

Spring 2025 Social Science Colloquia



Winning Combinations in Health Behavior: Exploring Health Priorities

John Roncone

HONOR 340 – 001

T 5:15pm – 6:30pm (Hybrid)

This social science discipline colloquium examines health behavior exploring health priority areas, such as, physical activity, stress management, and other dimensions of health-related physical fitness. The priority areas explored will be beneficial to students reflecting on their own health behavior(s), quality of life/healthy life years/lifestyle management. Students will leave the course with a sound knowledge of key health components related to mind/body health, research as well as health behavior models/theories.

S.T.E.M. in the News

Carrie Tomko

HONOR 340 – 004

MWF 10:45am - 11:35am

Students in this colloquium have an opportunity to reflect on innovations, such as: The latest in available smart phones... The ongoing discussion of global warming... The usage of self-driving cars... The challenges of feeding a growing population through technological advances in agriculture...! As new research and technology emerge, resulting innovations enter our ever-changing world. How are these innovations communicated to the general public? The mass media is the place where the general population learns of innovations. Students in this colloquium will engage in the analysis of the media's reporting and then the population's reaction to S.T.E.M.'s impact on society, discerning how emerging research and technology are embraced or refused by society via communication and the media's role in construction of a new reality.

The Honors Tradition

Carrie Tomko

HONOR 340 – 005

MWF 11:50am – 12:40pm

In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the Honors at The University of Akron, students who enroll in this colloquium will have the honor to research the history of The Williams Honors College, formerly known as the Honors College and the Honors Program. Using archival historical documents—digital and hardcopy—a timeline of key events will be developed, along with key moments and key people in the history of Honors, key faculty and staff, key alumni, keynote speakers, key events, and key individuals who have propelled The Williams Honors College to academic successes through its 50-year history. The information that is gathered by the students in this colloquium will be used to document the history and aid in celebratory plans for the year 2025.

Salsa: History in Motion

Martha Santos

HONOR 340-007

TTh 2:00pm – 3:15pm

This interdisciplinary colloquium provides the opportunity to examine and experience the history, aesthetics, and movement of salsa dancing, from its origins in the Afro-Cuban rhythms and dances of enslaved and formerly enslaved peoples to its modern emergence in the Latin neighborhoods of New York during the 1970s. Through reading, discussion, and debate, we will analyze how the various rhythms and dances encompassed in salsa emerged within complex histories of globalization, colonialism, enslavement, immigration, and cultural commodification in the Caribbean and New York. Through movement, we will explore the embodied strategies through which various peoples navigated their historical circumstances and the meanings they assigned to their



music and dance. As an experience in interdisciplinarity, this course invites us to imagine and participate in new ways of learning, teaching, and communicating history. Assessment will not be based on dancing ability. Instead, the course will develop its own creative language to reflect on our discovery of the history and motion of salsa.

Democracy, Objectivity and the US Constitution

Nathaniel Blower

HONOR 340- 008

MWF 9:40am – 10:30am

How should we read the United States Constitution? As a 'living document' whose meaning can change and grow alongside changes and growth in American democratic society? Or as something whose meaning is more 'static', more 'objective'? Recently more than ever, perhaps, it seems to be the second option that is preferred by justices of the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). But is it even possible to interpret the Constitution without injecting any life into it? And if it is possible, do the recent decisions of SCOTUS (on abortion and gun control, for instance) actually live up to this ideal? These questions, and a number of related political, social and philosophical questions, will be our focus in this colloquium.

The American Civil Rights Movement: History and Impact

Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval

HONOR 340 – 009

T 3:00pm – 6:00pm

Students will explore the origins of the Civil Rights Movement, which spans between 1954-1970 and the historical impact on marginalized communities. Through in-depth analysis of key events, leaders, organizations and the role of ordinary citizens, students will gain an understanding of the strategies and tactics employed by activists to challenge discriminatory laws and practices. With the use of readings, historical documents and multimedia materials, students will analyze and discuss historical narratives and explore the ongoing legacy of the Civil Rights Movement and its relevance to subsequent movements in the U.S.

Winning Combinations in Health Behavior: Combating Obesity

John Roncone

HONOR 340 - 502 (Online Asynchronous)

HONOR 340 – 503 (Online Asynchronous)

This social science discipline colloquium examines health behavior in an exploration to combat obesity. Areas that will be carefully examined include: Current obesity trends, assessment of body weight and body composition, etiology of obesity, health and economic consequences of obesity, dietary interventions for obesity prevention and new insights and looking into future insights. We will engage in meaningful online discussions as well as assignments, learning from other's experiences and guidance from the professor, whom has an extensive knowledge in health education and promotion. Our main book will be, *Nutrition and Obesity: Assessment, Management, and Prevention*, by Alexandra G. Kazaks, and Judith S. Stern. Other secondary resources will be provided to the students by the professor. Assignment readings, HW/Labs, behavior change models/theories, online discussions, and other assignments will be assessments utilized in the course. Brightspace will be utilized to deliver this online asynchronous course for content, grades, communication/announcements, communication/class roster and emails, assessments/assignments, and communications/discussions and course materials/calendar. Students will leave the course with a sound knowledge of health behavior and exploring areas in combating the obesity epidemic in the U.S.

Spring 2025 Social Science Colloquia



The Willpower Superpower: The Epic of LeBron James

Tim Gabel

HONOR 340 – 506 (Online Synchronous)

W 3:05pm – 5:35pm

This course conceptually focuses on the intersection of psychology and storytelling, more specifically how the dimensions of willpower create self-understanding when life is viewed narratively. In this sense, we think of willpower as an agentic force for not only accomplishing external goals, but also how we, as individuals, can transform our inner selves and society as a collective. While *The Willpower Superpower: The Epic of LeBron James* is naturally about a basketball icon, it is more about how his journey, discovery and application of willpower—for better and worse—informs the development of our own. It is a unique, and surprisingly local, paradigm to analyze these concepts. In fact, the willpower and personal story we all have, when understood and applied, is a force as prodigious as LeBron James' basketball ability.