UAB Honors Program
Interdisciplinary Course, Fall 2004
"In Search of Human Nature"

Full-Time Faculty

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Guest Lecturers
Dr. Ben Chastain, Professor Emeritus, Chemistry, Samford University.
Dr. Gene Hines, Director of Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee, UAB.
Dr. John T. Tarvin, Chair & Professor, Physics, Samford University.
Rabbi Scott Hausman-Weiss, Temple Emanu-El, Birmingham
Dr. Sandosh Khare, retired neonatologist, member of the Hindu Temple, Birmingham
Tenzin Deshek, Tibetan Buddhist monk, Birmingham.
Dr. Robert Angus, Professor, Dept. of Biology, UAB
Dr. Jeannette Doeller, Associate Dean, Graduate School, UAB.
Dr. Cynthia Owsley, Professor & Vice-Chair, Dept. of Ophthalmology, UAB.
Texts
The following texts are available at the UAB Bookstore and Snoozy’s. If you buy—or already own—editions of the texts that are different from the ones ordered for the class, you may have trouble following references to page numbers during the lectures.

- Achebe, Chinua Things Fall Apart: A Novel (Summer Reading)
- Bondi, Robert C. Memories of God: Theological Reflections on a Life
- Conrad, Joseph Heart of Darkness (Summer Reading)
- Eady, Cornelius Brutal Imagination: Poems
- Gibson, William Neuromancer (Summer Reading)
- Gould, Stephen Jay The Panda's Thumb: More Reflections in Natural History
- Gould, Stephen Jay The Mismeasure of Man
- Pinker, Steven The Language Instinct
- Shakespeare, William Hamlet
- Stoppard, Tom Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.
- Vanier, Jean From Brokenness to Community (The Wit Lectures)

Summer Reading Assignment
During the summer you should read Heart of Darkness (Conrad), Things Fall Apart (Achebe), and Neuromancer (Gibson). These three books will be the subject of lectures in the first week of class and will also serve as the basis for your first written assignment, the Literary Analysis.

Reading Requirements
Reading assignments marked with an asterisk in the syllabus should be read before that class period. In addition to the texts listed above, you will need to buy a packet of additional readings which will be available the first day of class.

Assignment (% of Grade) Due Date
Attendance and Participation (5%) Daily
Literary Analysis (15%) Sept. 9
Library Assignment (0%, Required) Sept. 23
Science Project (15%)
- Project Title, Thesis, & Bibliography (Required) Sept. 9
- Interim Progress Report Oct. 21
- Final Report & Exhibit (Required) Dec. 2
Short Essay Assignments (10%)
- Number 1 (5%) Oct. 5
- Number 2 (5%) Nov. 23
Midterm Exam (20%) Oct. 14
Arrington Project (15%)
- Sequence of assignments and due dates TBA
Course evaluation (Required) Nov 30
Final Exam (20%) Dec. 9

Explanation of assignments
Attendance and Participation
You must sign in by initialing the attendance sheet for each lecture. Unexcused absences beyond a total of three for the entire term will result in a deduction from your grade. Participation in classroom discussion is strongly encouraged and can make a positive difference in your grade.
**Literary Analysis**
The literary analysis will be based on the three books assigned for summer reading. Since this assignment is the first one due and since lectures on these books will be presented in the first week of class, it is imperative that these books be carefully read prior to the beginning of term. Students will be provided with suggestions and guidelines for the literary analysis assignment. The five teaching assistants (TAs) will be available to help with the literary analysis assignment. The TAs will set up appointment schedules for individual sessions. In addition, faculty will be available during the weekly review sessions (see below) for advice on the literary analysis and other assignments.

**Library Assignment**
This assignment is designed to familiarize you with aspects of library use relevant to the fall course. There will be sign-up sheets for the group orientation sessions. At those sessions you will receive the actual assignment that must be turned in by the due date. These assignments will be different for 1st and 2nd year students.

**Science Project**
There will be a separate handout describing the scope and nature of the science project. In short, each student will be assigned to an interdisciplinary group of about 5 students. There will be a list of potential projects to choose from. Students will collaborate in conducting the project but write individual reports. The final group project will be displayed on December 2nd.

**Short Essay Assignments**
This assignment requires that you write a 600-word essay comparing two different treatments of a single idea or theme from the course. The two treatments can come from (a) two different course lectures, (b) a Tuesday night film and a course lecture, (c) two Tuesday night films, (d) a First Thursday lecture and a course lecture, or (e) two First Thursday lectures.

The most successful essays will be substantive but concise, well-organized, interesting, and grammatically correct. You are welcome, even urged, to have someone read over your essay before you turn it in. (Note: you will profit most from the experience of getting help with your grammar if you will allow time for going over any corrections with your reader—provided that your reader has the time.) A 600-word essay is just under two pages of typed, double-spaced text printed in 12-point font. Most of you, frankly, will be less likely to do well on the essays if it is notably under 600 words than you will if it is 600 words or more. That said, a seasoned essayist can often pack more in 300 words than a novice can in 600. Whatever its length, however, the essay must fit, double-spaced, on two sheets of paper. Essays should be stapled and have your name clearly typed at the top of both pages.

**Midterm & Final Examinations**
The midterm examination will take place from 9 am to 6 pm on Thursday, Oct. 14th. The final examination will take place from 9 am - 6 pm on Thursday, Dec. 9th. Each exam is worth 20% of your final course grade. Both examinations are open-book. Four essays are required for each exam, two (chosen from six) disciplinary essays and two (chosen from six) interdisciplinary essays. Students will be provided with sample questions a week prior to the exam. Students may use computers to type their essays but not to access internet sources. Students are responsible for printing out their essays prior to the 6 pm deadline. There will be a sign-up procedure for house computers a week prior to the exam.

**Arrington Project**
There will be a separate handout describing the Arrington Partnership Project distributed in class. In general, Honors students work in assigned groups with 7th grade students from Arrington Elementary School. You will be working closely with one or two 7th graders on a project that complements their science curriculum.
**Course Website**
There will be a designated Blackboard course website for the fall interdisciplinary course on which faculty will be posting announcements, readings, and lecture-related material. You will be given a complete set of instructions for accessing and navigating the course website. You are required to register on this site.

**Weekly Review Sessions (Optional)**
Program faculty will meet with all interested students on Thursdays, 8:30 am – 9:15 am. Early in the term the sessions will pay greater attention to the literary analysis and the first short essay assignment. Later in the term the sessions will pay greater attention to scientific writing, exam taking, and any other topics students may want to discuss.

**Films (Optional)**
Course-related films will be shown on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm in the main lecture room of the Spencer Honors House (check the course syllabus for film titles). Attendance is optional, but highly recommended. Students receive “Participation in Honors” credit for attendance, and writing assignments and exams will provide opportunities for writing about one or more of the films.

**First Thursday Lecture Series (Optional)**
The First Thursday Lecture Series is a monthly public lecture series sponsored by the UAB Honors Program. Lecture topics and presentations during the fall series are closely related to the theme of the interdisciplinary course (check the course syllabus for lecture titles). Attendance is optional, but highly recommended. Students receive “Participation in Honors” credit for attendance, and writing assignments and exams will likely include the option of writing about one or more of the First Thursday presentations.

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**General Issues and Framework**

**Thursday, August 19**
9:30am - 10:45am Policies & Procedures

11:00am - 12:15pm Student Introductions

2:00pm - 3:15pm Introductory comments from faculty

**Tuesday, August 24**
9:30am - 10:45am "From Nurture to Nature: the Fantastic Voyage of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" (Rusty Rushton)
   *Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

11:00am - 12:15pm "From Nurture to Nature" continued (Rusty Rushton)

2:00pm - 3:15pm "Origins of the Nature-Nurture Debate" (Mike Sloane)
   *Michael Meaney, "Nature, Nurture, & the Disunity of Knowledge"
   *Gerald McClearn, "Nature and Nurture: Interaction & Coaction"

7:00pm Film: *Aguirre: The Wrath of God*
Thursday, August 26
9:30am - 10:45am "The Meaning of Culture" (Lori Cormier)
   *Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart: A Novel

11:00am - 12:15pm "The Meaning of Culture" continued (Lori Cormier)

2:00pm - 3:15pm Class Discussion of Neoromancer (Moderator: David Basilico)
   *William Gibson, Neoromancer

Tuesday, August 31
9:30am - 10:45am "What is a Human Being? Theological Musings on a Big Question"
   (Bill Blackerby)
   *John Macquarrie, "Becoming" (from In Search of Humanity)

11:00am - 12:15pm "Concepts of Human Nature and Free Will" (Panel Discussion)
   *John Macquarrie, "Freedom" (from In Search of Humanity)

2:00pm - 3:15pm Science Projects: Arrington & UAB Honors Program

7:00pm Film: Groundhog Day

Thursday, September 2
9:30am - 10:45am "Science & Pseudoscience" (Anne Cusic & Mike Sloane)
   *Robert Park, "The Seven Warning Signs of Bogus Science"
   *Rory Coker, "Distinguishing Science and Pseudoscience"

11:00am - 12:15pm "Perspectives on Science & Religion"
   Dr. Ben Chastain (Samford); Dr. Gene Hines (UAB); &
   Dr. Tommy Tarvin (Samford)

2:00pm - 3:15pm Arrington Middle School Organizational Meeting

7:00 pm First Thursday Lecture
"Gods and Monsters: The Portrayal of Scientists in Film"
Lee Shackelford (Theatre Dept., UAB)

Tuesday, September 7
9:30am - 10:45am "Unraveling the Code: DNA, the Molecule of Life" (Anne Cusic)
   *Visit WWW.KUMC.EDU/GEC
   *Visit WWW.DNALC.ORG (see 'DNA from the Beginning' & 'DNA')

11:00am - 12:15pm "The Central Dogma of Genetics" (Anne Cusic)
   *Joseph McInerney, "Behavioral Genetics"

2:00pm - 3:15pm Visit to Arrington

7:00pm Film: The Double Helix
Thursday, September 9
9:30am - 10:45am "The Evolution Process" (Anne Cusic)
   *Chris Colby, "Introduction to Evolutionary Biology"
   (from WWW.talkorigins.org/faqs/faq-intro-to-biology)
   *WWW.golgi.harvard.edu/BioLinks/Evolution (see 'Evolution happens')
   *Stephen Jay Gould, "Evolution as Fact and Theory"

11:00am - 12:15pm "Physical Constraints on Evolution" (David Basilico & Mike Sloane)

2:00pm - 3:15pm Genetics Laboratory

Tuesday, September 14
9:30am -10:45am "Sociobiology and the Yanomano Question" (Lori Cormier)
   *S.J. Gould, "Caring Groups and Selfish Genes"
   *(The Panda's Thumb 85-92)
   *Patrick Tierney, "The Fierce Anthropologist"
   *Marshall Sahlins, "Jungle Fever"

11:00am - 12:15pm "Linguistic Diversity: Familiar Dialects, Exotic Languages" (David Basilico)
   *Jack Hitt, "Say No More"
   *John McWhorter, "Mohawk Philosophy Lessons"
   *John Rickford, "Suite for Ebony and Phonics"
   *Geoff K. Pullum, "The great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax"

2:00pm - 3:15pm "Uncovering Genetic Determinants" (Mike Sloane)

7:00pm Film: Adaptation

Thursday, September 16
9:30am - 10:45am "Historical Ecology: the Collision of Nature and Culture" (Lori Cormier)
   *W.M. Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: the Landscape of the Americas in 1492"

11:00am - 12:15pm "The Evolution of the Brain" (David Basilico & Mike Sloane)

2:00pm - 3:15pm "The Individual and the Community" (Bill Blackerby)
   *Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Conflict Between Individual and Social Morality" (from Moral Man and Immoral Society)

The Body

Tuesday, September 21
9:30am -10:45am “Bacteria, Bugs, and Dogs: Artificial Selection” (Anne Cusic)
Tuesday, September 21 (Continued)
11:00am - 12:15pm  "The Evolution of the Human Body" (Lori Cormier)
   *S.J. Gould, "A Biological Homage to Mickey Mouse".
      (The Panda's Thumb 95-107)
   *S.J. Gould, "Piltdown Revisited".
      (The Panda's Thumb 108-124)
   *S.J. Gould, "Our Greatest Evolutionary Step"
      (The Panda's Thumb 125-133)

2:00pm - 3:15pm  Visit to Arrington

7:00pm  Photography: "Is What You See What You Get?...Visions of Disability"
   (Carolyn Sherer)

Thursday, September 23
9:30am - 10:45am  "Evolution of the Human Vocal Tract" (David Basilico)
   * Selections from Philip Lieberman, The Biology and Evolution of Language

11:00am -12:15pm  "The Body and the Self: Unity or Duality?" (Bill Blackerby)
   *John Macquarrie, "Embodiedness" (from In Search of Humanity)

2:00pm - 3:15pm  “Transcending the Flesh through Pain” (Rusty Rushton)
   *Jean Stafford, “The Interior Castle”

Tuesday, September 28
9:30am -10:45am  "Genetic & Acquired Color Vision Deficiencies" (Mike Sloane)
   *M. Neitz & J. Neitz, "Numbers and ratios of visual pigment genes for normal red-green color vision"
   *J. Neitz, M. Neitz & P.M. Kainz, "Visual pigment gene structure and the severity of color vision defects"

11:00am -12:15pm  "The Meaning of the Body in Cross-Cultural Perspective" (Lori Cormier)

2:00pm - 3:15pm  "Critical Periods in Embryonic Development: Teratogens" (Anne Cusic)

7:00pm  Film: Gattaca

Race

Thursday, September 30
9:30am - 10:45am  "Mitochondrial DNA" (Anne Cusic)
   *Max Ingman, "Mitochondrial DNA Clarifies Human Evolution"

11:00am - 12:15pm  "The Cultural Construction of Race" (Lori Cormier)
   *S.J. Gould, "Flaws in a Victorian Veil"
      (The Panda's Thumb 169-176)
Thursday, September 30 (Continued)
2:00pm - 3:15pm  "Competing Christian Perspectives: a 19th Century Debate on Slavery"
   (Bill Blackerby)
      *Sermons from "God Ordained This War"
      *Theodore Parker, "The Function of Conscience"
      *Charles Colcock Jones, "The Religious Instruction of the Negroes"
      *James H Thornwell, "The Rights and the Duties of Masters"

Tuesday, October 5
9:30am -10:45am  “If Stereotypes Could Talk: the Uncanny Voices of Cornelius Eady’s Brutal Imagination” (Rusty Rushton)
      *Cornelius Eady, Brutal Imagination (5-57)

11:00am -12:15pm  "Language & Ethnicity" (David Basilico)
      *John Rickford, "Suite for Ebony and Phonics" (see Sept 14)

2:00pm - 3:15pm  Visit to Arrington

7:00pm  Film: American Tongues

Sex & Gender

Thursday, October 7
9:30am -10:45am  "Gender Differences and Sexual Orientation: Part I" (Anne Cusic)
      *Ryan D. Johnson, "Homosexuality: Nature or Nurture"

11:00am -12:15pm  "Gender Differences and Sexual Orientation: Part II" (Robert Angus)

2:00pm - 3:15pm  "Sex and Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective" (Lori Cormier)
      *M.S. Kimmel, "Spanning the World: Cross-Cultural Constructions of Gender" (in The Gendered Society)
      *Serena Nanda, "Hijra and Sadhin: Neither Man Nor Woman in India" (in Gender Diversity: Cross-Cultural Variations)

7.00 pm  First Thursday Lecture
"Diagnostic and Therapeutic Implications of the Human Genome Project"
   Eric J. Sorscher (Hematology & Oncology, School of Medicine, UAB)

Tuesday, October 12
9:30am - 10:45am  "The Language of Men and Women" (David Basilico)
      *Selections from P. Eckert & S. McConnell-Ginet, "Language & Gender"

11:00am - 12:15pm  “Gendering Desire” (Rusty Rushton)
      *David Lehman, "Sexism"
      *Dorianne Laux, "The Thief"
      *May Swenson, “A Couple”
      *Etheridge Knight, "A Love Poem"
      *James Merrill, "Morning Exercise"
Tuesday, October 12 (Continued)
2:00pm - 3:15pm "Sexuality and Christianity" (Bill Blackerby)
   *R. Williams, "The Body's Grace" (from Theology and Sexuality)

7:00 pm Film: Southern Comfort

Thursday, October 14 Midterm Exam, 9.00 am - 6.00 pm at Spencer Honors House

Tuesday, October 19
9:30am - 12.15 am  Morning Activities: TBA
2:00pm - 3:15pm Visit to Arrington
7:00pm Film: Lord of the Flies

Language

Thursday, October 21
9:30am -10:45am  "Nativism & Language" (David Basilico)
   *Steven Pinker, The Language Instinct

11:00am - 12:15pm "Communication in Lower Species" (Anne Cusic)

2:00pm - 3:15pm "Language in the Great Apes" (David Basilico)
   *Steven Pinker, The Language Instinct (Ch. 11)

Tuesday, October 26
9:30am -10:45am "Language Processing in the Brain" (Mike Sloane)
   *Steven Pinker, The Language Instinct

11:00am -12:15pm “Naming and Unnaming: the Contestable Power of Adam”
   (Rusty Rushton)
   *Louise Gluck, "The Gift"
   *Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar"
   "The Poem that Took the Place of a Mountain"
   *A. R. Ammons, "A Coast of Trees"
   "Triphammer Bridge"
   "The Pieces of my Voice"
   *George Herbert, "The Forerunners"

2:00pm - 3:15pm "Telling the Story: Spoken Word & Text in Religious Tradition"
   (Bill Blackerby)
   *Roberta Bondi, Memories of God

7:00pm Film: Secrets of the Wild Child
**Thursday, October 28**

9:30am -10:45am  "The Power & Impotence of Language in Religious Experience"
(Bill Blackerby)
*Roberta Bondi, Memories of God

11:00am -12:15pm  “Uncarving the Chaos: the Challenge of Translation” (Rusty Rushton)
Charles Beaudelaire, "A Une Passante" & several Eng. translations

2:00pm - 3:15pm  "Language & Thought" (David Basilico)
*Lee & Gleitman, "Turning the Tables: Language and Spatial Reasoning"
*Lera Boroditsky, "Sex, Syntax and Semantics"
*The Language Instinct (Ch. 3)

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**Tuesday, November 2**

9:30am -10:45am  "Language and Cultural Identity: The MOWA Choctaw of South Alabama" (Lori Cormier)

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**Intelligence**

11:00am -12:15pm  "History of IQ and the Eugenics Movement" (Mike Sloane)
*S.J. Gould, "Racist Arguments and IQ"
*S.J. Gould, The Mismeasure of Man

2:00pm - 3:15pm  Visit to Arrington

7:00pm  Film: Europa, Europa

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**Thursday, November 4**

9:30am -10:45am  "Brilliance, Interiority, and the Rise of Hamlet" (Rusty Rushton)
*William Shakespeare, Hamlet

11:00am - 12:15pm  "Brilliance, Interiority, and the Rise of Hamlet" continued (Rusty Rushton)

2:00pm - 3:15pm  Concepts of Intelligence (Mike Sloane)
*Howard Gardner, selections from Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences
*"The Idea of Multiple Intelligences"
*What is an Intelligence?"
* A Critique of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences ”

7:00 pm  **First Thursday Lecture**
Dolores Hydock performs Silence with musical accompaniment by PanHarmonium. (Silence is a 13th century French romance in which the characters of "Nature" & "Nurture" continually battle for the soul of "Silence")
Tuesday, November 9
9:30am -10:45am "Intelligence, Humanity and Mentally Challenged" (Bill Blackerby)
  *Jean Vanier, *From Brokenness to Community*

11:00am -12:15pm "Evolutionary Psychology: Ancient Brains for Modern Minds" (M. Sloane)
  *L. Cosmides & J. Tooby, *Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer*

2:00pm - 3:15pm "Environment & the Brain: Enrichment Studies" (Mike Sloane)

7:00pm Film: *Being There*

Thursday, November 11
9:30am -10:45am "Disparities in Education in Birmingham" (Rosie O' Beirne)

11:00am - 12:15pm "Women in Science" (Anne Cusic, Jeannette Doeller, Cynthia Owsley)

Social Being

2:00pm - 3:15pm "Religious Values and Impulses" (Bill Blackerby)
  *John Macquarrie, "Conscience" (from *In Search of Humanity*)
  *John Macquarrie, "Commitment" (from *In Search of Humanity*)

Tuesday, November 16
9:30am - 10:45am "Bonding, Social Behavior, & Altruism in Animals" (Anne Cusic)

11:00am - 12:15pm "War and Peace: Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution" (Lori Cormier)
  *Franz de Waal, "False Dichotomies" (from *Peacemaking among Primates*)

2:00pm - 3:15pm Visit to Arrington

7:00pm Film: *The Trials of Life*, David Attenborough

Thursday, November 18
9:30am - 10:45am "Temperament & Aggression: Social Learning?" (Mike Sloane)

11:00am - 12:15pm "The Drama of Putting Others First: Altruism and Forgiveness in Modern Literature" (Rusty Rushton)
  *James Wright, "Saint Judas"
  *Flannery O'Connor, "The Artificial Nigger"
Thursday, November 18 (Continued)
2:00pm - 3:15pm "Legislating Language" (David Basilico)
    *Geoff K. Pullum, "Here come the linguistic fascists"
    *Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (Ch. 12)

Tuesday, November 23
9:30am -10:45am "Spiritual Ecology: The Symbolic Landscape" (Lori Cormier)
11:00am - 12:15pm "Loneliness, Anxiety, and Spiritual Journey" (Bill Blackerby)
    *Roberta Bondi, *Memories of God*
    *Jean Vanier, *From Brokenness to Community*
2:00pm - 3:15pm “Losing the Script: Facing Freedom in Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*" (Rusty Rushton)
    *Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*
7:00pm  Film: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

Tuesday, November 30
9:30am -10:45am Reflections on Course Themes (Faculty)
11:00am - 12:15pm Course Evaluations, Elections, & Discussion of Final Exam
5.00 - 7:00pm  Science Exhibit and Dinner at Arrington Middle School

Thursday, December 2
9:30am - 3:15pm  Science Exhibit and BBQ at Spencer Honors House
7.00 pm  First Thursday Lecture
    “Is Alcoholism a Disease: The case of Ernie Crowfeather”
    Gregory Pence, Dept. of Philosophy, & School of Medicine, UAB.

Thursday, December 9   FINAL EXAM   9.00 am - 6.00 pm at Spencer Honors House

Directions to Arrington Middle School
From the Honors House, go west on 10th Ave. So. to Green Springs Highway. Turn left and go about a half-mile to Green Springs Ave (Just past George Ward Park, on the left).
    Turn right, go over the I-65 viaduct, and continue as the road becomes Dennison Ave. Continue on Dennison Ave, past the Elmwood Cemetery grounds on the right, until the road ends (and forks) at Jefferson Ave.
    Bear left onto Jefferson Ave and go almost to the large viaduct you see ahead of you. Just past the 3rd traffic light (counting the one at Dennison and Jefferson), turn left onto 19th Pl SW. Go one block to the entrance to the Arrington Middle School parking lot on your right. Park in the lot and go in the far right-hand door; the school office is to your immediate left.