

Big Problems

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The Big Problems courses that follow are among a growing number of capstone experiences offered as electives to fourth-year students in the College. Under special circumstances involving senior project needs, third-year students may petition for special permission to register for a Big Problems course.

“Big problems” are characteristically matters of global or universal concern that intersect with several disciplines and affect a variety of interest groups. They are problems for which solutions are crucially important but not obviously available.

Big Problems courses emphasize process as well as content: learning how to creatively confront difficult intellectual and pragmatic problems wider than one’s area or expertise and to consider how to deal with the uncertainty that results. This often points to the importance of working in groups. If the core curriculum provides a basis for learning and the majors develop more specialized knowledge, the Big Problems experience leads to the development of skills for thinking about and dealing with the important but unyielding issues of our time.

Big Problems courses encourage linkage to B.A. papers, research experiences, or internships. They use interdisciplinary team teaching, seeking to cross disciplines and divisions and to transcend familiar models of content, organization, and instruction.

Each year a Big Problems Lecture Series features outside speakers and additional workshops for interested students.

Courses: Big Problems (BPRO)

22200. Boundaries, Modules, and Levels. (=HIPS 20601, PHIL 22210) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course investigates conceptual problems arising in the attempt to analyze the structure of complex systems in a variety of biological, psychological, social, and technological contexts, and how the answers may vary with how the boundaries are drawn. We confront descriptive, critical, and normative puzzles arising from questions such as the following: Is a society just a collection of people, an organized collection of people, or something more? Can a corporation have rights and responsibilities? Can groups have identities? Why are minds in the head, or are they? And are genes the bearers of heredity? *W. Wimsatt, J. Haugeland. May be offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

22300. Empire (=HUMA 22303, ISHU 22303) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course is designed for students who have met their civilization studies requirement by participating in one of the College’s study abroad

programs. Students read a variety of texts (e.g., writings of Thucydides, Vergil, and Forster; documents from the caliphate of Andalusia; current articles). By viewing their own experiences in the light of Arab, British, Greek, and Roman empires, students reflect on America's role in the cultures and countries of the twenty-first century. *M. L. Behnke. Autumn, 2007.*

22500. Medicine and Society: Things, Bodies, and Persons. (=BIOS 29310, HIPS 22501, PHIL 22501) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing. This course does not meet requirements for the biological sciences major.* This course explores ethically controversial topics in contemporary medicine (e.g., abortion, the right to die, genetic enhancement, role of religion in medicine). The course is team taught by faculty from medicine and philosophy. For each topic, we discuss current dilemmas that arise in clinical medicine and elucidate the moral basis for different responses to the dilemmas. *D. Brudney, J. Lantos, A. Winter. Winter, 2008.*

22600. Autonomy and Medical Paternalism. (=BIOS 29311, HIPS 21901, HIST 25102, PHIL 22601) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing. This course does not meet requirements for the biological sciences major.* This course is an in-depth analysis of what we mean by autonomy and how that meaning might be changed in a medical context. In particular, we focus on the potential compromises created by serious illness in a person with decision-making capacity and the peculiar transformations in the meaning of autonomy created by advance directives and substituted judgment. *This course is offered in odd years. D. Brudney, J. Lantos, A. Winter. Winter, 2007.*

23400. Is Development Sustainable? (=ENST 24400, HIPS 23400, PBPL 24400) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This is a discussion course for students without a background in environmental issues. Its aim is to grapple with the "big problem" of sustainable development. We analyze problematical issues underlying population growth, resource use, environmental transformation, and the plight of developing nations through a consideration of economic, political, scientific, and cultural institutions and processes. *T. Steck, S. Pieck. Spring.*

23500. The Organization of Knowledge. (=HIPS 23000, HUMA 23502, ISHU 23502) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course explores several structures of knowledge that students may have encountered in their core and specialized education, with the goal of enabling students to identify and explore the implications of these different structures. We ask whether all knowledge is relative, and if so, to what? When things are structured differently, does that mean that knowledge is lost? Or are there several diverse ways of structuring knowledge, each of which may be viable? We read a wide range of classical and modern thinkers in various disciplines. *H. Sinaiko, W. Sterner. Offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

23600. Social Context, Biology, and Health. *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* We take for granted our relationships with other people as fundamental. Yet when these connections are absent or disrupted, our minds and biology are likewise

disrupted. Epidemiological studies have now clearly established a relationship between social isolation and both mental and physical health. This course adopts an integrative interdisciplinary approach that spans the biological to sociological levels of analysis to explore the interactions involved and possible mechanisms by which the social world gets under the skin to affect the mind, brain, biology, and health. *J. Cacioppo, M. McClintock, L. Waite. Not offered 2006-08.*

23900. Biological and Cultural Evolution. (=BIOS 29286, CHSS 37900, HIPS 23900, LING 11000, PHIL 22500/32500) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing or consent of instructor. Core background in evolution and genetics strongly recommended.* This course draws on readings in and case studies of language evolution, biological evolution, cognitive development and scaffolding, processes of socialization and formation of groups and institutions, and the history and philosophy of science and technology. We seek primarily to elaborate theory to understand and model processes of cultural evolution, while exploring analogies, differences, and relations to biological evolution. This has been a highly contentious area, and we examine why. We seek to evaluate what such a theory could reasonably cover and what it cannot. *W. Wimsatt, S. Mufwene. Winter. Offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

24100. Science and Religion. (=HIPS 24200) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* In this course, we explore some aspects of the relations between science and religion in Western culture (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Islamic). Questions include: What are science and religion? Are they competing intellectual systems for making sense of the world? What are social institutions? Can they be in conflict with one another? Can they support one another? Each of the instructors treats these questions by examining certain historical episodes and texts to add different perspectives to the material. *R. Perlman. Not offered 2006-08.*

24200. Psychoneuroimmunology: Links between the Nervous and Immune Systems. (=BIOS 02370, PSYC 24150) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing, and BIOS 20180s or 20190s. This course meets requirements for the biological sciences major.* This course covers all aspects of neuroimmunoendocrinology at the molecular, cellular, and organismal and social levels. *M. McClintock, J. Quintans. Spring, 2007.*

24204. Romantic Love: Cultural and Psychological Perspectives. (=HUDV 24204, ISHU 24204) *PQ: BPRO 24104 or consent of instructor.* Romantic love is a "big problem" because of its central role in personal life and its ambiguous relationship to marriage in modern society. This course on love focuses in depth on the experience of romantic love from psychological, social scientific, historical, and humanistic perspectives. Classes include informal lectures and discussion of readings supplemented by cinematic presentations. *D. Orlinsky, K. Mitova. Spring, 2007.*

24300. Globalization and Neo-Liberalism. (=INST 24300) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Developments over the past decade have led a number of

former leading enthusiasts of globalization to raise basic criticisms of the neo-liberal paradigm. In doing this, they have echoed and drawn attention to the results of economists and historians whose work undercuts the basic premises of neo-liberalism. This course explicates a varied collection of this work, viewed as a critique and alternative to neo-liberalism, by economic historians (e.g., Hobsbawm, Williams, Arrighi, Polanyi) and economists (e.g., Palley, Taylor, Stretton, Marglin, Eatwell, MacEwan, Blecker, Brenner). *M. Rothenberg, R. Baiman. Not offered 2006-08.*

24400. Concepts of the Self from Antiquity to the Present. *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This seminar explores the evolution of ideas about the nature and formation of selfhood from classical antiquity to the present. Along the way, we look at Greek tragedy, Stoic philosophy, early Christian texts, and the conceptual models of selfhood and self-understanding behind Descartes, Kant, Freud, Foucault, and others. Students should be prepared to deal extensively with scholarship on self, ethics, and community across the fields of philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and social history. *S. Bartsch, J. Goldstein. Not offered 2006-08.*

24500. Language and Globalization. (=ANTH 27705/47905, CRPC 27500/37500, LING 27500/37500) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Distinguishing myths from facts, this course articulates the different meanings of *globalization*, anchors them in a long history of socioeconomic colonization, and highlights the specific ways in which the phenomena it names have affected the structures and vitalities of languages around the world. We learn about the dynamics of population contact and their impact on the evolution of languages. *S. Mufwene, W. Wimsatt. Winter, 2007.*

24600. Images of Time: Japanese History through Films and Other Texts. (=CMST 24904, EALC 24601, HIST 24600) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing required; knowledge of Japanese not required.* Focusing attention on the emerging nexus between audio-visual media and historical studies, this course deals with theories of time, history, and representation while making those ideas and problems concrete through a study of the way in which history in Japan has been mediated by the cinema. A close reading of a wide range of films produced in and about Japan in tandem with primary and secondary materials on theories of time, images, and national history highlights the historicity and history of both film and Japan. All materials in English. *J. Ketelaar, M. Raine. Spring, 2007.*

24700. From Neo-Liberalism to Neo-Imperialism. (=INST 24700) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course examines the thesis advanced by a number of recent thinkers on the organic ties between neo-liberal doctrine and the rise of a new imperialism. In *False Dawn*, the noted conservative political theorist John Gray gives a critique of the global free market. In *Capital Resurgent: Roots of the Neoliberal Revolution*, two important left critics, economists Gerard Dumenil and Dominique Levy, investigate the economic roots of neo-liberalism. Finally, in reading two recent works by the economic geographer David Harvey (*A Brief*

History of Neo-Liberalism and The New Imperialism) we consider in depth the link between neo-liberalism and imperialism. *M. Rothenberg, R. Baiman. Spring, 2007.*

24800. The Complex Problem of World Hunger. (=BIOS 02810, ENST 24800, SOSC 26900) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Few of our policymakers are experts in economics, agronomy, food science, and molecular biology, yet all of these disciplines are essential for developing strategies to end world hunger. Choosing one country as a test case, we look at the history, politics, governmental structure, population demographics, and agricultural challenges. We then study the theory of world markets, global trade, and microeconomics of developing nations, as well as the promise and limitation of traditional breeding and biotechnology. *J. Malamy, D. Levine. Spring. Offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

24900. Biology and Sociology of AIDS. (=BIOS 02490) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This interdisciplinary course deals with current issues of the AIDS epidemic. Readings are based primarily on *AIDS Update 2006*. *J. Quintans, H. Pollack. Winter, 2007.*

25200. Body and Soul: Approaches to Prayer. (=HUDV 25200, RLST 28800) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Why do we pray? Why do we experience prayer practice as reaching out towards an intentional being whom we cannot (except in representation) touch, see, or hear? This course approaches an answer to that question by looking at the way we pray, particularly in a Christian context. What kinds of bodily engagement do we find in prayer; what impact might prayer practice have upon our bodies; what bodily features of prayer might help to explain why its practice has been so compelling to so many for so many years? *T. Luhrmann, A. Boden. May be offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

25300. Utopias. (=ARTH 22804, ENGL 25302, HUMA 25350, ISHU 25350) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course surveys significant moments in utopian practice, choosing case studies from among Plato's *Republic*, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, national experiments, utopian communities, socialism, technophilia, new social movements, radical conservatism, and fundamentalisms. We focus on literature and art, including music, painting, architecture and urbanism, and film and digital media. *L. Berlant, R. Zorach. Spring. May be offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

26050. Memory, Commemoration, and Mourning. (=AASR 30001, FNDL 23312, HUDV 27102, PSYC 25450, RLST 28102) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course focuses on the manner in which we make use of the past, the personal past, the collective past, and the place of social and historical change in retelling and rewriting life-history and history. The course begins with a discussion of memory, conceptions of the personal and historic past, and such related issues as nostalgia, mourning, and the significance of commemoration in monument and ritual. These issues are explored in a number of topics such

as twentieth-century war memorials, high school and college reunions, and the Holocaust and its representation in contemporary European society. *B. Cohler, P. Homans. Spring, 2007.*

26103. On Love: Cultural and Psychological Perspectives. (=HUDV 24103, ISHU 24102) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course explores the nature of love and love relationships from humanistic and social scientific perspectives. Readings and presentations include classic philosophic and literary works (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare) and modern writers (e.g., Freud, Tillich, DeRougemont). We focus first on the qualities that characterize the phenomenon of love in general. Then, more specifically, we examine psychological, social, and cultural aspects of romantic love. Lectures and class discussions may be supplemented by cinematic materials. *D. Orlinsky, K. Mitova. Not offered 2006-08.*

26102. War. *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* In this course, we ask such questions as: Why do humans go to war? What is the experience of war like? How does war affect the individual and his society? What is a just war? An unjust war? Can we conceive of a world without war? We read and discuss texts such as Homer's *The Iliad*, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam*, and Glen Gray's *The Warriors*. The readings serve primarily as a starting point for the discussion of the above questions and any other issues raised by the class that are related to war. *M. Ehre, H. Sinaiko. Not offered 2006-08.*

26200. Military Theory and Practice. *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* (=ANTH 23400/32500) This course introduces classic military theories (i.e., Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, Upton, Lyautey, Mahan, Keegan) and their deployments. It also considers the impact of new technologies on conditions of possibility for coercion. Particular attention is given to anti-colonial and counter-insurgency campaign strategies (i.e., Gandhi, Fanon, Truman, Rostow) and the rise and style of American power, including new concepts and practices of military intervention (e.g., "compellence" theory) being developed in the contemporary United States. *J. Kelly. Not offered 2006-08.*

26300. Globalization: History and Theory. (=HIST 29901, INST 27201) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course makes sense of globalization as a historical phenomenon focusing primarily on the long twentieth century, but with a look back into the "deep history" of the making of the contemporary world. While the course has a theoretical bent, it should be taken as an introduction into modern history. It has three goals in particular: (1) It introduces the main concepts and theories of globalization. (2) It explores key moments, processes, and events in the annals of globalization. (3) It highlights the nature of contentions over the terms of global order. *M. Geyer, C. Bright. Spring. Not offered 2006-08.*

26600. Antonioni's Films: Reality and Ambiguity. (=ARTH 28904, CMST 26801, ISHU 26602) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* In this in-depth study of several Antonioni films, our eye is on understanding his view of reality and the elements of ambiguity that pervade all of his films. Together, as a film scholar and physicist, we bring out these aspects of his work together with his unique cinematic contributions. This course introduces students to this poet of the cinema and the relevance of Antonioni's themes to their own studies and their own lives. *Y. Tsivian, B. Winstein. Winter, 2007.*

27000. Perspectives on Imaging. (=ARTH 26900/36900, BIOS 02927, CMST 27300/37300, HIPS 24801) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Taught by an imaging scientist and an art historian, this course explores scientific, artistic, and cultural aspects of imaging from the earliest attempts to enhance and capture visual stimuli through the emergence of virtual reality systems in the late twentieth century. Topics include the development of early optical instruments (e.g., microscopes, telescopes), the invention of linear perspective, the discovery of means to visualize the invisible within the body, and the recent emergence of new media. We also consider the problem of instrumentally mediated seeing in the arts and sciences and its social implications for our image-saturated contemporary world. *B. Stafford, P. La Riviere. Autumn, 2006.*

27600. Creation and Creativity. (=ANTH 27610, ISHU 27650, SOSC 28601) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This seminar explores several creation stories from anthropological, literary, philosophical, and psychological perspectives. We compare the accounts of the beginning in *Genesis*, Hesiod's *Theogony*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Bhagavad Gita*, the Maya's *Popol Vuh*, and other sources, including Native American ones. We explore the ways cosmic creation has been imagined in world culture. We also delineate human literary creativity and ask about the relationship between individual creativity and the cultural myths of creation. We consider at least one modern theory of the beginning of the universe. *P. Friedrich, K. Mitova. Spring, 2007.*

28000. Terror, Religion, and Aesthetics. (=HMRT 28801, ISHU 28201, RLST 23401) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Through our contemporary experiences of terrorist acts, we apprehend the no-citizens' land of life without a social contract, of the violent "state of nature" among people. In varied genres (e.g., poems, plays, novels, memoirs, essays), we engage with the transformative powers of diverse aesthetics (e.g., catharsis, the sublime, theatre of cruelty, realism, fable, satire) and of religious faiths (e.g., deism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Sufism, Buddhism) to counteract terror and redeploy our civil status in society. *A. Boden, M. Browning. Autumn, 2007.*

Registration in the following courses is not restricted to third- or fourth-year College students. For descriptions of associated courses and programs, see the relevant sections of the catalog.

BIOS 22257. Darwinian Medicine. (=HIPS 25900) *PQ: Completion of the general education requirement in the biological sciences. R. Perlman. Autumn.*

HMRT 20100/30100. Human Rights I: Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights. (=HIST 29301/39301, INTL 31600, ISHU 28700/38700, LAWS 41200, LLSO 25100, MAPH 40000, PHIL 21700/31600) *M. Green. Autumn.*

HMRT 20200/30200. Human Rights II: Historical Underpinnings of Human Rights. (=HIST 29302/39302, INRE 39400, ISHU 28800/38800, LAWS 41300, LLSO 27100) *M. Geyer. Winter.*

HMRT 20300/30300. Human Rights III: Contemporary Issues in Human Rights. (=HIST 29303/39303, INRE 57900, ISHU 28900/38900, LAWS 57900, PATH 46500) *S. Gzesh. Spring.*