LAYERS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE
Molecules, Methods, & Metaphysical Madness

Human beings are complex organisms: biological, mechanical, and social. These dimensions interact in a variety of ways to give rise to what we call “the human experience.” In this course, we will explore different layers of the human experience from the perspective of five different disciplines. This course is designed for students who are either interested in exploring how different fields theorize the concept of the human condition, and/or students who are considering post-Baccalaureate education and want to get a glimpse into the nature of academic research. The course will cover themes in the following areas of study:

**Biomedical Engineering**

**Do you know what your brain is doing right now?** Cutting edge brain imaging techniques allow us to watch the brain at work, and what we are learning is both exciting and frightening. Learn about how our rapidly evolving understanding of the human brain is changing our perceptions of our world, ethics, and ourselves.

**Religion**

**How do humans experience the religious?** Our culture often employs narrow definitions of religion, yet historically it has been defined much more broadly. Using the experiences of enslaved peoples in Georgia, we will challenge popular assumptions about religion, and use our findings to explore the religious in modern culture.

**Biology**

**Have you ever reprogrammed bacteria? Have you ever wanted to?** You will learn about the molecular world of RNA, how it can be used to reprogram bacteria, and why some scientists hypothesize that an "RNA World" preceded our modern world of DNA.

**Sociology**

**Should the WNBA have skimpier uniforms?** Female athletes struggle with balancing athleticism and femininity. Many try to minimize this by wearing make-up or by putting bows in their hair for games. Do all female athletes deal with this struggle?

**Philosophy**

**What makes the human structurally different from the animal?** We tend to think humans are radically different from other animals. However, recent studies in animal cognition and animal behavior suggest that perhaps humans and other animals are not as distinct as we have been led to believe and that notions like *morality* and *rationality* are shared between human and non-human animals.