

SPRING 2026 NEW COURSES & DESCRIPTIONS

ERH-411 Fieldwork: Rockbridge Memoir Project

Fieldwork involves hands on, community-based learning, bearing significant academic components, to allow cadets to apply classroom learning and practice good citizenship. In the age of the internet, where truth seeking and self-presentation via social media have reached a fever pitch, some would say this is a golden moment for the art of memoir. Now in its 6th year, The Rockbridge Memoir Project offers cadets opportunities to develop, lead, and participate in memoir writing workshops with Rockbridge County resident writers from two generations- retired adults and 6th graders. Together, cadets and community participants will compose their own autobiographical and creative non-fiction by reading models, then developing and sharing each other's writing. This workshop-based process culminates in a public reading and published anthology. Prerequisite(s): ERH-101 and ERH-102 with minimum grade of C. Restriction(s): Priority is given to first and 2nd class English majors as a core requirement.

ERH-422: One Figure – Playwright Arthur Miller, from Page to Stage

Description: By May of 1940, Arthur Miller was ready to admit defeat as a writer. At 24 years old, the aspiring playwright still lived with his parents, received countless rejection letters for his stories and plays. He was ready to turn in his typewriter, but luckily for us, he didn't. Just four years later, his plays would be staged on Broadway, electrifying postwar audiences with dramas like *All My Sons* (1947), *Death of A Salesman* (1949) and *The Crucible* (1953), launching what is now viewed as the Golden Age of American drama. But how does his legacy continue on the page, or in the theatre? How might we stage or interpret his life's work as current human dramas? By reading, debating and re-interpreting three of his plays through our own original scene-writing, students in this course consider Miller as a "major figure" who understands the past, present, perhaps even the future of the American dream, in all its pain and promise. Prerequisite(s): ERH-101 and ERH-102 with minimum grade of C. Restriction(s): NA

HI-281: Piracy in the Atlantic World

This course uses the theme of Piracy in the skills in the methods and practice of historical research. Key topics include: The Golden Age of Piracy, Mercantilism, Capitalism, Privateers, and The Age of Sail. Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s): NA

HI-284: Post-Cold War American Warfare

A History discussion-intensive seminar to explore the evolution of American military policy and application of military force from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the present. Organized both chronologically and thematically, the course will compare changes in policy, strategy, and operations in war and peace to assess whether and how a distinctive “American Way of Warfare” evolved in the post-Cold War era. The course will emphasize the connection between national security, war, and technologies. Leadership and generalship will also be prominent themes to illustrate how the human dimension influences the outcomes of campaigns and battles. Using critical thinking skills, cadets will analyze and discuss the key historiographical issues and selected campaigns involving America’s post-Cold War approaches to conflict.”

Prerequisite(s): HI-205W or HI-206W with a minimum grade of C. NA Restriction(s): History majors only

HPW-470: The Science of Endurance Performance

This course will examine the physiological factors that determine endurance and provide a foundation in program design to enhance performance. In addition to lectures, cadets will participate in the laboratory and practical field experiences designed to deepen their understanding of exercise physiology and endurance training. Related topics that influence endurance including ergogenic aids, environmental factors, age, and biological sex will also be explored. Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s): NA

IS-320: Chinese Foreign Relations

This course is designed to illuminate how China conceives of its interactions with other nations and how it behaves in political, economic and cultural terms within our shared, dynamic global system. Unit 1: We will begin with a review of the foreign relations of the PRC from 1949 to the present. We will consider historical legacies of empire, authoritarianism and nationalism in Chinese governance, and the evolution of a possible grand strategy in PRC’s relations abroad in Asia and worldwide. What are the players, roles and institutions that make foreign policy in the PRC? How has this evolved from the Mao, Deng and the current Xi periods in China foreign relations? Unit 2: China interacts with other nations in four domains: economic, cultural and military relations, and by participating in various global governance regimes. Unit 3 will explore a series of China’s major bilateral and regional relations (e.g. with the USA, Russia and central Asia, India, Europe, other East Asian nations (such as Japan, the two Koreas, and ASEAN - Southeast Asia), Middle East, Africa and Latin America. A special section will analyze how Taiwan, formally considered by China as a domestic matter, plays a role in the international relations of the PRC. Unit 4: will study multilateral topics in the foreign relations of the PRD,

such as environment and energy policy, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China in the UN, international trade policies and the global aspects of China's ambitions for industrial growth and R&D. The course will finish by considering future challenges for China's statecraft and diplomacy in its foreign relations. Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s): NA

IS-303: China in the Modern World

A major question we will address is to what extent has the communist revolution in China fit the deep pattern of dynastic change from the Han through the Qing? On the other hand, in what ways has the rise of the communist state over the past 100 years been a distinctly modern political and socio-economic process of the collapse of an empire and the formation of a modern state? Has the PRC state broken with the imperial Chinese past? Or is it bent on recreating imperial power in the 21st century? The four major turning points we will study in depth will be: 1. The fall of the Ming and establishment of the Qing (Manchu) dynasties in the 1620s to 1660s period 2. Qing dynasty encounters with the West in the mid-19th century, and its subsequent collapse in the early 20th century 3. The failed republican state of the Kuomintang (Nationalists) from the 1912 to 1949 4. The success of the communist movement from rural uprisings to the formation of a Stalinist state drawing on an industrial economy that aims to be a leading global power in the 21st century Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s):

IS-374: Liberalism and Its Critics

This course introduces cadets to liberalism and its critics, exploring tensions between political conceptions of the individual and community, contract and tradition, freedom and obligation, equality and hierarchy, and more. Throughout the course, we will place particular emphasis on how these conversations inform conceptions of property. The majority of the course will cover the canon of liberal political theory, such as works by John Locke and J.S. Mill. The next portion surveys thinkers in contemporary conversation defending liberalism, such as John Rawls. In the last section of the course, we will discuss the critics of liberalism, covering thinkers like James C. Scott and Patrick Deneen. Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s): NA

IS-473: Politics & Literature

Political philosophy asks questions and seeks answers relating to the nature of justice or the just society. The texts that have explored this question since the earliest Platonic dialogues have predominantly done so through the use of reason or analytic intellect, often taking the form of philosophical treatises, speeches, or letters. However, some of the most penetrating insights into the nature of justice have also been articulated through the use of the imagination, as one finds in certain novels, plays, and short stories. In fact, it may be argued that the aesthetic sense is sometimes superior to reason for its ability to synthesize or combine information into conceptual wholes—precisely not to dissect or separate these elements—to express what is important or significant, as understood from within human experience or reality itself. The scope of fictional writing that addresses questions of justice or the just political order is too vast to cover in a single semester. Therefore, this course will focus on a particular issue or special topic within the latter that is addressed by a narrow subset of these works. By applying the insights of such texts to one's own life and contemporary society, cadets will be asked to comprehend and ultimately respond to each author's claims as part of an ongoing dialogue on the nature of the just society. Questions to be examined may include, but are not limited to: Does the just society require a certain type of character or virtue among its citizens? What are the threats to individual liberty that exist outside the formal institutions of law and government? How do commonly accepted ideals such as "happiness" and "progress" relate to our understanding of political authority? What (if any) are the limits or givens that we must simply accept or contend with as part of any human society? Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s): NA

IS-472 Democratization and Regime Change

The goal of this course is to familiarize cadets with key approaches and debates on democratization and regime change. We will examine structural, institutional, and agency-based approaches on democratization. We will also focus on what outside powers such as the US should (or should not) do to promote democracy abroad. Our readings will focus on both classical and more recent works on the subjects with heavy emphasis on discussions. Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s): NA

MA-374: Concepts in Mathematical Biology

An exploration of mathematical applications to the field of biology, including: predator-prey relationships, population models, disease spread, patterns in nature, and mathematical physiology. Prerequisite(s): MA-110, ME-203 or PY-223; & MA-311 Restriction(s): NA

MA-375: Data Visualization With R

This is an introductory course on Data Visualization using R, a widely used free statistical software popular in both academia and industry. Students will learn how to import data, prepare it for analysis, and visualize it using a variety of tools. The course covers appropriate visualization techniques for different types of data, including univariate and multivariate, as well as quantitative and qualitative data. Visualization methods will range from basic plots such as histograms to more advanced techniques like hierarchical trees and heat maps. R will be used extensively throughout the course. Prerequisite(s): MA-106 or MA-220 Restriction(s): NA

MA-377: Introduction to Clustering Analysis

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of clustering analysis using R statistical software. Topics include distance metrics, hierarchical and partitional clustering methods, and basic techniques for evaluating clustering quality. Students will gain hands-on experience applying clustering algorithms to real-world datasets using R. Prior experience with R is not required, though familiarity with programming and basic data analysis concepts is highly encouraged. Prerequisite(s): MA-106 or MA-220 Restriction(s): NA

CIS-475: Introduction to Machine Learning

This course is designed to provide a general introduction to machine learning and its applications. Topics covered include regression analysis, classification models, clustering analysis, logistic regression, decision trees, k-means, hierarchical clustering, features selection, model selection, model tuning, ensemble techniques, natural language processing, computer vision, and neural networks. Prerequisite(s): CIS-213 Restriction(s): NA

PS-471: Advanced Clinical Psychology

This advanced undergraduate course examines Paul Meehl's Five Noble Traditions of clinical psychology—descriptive clinical psychiatry, psychometrics, behavior genetics, behavioral modification, and psychodynamics—as the foundational intellectual streams that shaped the modern field. Students will explore how each tradition contributes distinct methods, assumptions, and forms of evidence to the understanding and treatment of mental disorders. Through primary readings, discussion, and case analysis, the course emphasizes Meehl's call for integration between empirical rigor and clinical insight. By the end of the semester, students will appreciate how these five traditions continue to inform contemporary debates about diagnosis, assessment, and evidence-based intervention. Prerequisite(s): PS-305 & PS-315 Restriction(s): NA

PY-263: Introduction to Quantum Information

In the effort of advancing quantum information at the undergraduate level, this introductory course will expose students to basics of manipulating information using principles of quantum mechanics. Topics will be selected from the following: Dirac notation, quantum state, quantum bit (qubit), superposition, entanglement, Bloch sphere, coherence, quantum sensing, communication and information, and quantum computers. Prerequisite(s): NA Restriction(s): NA