they intersect with our sense of community, language, social reality and identity. Texts and materials may include Cormac McCarthy's "The Road", "Trashed" a documentary that examines a fundamental element of modern American culture: the disposal of what our society defines as "waste," and selections from James Howard Kunstler's "Home from Nowhere."

Stories of travel, exploration

Kevin Ketchner

The best sort of travel literature tells two stories: the story of looking at difference, of seeing other peoples, other places, other ideas; and the story of what such looking tells us about the observer. An essential aspect of the work of travel lies in recording the journey, the experiences, and the learning gained from them. This section of Honors 191 will explore travel through literature, film and television as one of the primary experiences of human existence, against which everything else is compared.

King Arthur: Legend, Lit & Film

John Doherty

Explores the historicity, literature, and film of the Arthurian canon, beginning with the early Welsh tales, continuing with Malory, and examining the texts and film of the 20th century.

Murder, Madness & Monsters

Lisa Eutsey

Murder, Madness and Monsters in 19th Century Fiction.

Film critic Linda Williams has suggested that some genres of film are "body genres" - or genres of film that people watch because of the physical effects they have on the human body. Horror movies make us scared (our hairs stand on end, our pulse increases), weepies (sad movies) make us cry, and pornography makes us sexually aroused. While the 19th century lacked motion pictures to produce these effects, there was no shortage of fiction to fill this role. In fact, much of this fiction was considered dangerous, especially for women. This class examines examples of gothic, sensation, and detective fiction as well as contemporary writings about the corrupting influence of such fiction. Works that we may cover include *The Castle of Otranto*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Moonstone*, *Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and selected Sherlock Holmes stories as well as several films.

Critical Communities

Glenn Hansen

Between 1980 and 1993 the total number of bowlers in America increased by 10 percent, while league bowling decreased by 40 percent. Also consider these statistics over the last 25 years: attending club meetings saw a 58% drop; having family dinners saw a 43% drop; and having friends over took a 35% drop. What do these numbers say about the communities in which we live? We'll take a look at the term "community" from a number of different perspectives: political, cultural, geographic, social, commercial, historical, demographic, etc. and critically investigate the nature, purpose and function of communities in our past, present and future. This class will involve several volunteer and fieldwork exercises/activities, averaging not more than one hour per week.

Reality vs. Truth: Studies in Nonfiction

Patty Petelin

A critical reading and writing course focusing on contemporary works of nonfiction including personal essays, reportage and memoir. This course will seek to understand what we mean when we describe a work of literature as "true" or "real," as well as "fictional." Students should expect to write personal works of their own.

Making Choices

Barbara Youngs

Authors define their work through their choices of language, imagery, plot twists, or character development. Outside the pages of their literary work, authors define themselves through their choices in their lives. We will trace the events and personal decisions -- accidents, alcoholism, protesting for peace, going to war -- that frame and influence their writing. Additionally, we will analyze the choices that authors voice through their characters, from courtiers in Denmark to soldiers in Viet Nam, from timid men intent on murder to girls intent on having fun. While studying an assortment of short stories, poems, plays, and novels, you will construct your own methods for measuring choices and results. Authors include James Thurber, Pablo Neruda, Dorothy Parker, Joyce Carol Oates, Tim O'Brien, Tom Stoppard, Dylan Thomas, Saki, Ray Bradbury, Herman Melville, and more.