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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences_COVID-19 Course Content

Kristin Vekasi

Frederic Rondeau

Marcella Sorg

Derek Michaud

Ayesha Miller

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Kristin Vekasi, Frederic Rondeau, Marcella Sorg, Derek Michaud, Ayesha Miller, Kirsten Jacobson, Lillian Herakova, and Mark Brewer

Kristin Vekasi (Associate Professor, Political Science)

POS 349: Politics of Media and Censorship

(From the course flyer:) Media plays a key role in political life: informing citizens, holding officials accountable, and as a forum for public discourse and debate. Censorship restricts these functions. Censorship is formalized in many authoritarian contexts, and exists in informal structures across democracies and autocracies alike. In this class, we will explore models of formal and informal censorship. We will learn about the political dynamics of media restrictions in regimes like Russia and China, and debate how censorship can strengthen or weaken autocratic regimes. We will examine how similar dynamics work in democratic contexts like Japan and the United States. We will discuss when and how journalists and ordinary citizens resist censorship regimes. As a final project, each student will apply these models and conduct a case study of the politics of media coverage and censorship dynamics of one country during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Frederic Rondeau (Associate Professor, Modern Languages and Classics)

I will be teaching an **Introduction to French Classics Novels of the XX-XXI century** in the Fall. I usually teach *L'étranger* by Albert Camus, but I will replace this book by *La Peste (The Plague)* from the same author. We will read and study this book, but we will also be interested in the interpretation that is being done of the novel during the current pandemic. We can find multiple articles and opinion pieces published in newspapers and magazines recently (some examples below) who draw parallels between Camus's book and the Coronavirus.

Marcella Sorg (Research Professor, Department of Anthropology, Climate Change Institute, and Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center)

ANT 260: Forensic Anthropology

Will contain a short module on infectious disease, disaster preparedness, and the medical examiner function.

Derek Michaud (Lecturer, Philosophy; Coordinator of Religious Studies and Judaic Studies)

PHI 105: Introduction to Religious Studies

Will include discussion of COVID-19 and religious observances. We'll look at the role communal ritual plays in religion generally and how some local congregations (Jewish, Christian, and Muslim) adapted to the pandemic by holding online services and other creative measures. I'm still working out the specifics here but hopefully this gives you the general idea.

PHI 100: Contemporary Moral Problems (Summer Course)

I plan to focus on the responsibility each of us has to take steps to protect public health from a number of theoretical perspectives.

Ayesha Maliwal (Lecturer, Mathematics and Statistics)

MAT 116: Introduction to Calculus as a part of the course, students do up to two projects exploring application of the concepts to potential real-life situations. For Fall, I intend to do a project on logistic growth curves and exponential growth rate (a characteristic of pandemics). Our team decided not to pursue this project this semester since numbers tell a powerful story and could have potentially caused anxiety to some students who are directly affected by it. This means that we may be offering students the option to choose between working on this project and another one, to ensure no student has to relive a traumatic experience.

Kirsten Jacobson (Chair, Philosophy)

PHI 104: Existentialism and Literature will have a final section focusing on existential ethics and responses to the pandemic (including issues pertaining to racial disparities and other injustices directed toward vulnerable populations during the pandemic).

PHI 431: Advanced Topics in the Philosophy of Art will be focusing the following course on issues related to the pandemic and crises.

Liliana Herakova (Lecturer, Communication and Journalism)

CMJ420 SL: Health Communication (*currently being taught*)

Each week, we integrate the topical focus with COVID-19 related news and resources - for example, we explored the role of communication in developing and enhancing health literacy through [this multilingual project](#); when discussing communication on healthcare teams, we focused on an [LA Times article](#) about inequitable access to PPE, sick leave, and hazard pay among healthcare workers; students reflected on health disparities as they play out on such teams and what that communicates about professional socialization, decision making, and hierarchies within the healthcare system. **This kind of integration has been preparing students to shift the focus of their service learning projects and I am so proud of the work they are doing, using principles of supportive communication, relationship-centered care, de-stigmatization, and communicating wellness at work.** Since the beginning of the semester, all teams have been focused on addressing a health issue in our community via (re-)shaping communication channels, processes, messages, and narratives. But since the announcement of the pandemic and our varied personal experiences with it, the focus has shifted entirely on COVID-19 related support. Two of the teams in the class are working with a local respiratory clinic to assist their transition to telehealth and to increase access to these services to their patients, almost all of whom are high-risk (due to pre existing respiratory illnesses), mostly rural and elderly. One team is collaborating with the Mabel Wadsworth Center and Partners for Peace on "kitchen table conversation" guides on topics of relationship and sexual health (the idea is using those during "quarantine" in both physical and virtual spaces). The last team in the class is developing a resource that provides informational, instrumental, and emotional support to fellow UMO students during this time of uncertainty.

Mark Brewer

POS 348: The Politics of Sport

Significant elements of COVID-19 have been added to the class sessions on The Place of Sport in American Society, Sport and American National Identity, Sports and Economics, College Athletics, and the Olympics. Together these sections represent 50% of the course. A little COVID-19 was added into Sports and Gambling as well.