

Coordinator:

Craig Watson, Professor, English

The Honors Program at Monmouth College is intended for a select group of well-qualified students and incorporates a variety of special courses germane to liberal education. The Program is designed to reinforce and extend the perspectives of the General Education curriculum, but it does not substitute for it. Each of the courses is distinctive and may not be cross-listed for credit in other departments. The first course in the Program serves both to extend the issues raised in Introduction to Liberal Arts and to introduce the perspectives of various branches of intellectual inquiry. In the middle section of the Program students pursue in-depth examinations of the thought and work of figures and of events, movements, and ideas instrumental in shaping our world. Finally, students enroll in a senior level independent study course whose outcome is a substantial interdisciplinary project or paper accomplished under the guidance of mentors from more than one academic field.

. To be recognized as an Honors Graduate of Monmouth College, a student must have at least 17 semester hours, including Honors I (110) and II (410), attain at least a B- in each course, and graduate with a 3.5 GPA. A participant in an officially sanctioned ACM-GLCA off-campus study program may be released from one HONR 210 course. Possible release from the Senior Year Honors Course because of Off-Campus Program attendance will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with the Honors Committee.

Courses are reserved initially for Honors students. If space is available, others may enroll with the consent of the instructor.

Honors 100. This one-credit course provides an introduction to the Honors program and to a portfolio of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities available to those enrolled in the program. An important part of Honors 100 will be to describe special opportunities Honors students may take in two potentially related areas: 1) research, travel and study; and 2) service learning (public scholarship) and leadership. In this second area the course will map pathways students may follow: through service learning experiences to limited expertise in a particular area of public scholarship, and finally, ideally, to senior leadership and mentoring roles on and off-campus. The goal here is student enrichment, whose achievement will be estimated by the student's senior Honors Portfolio (submitted as part of the requirements of Honors 420) and further measured by the student's bona fide candidacy for a variety of post-baccalaureate scholarships. One or two sections offered annually, often in the spring semester as a co-requisite with Honors 110. (One credit.)

HONR 110. Honors I. Wonder, Ideas,

Trials. A critical examination of texts and issues related to the acquisition of knowledge, the various means by which we know, and historical-cultural factors influencing what we know. The course is organized from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. (Three credits.) (Prof. Craig Watson; spring semester)

HONR 210. Selected Topics. A critical examination of a seminal figure, event, movement, or idea recognized as significant in shaping our collective history. A minimum of three courses is required. Prerequisite: sophomore status. (Three credits each.)

Current Courses in Selected Topics:

HONR 210. Global Climate Change. The Earth System includes the interactions between the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, cryosphere and the lithosphere. Additionally, these interactions occur across a spectrum of time scales, from days to millennia. As humans continue to alter the Earth, we will need an understanding of how the Earth's physical, chemical, and biological systems interact. What were the driving factors responsible for past climate change, and what role will they play in our future? How do we predict the effects of human actions on the Earth System? In this course we will take an interdisciplinary view of the changes to the Earth to understand past, present and future climate changes and their environmental consequences.

The Births and Deaths of Tragedy. The course first examines literary definitions and representative types of tragic drama, tracing the genre from Greek plays and Aristotle's *Poetics* through Senecan, Elizabethan, neoclassical French, then modern European and American works. Readings and discussion next focus attention upon philosophical theories of tragedy, particularly of the 19th century—theories which find in literary works ways of describing "tragedy in the world." Consideration is subsequently given to Freud's tragic consciousness and literary indebtedness to Greek tragedy; and to reports of intellectual and literary historians in the 20th century which pronounce the "death of tragedy." (Prof. Craig Watson)

Corn. The agricultural revolution that marked the transition of some humans from hunter-gatherer to agricultural lifestyles is one of the most profound in the history of our species. This course will explore relationships between humans and plants by using corn as a model

system. Topics will include: the history of grasses; New World corn-based cultures; prairie ecology; conventional and organic farming; genetic engineering; bioethics; and ecological economics. Labs will include field trips to local museums, farms and facilities involved in corn and meat production.

Evil. This course engages the theme of evil and our responses to evil. Course material will include an introduction to what philosophers of religion call “the problem of evil” (how can we simultaneously believe in an all-powerful, benevolent deity, given the existence of evil in the world?); how different religious traditions have addressed the problem of suffering; the western tradition of belief in an Anti-Christ as the source of evil; and contemporary discussions that encourage broadening our understanding of what counts as evil so as to include experiences of physical pain, helplessness, poverty and torture. The course includes literature as well as scholarship from the fields of religious studies, history, philosophy, politics and education.

Globalization. One of the most significant trends of the second half of the twentieth century has been a dramatic increase in circulation of people, commodities, and cultural products in the world. This phenomenon, generally referred to as “globalization,” has posed a serious challenge to social scientists. This is so because the new social and political formations wrought by globalization break down familiar expectations that human societies can be understood in terms of specific geographic and cultural regions. In this context of complex flows and unexpected linkages of people, capital, resources, and political relationships, how are we to define meaningful analytical and interpretive boundaries? This course will examine globalization by first introducing students to the major issues discussed by recent scholarship on globalization. For the second half of the course, we will focus on a particular region—South Asia—in order to challenge the premise that globalization is a 20th-century phenomenon. Globalization in South Asia began not with the introduction of McDonald’s and global capital investment, nor with the 19th-century dominance of the British raj. It began with the earlier encounters between India and the Arab and European world. The impact of this globalization process will be examined closely. In doing so, we will come to a general understanding of the impact of globalization on regions, peoples, and cultures.

The Human Dialogue. A course organized around the theme of dialogue as a principle for interpreting the human condition. The human sciences most commonly focus on either the individual self (e.g., psychology) or the social structures within which people live (e.g., sociology). By contrast, a dialogical approach centers attention on the interaction between individuals as a generative force which can account for outcomes of both self and social structure. Topics covered while examining the dialogical principle will include: dialogue as a pragmatic of communication and conversation, dialogue as a philosophical

concept, dialogue as a basis for ethics, and dialogue as the progenitor of the self. Students will read and discuss critical texts, reflect on dialogical experience in journals, analyze communicative interactions, and pursue an individual project. (Prof. Lee McGann)

New York: Portrait of a City. The course is an exploration of New York City from multiple angles. From an inquiry into the archaeology of the city, her Native American and colonial roots; to her emergence as a North American trading, and later industrial metropolis; a port of entry for millions of immigrants; to her current position as an undisputed global financial, cultural and political center, this course will probe into the complex history and social and cultural dynamics of this unique city.

Nobel Laureates: Modern Literature. The course is an overview of modern world literature by way of the recipients of the Nobel Prize in Literature. Works will be selected from the following authors: Albert Camus, Yasunari Kawabata, Samuel Beckett, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Wole Soyinka, Heinrich Böll, Thomas Mann, Naguib Mahfouz, Luigi Priandello, Ivo Andrić, Patrick White, Czeslaw Milosz, and Nadine Gordimer. If feasible, a work by the recipient of the 1998 prize will be included. The primary focus of the course is a critical appreciation of these writings as works of art. Secondly, the breadth of the literature will invite comparative analysis both in literary and cultural terms.

Reading Through The Millennia. An examination of texts from three millennial transitions (1 B.C., 1000 A.D., and 2000 A.D.). With an emphasis on general cultural and historical characteristics as well as prophetic/predictive aspects of each period.

Signifying Voices: The Caribbean. An in-depth study of the Anglophone, Francophone, and Hispanophone Caribbean, including the Greater Antilles (Cuba, Haiti, The Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Jamaica), and the Lesser Antilles (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Trinidad) and touching on Mexico and the countries of Central and South America where their histories and cultures pertain to the Caribbean. The emphasis is on understanding the peoples of the region through their own eyes, and largely through their literary traditions, but also including other artistic traditions, notably music and dance. Course participants will also study the history and the politically and economically strategic significance of the region.

Successful Aging. Our society tends to have a widespread negative attitude toward the elderly that is primarily based on negative myths and stereotypes perpetuated by the media. This course will assess biological, psychological, societal, and cultural influences on adult health and aging as well as evaluate

current efforts to maximize both our physical and psychological health as we age. Furthermore, students in this course will assess the current devaluation of the elderly and evaluate those views with the help of older adults we meet during the semester.

Strange Worlds: The Quantum World,

The Early Universe, and The World of Complexity. The ideas of modern physics have profoundly changed our view of the universe and our role in it. The application of those ideas has had and will continue to have tremendous technological, social and ethical consequences. This course will focus on the conceptual understanding of quantum theory, cosmology, theories of chaos, and on the philosophical and practical consequences of those ideas. Particular attention will be paid to the historical development of these ideas and to the experimental data that support them. The consequences of a world view that includes quantum physics, modern cosmology, and new understandings of complexity will be discussed and analyzed in detail. This discussion may include topics dealing with ethical dilemmas and questions that arise because of both the world view and the practical and technological results of those ideas.

The Ideal. This course will explore views on what it means to be an optimal organism, a superior species, a perfect plant, an ideal individual. Together, we will examine the machinery of life and answer the question, “What makes us more than the sum of our parts?” The majority of the course will be dedicated to studying humans and our quest to become “the ideal.” Advances in science and medicine have created new paths to attain the “ideal” and satisfy our deepest human desires: perfect health, superior performance, younger bodies, happy souls, better children, and more. How we, with modern science and medicine, are engaged in fulfilling human desires will be discussed in class, studied at off-campus sites, and experienced through hands-on activities. Technical, moral, ethical, social, and legal challenges that accompany the quest for “the ideal” will be studied and debated throughout the course.

HONR 410. Honors II. The capstone course is an independent study whose outcome is a substantial, interdisciplinary paper or project undertaken with the guidance of the Honors coordinator and at least two faculty mentors in different academic fields. Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing. (Three credits.) (Staff; fall and spring semesters)

HONR 420 Honors Portfolio: Service and Leadership. A final requirement of the program involves submission of an Honors portfolio that provides a record of a) intellectual growth and achievement over three years, and b) a summary of meaningful service to the college and/or larger community, especially as demonstrated in senior leadership roles. (One credit) (Staff, fall and spring)

semesters)

Substitution for General Education

Required Courses. Honors students who complete the program may substitute specifically designated HONR 210 courses for the following General Education requirements:

1. A lab science course in the rubric “Physical Universe and its Life Forms”
2. A “Human Societies” course other than Global Perspectives
3. An “appreciation” course under the rubric “Beauty and Meaning in Works of Art”

For any student enrolled in the Honors program but who subsequently fails to complete it, the Registrar will evaluate the student transcript upon student notification of discontinuance from Honors, and apprise the student of remaining General Education requirements for graduation.

A grade of “B-” or better is required in each Honors course. If a student falls below that grade in a particular Honors course and leaves the program subsequently, that course will substitute for a designated General Education requirement. Should a student complete all requirements in Honors but fail to graduate with “Honors” because of a college-wide G.P.A. below 3.5, “designated” Honors courses taken by the student will substitute for the pertinent General Education courses.

Application and Admission to the Honors Program.

A small number of exceptionally qualified students are invited to apply at the time of admission to the college. They submit an application essay, provide a writing sample (high school essay) and interview on campus with the program coordinator.

Most Honors students are selected for the program in the fall semester of their first year at Monmouth. Instructors of first and second-year students in ILA and foundation courses of General Education are invited to nominate candidates for the program, but with or without nomination any first-year student interested in the program at that time-- or any sophomore or sophomore transfer student-- may solicit a confidential letter of recommendation from a faculty member familiar with his or her academic performance. Typically, nominating letters and solicited letters of recommendation will address the student’s preparation in terms of intellectual capacity, written and oral abilities, and class participation. The letter may further provide a faculty member’s estimate of the applicant’s independence, initiative, and creativity. Applicants may request more than one letter of recommendation.

Applicants are asked, also, to submit a formal essay of about 400-500 words, in which they review their expectations of the program and their motivations for applying. Along with the essay, applicants should also submit a recent sample of their writing (e.g., an Introduction to Liberal Arts paper). At the time of review, the Honors Committee may also review applicants' high school records and ACT scores. All application material should be submitted to Craig Watson, Honors Program Coordinator.

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