Reading Celebrity, Written in/by/for the Stars
HON 299 (14723) ES - Kerr, Darin
MW 9:30-10:45
Robertson/Sayre 4b
3 credits
Should we care about Kate marrying Will? Celebrities...are they really "just like us"? How does stardom intersect with politics? Does fame have a price, and if so, who's paying it? This course will examine our contemporary culture of celebrity, attempting to make sense of the economy of fame, both in terms of its production and consumption. We'll take an interdisciplinary approach that draws on sociology, politics, history, and media and cultural theory. We'll also examine a variety of media forms, from television to film to popular periodicals [think US or People] to YouTube. While our primary focus will probably be on contemporary American iterations of celebrity, we'll certainly have room to explore other historical and transnational contexts. As a class, we'll engage with both extant and emergent notions of what "celebrity studies" should or could entail. And who knows? Maybe we'll even try to create a little celebrity of our own! If you ever wondered whether (or why) you should (or shouldn't) care about Oprah, Becks and Posh, or Justin Bieber, this class is for you.

HON 391 (7137) ES: HUM - Thorp, Burt
MW 3-5:50, 1st half semester (8/20/12-10/12/12)
1 credit
The Old Curiosity Shop: On February 7, 2012, we celebrated the 200th birthday of the renowned Charles Dickens. This fall Honors will offer a "Books You Should Read" course on The Old Curiosity Shop, one of his most interesting and curious novels—an engaging and haunting story that mixes mystery, drama, comedy, social realism, the supernatural, and the sentimental. Join Little Nell and her grandfather on their journeys and meet one of Dickens's memorable villains, the evil and sadistic Quilp.

Charles Dickens at 200!
HON 291 (7127) ES: HUM - Thorp, Burt
MW 2-3:50, 1st half semester (8/20/12-10/12/12)
1 credit

The Nature of Disease
HON 393 (7125) ES: HUM - Kirby, Merie
MW 1-2:15
3 credits
Disease is a part of our lives. The popularity of TV medical shows indicates that our society is fascinated by disease. We all have friends or family members who suffer from diseases and have ourselves, suffered from disease at various times. We know the names of many diseases from AIDS to diabetes to the common cold. Yet many of us know little about the process of disease or how diseases exert their effects on the body. This course is designed to help you begin to understand the mechanisms of different diseases and to see the similarities and differences among some of the most common diseases. In addition, we will look at how people deal with terminal diseases and face issues dealing with death and dying.

Sophomore Portfolio Workshop
HON 250 (7120) - David, Robin
W 12-12:50
1 credit
HON 250 (7125) - Gruenberg, Sam
R 11-11:50
1 credit
Are you ready to become a Full Member of the Honors Program? Are you wondering what the SHP really entails? The course gives SHP writers a chance to polish submissions by discussing and revising in peer groups. This eight-week class open to all students on the edge of a portfolio.
Philosophic Themes: Tragedy and Comedy

PHIL 399 [841] - Stone, Lucian
MW 1-1:50 3 credit

Literature raises many philosophical questions. This is especially true in the literary genres tragedy and comedy, which are expressive of the most extreme human emotions and experiences. What do these mininal experiences reveal about human nature, ethics, social-political values, and our knowledge claims? These and many other philosophical questions will be explored by reading philosophical works by Richard Kearney (On Stories), Friedrich Nietzsche (The Birth of Tragedy), and Simon Critchley (On Humour), as well as literary works including: Bashar (Euripides), A Good Man is Hard to Find (Flannery O'Connor), A Modest Proposal (Jonathan Swift), A Confederacy of Dunces (John Kennedy Toole), Catch-22 (Joseph Heller), and The Trial (Franz Kafka).

Scholarships and Career Planning

Hon 291 (7124) ES: HUM- Hawthorne, Joan
MW 3-4:15 (Dates 09/17/12-10/26/12) 1 credit

This course provides first and second year students with hands-on preparation for scholarships and career planning. Students who complete this course will have developed plans for their progress through the academic, extracurricular, and personal growth opportunities available during college. They will have charted tentative paths for post-college, and clarified strategies regarding graduate school and/or starting a career. They will have gained insight into how people in gatekeeping roles (i.e., those who award scholarships, sit on grad program entrance committees, act in a hiring capacity) view various application strategies and tactics. Students who aim to prepare themselves for scholarship competitions will develop the skills and knowledge to do so. Those who aim for top opportunities for internships, grad schools, or careers will be similarly better prepared.

Democracy and the Media

HON 399 [7125] ES: SS–Schill, Brian
TuTh 11-12:15 3 credits

“Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom...of the press.” From the moment James Madison drafted an early version of these words, the media (which has evolved considerably from meaning simply “the press”) has played a crucial role in upholding, challenging, and even curtailing the democratic process. But for those living in what French theorist Guy Debord called the “society of the spectacle,” what role does the media—whether 24-hour television news, Internet, or pop music played on corporate radio—play in furthering or encumbering America’s political project? Is today’s increasingly corporate, privatized media a barrier or a boon for democracy? Can popular culture help make us a more informed voter this presidential election season? I teach, you decide.

Culture Area Studies: Sub-Saharan Africa

ANTH 379 [6884] ES: SS, G–Reed, Anne
TuTh 9:30-10:45 Babcock 108
3 credit

Within the general public, Africa is often thought of as a uniform entity, or even as a country. At the same time, media images present overwhelmingly negative ideas about Africa: that it is war-torn, deeply impoverished, and desperately coping with HIV/AIDs. Although some of what we hear in the news may be accurate, what often gets lost are the personal stories and the humanity of individuals living day-to-day as members of this communities. This engaging class will go beyond the stereotypes to provide students with a solid foundation for understanding the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, within historical, geographic, and cultural context. Central questions of the course include: What is “Africa”? How much similarity is there between the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa? How have historical processes on the continent shaped what Africa is today? How are African cultures dynamic and continually changing in contemporary times?

Reading True Crime

HON 491 (7136) ES: HUM- Greenberg, Sam
TuTh 12:30-1:45
3 credit

Despite their popularity, the genre of true crime is not highly-regarded, nor often subject to academic examination. This course will attempt to reverse that trend by treating true crime texts, no matter how exploitative, gristy, or shocking, as legitimate narratives worthy of investigation and admiration. This course will discuss such texts as In Cold Blood and Columbine and also cast a discerning eye to the prevalence of television police procedurals and crime-related newsmagazine programs.

Prospectus Development

Hon 395 (7119) – Schill, Brian
1 credit
Mo 12-12:50
Are you a junior considering writing an Honors thesis in the next year? While the notion of an extended senior project may seem overwhelming initially, the first step to a successful thesis is developing a sound prospectus, which is what this course is designed to help you do. In brief, Hon 395 will help you gather your thoughts on thesis processes; suggest strategies for writing your prospectus (mapping crucial background information, developing a methodology, and clarifying the focus of your thesis, and so on); and engage you in some preliminary research. This course is recommended for students who plan on writing a thesis next year.