HONORS PROGRAM

Course Schedule

Fall 2016
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D = Diversity  
I = International  
W = Writing Intensive  
ILC = Intermediate Learning Community
MISSION STATEMENT OF THE HONORS PROGRAM

The Wagner College Honors Program has the following goals:

- to operate in harmony with the College's mission statement;
- to work closely with the Admissions Office to identify incoming students who have the potential for exceptional scholarly work and recruit them into the Program;
- to recruit students from the whole student body who have special intellectual ability, but who may not reflect this in standard ways;
- to retain students who have been admitted into the Program by providing students with special courses, colloquia and independent study opportunities that are more challenging than regular courses;
- to provide students with extensive support and counseling in the pursuit of their academic and pre-professional goals;
- to develop a faculty identified with the Program who offer one-time seminars on topics of special interest to them and their students;
- to function as a source of innovation and curricular experimentation on campus;
- to utilize to the fullest the educational opportunities offered by information technology;
- to contribute to the overall enhancement of intellectual life on campus;
- to provide students with leadership opportunities by appointing them to an Honors Student Advisory Committee to work with the program's faculty Advisory Council in developing the aims of the program;
- to regularly submit the Program to self-study and revision in response to the changing nature of the student body and the College as a whole;
- to encourage students to participate in regional and national meetings of honors students and other forms of experiential education;
- to promulgate students' written and other works that are products of their work in the Program; and
- to provide opportunities for social gatherings among students in the Program.

The Wagner College Honors Program is a member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC).
WELCOME

Welcome to the fall semester of 2016! This semester begins already in March 2016 with the registration for fall semester courses. The offered courses represent an excellent selection of academic topics, and they are taught by outstanding professors. The courses represent many academic fields at Wagner College and give all of you plenty of opportunities to expand your academic experiences.

On the following page you find a course schedule. On first sight it may appear somewhat confusing, but I believe it is still a good tool to quickly see which courses overlap in time and cannot be taken simultaneously.

On the following pages you will find course descriptions. Some of the course descriptions are accompanied by comments of the instructors that may help you in your decisions.

Behind the course descriptions, I inserted course evaluation sheets for students and instructors. Towards the end of the fall semester I will send copies of these sheets to all instructors, and I would appreciate your feedback in order to improve the Honors Program. At this time just have a look. If you have suggestions to improve the evaluation sheets, do not hesitate to contact me.

At the end you find three articles. One is about the design of honors courses from the website of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). The other is about some reasons for students why to join an Honors Program from NextStepU. The last is a very interesting article about learning –Is there a Genius in all of us?– from the BBC News Magazine.

Already now I would like to remind the current sophomores to get in contact with potential advisors for their honors thesis during their junior year. Juniors, remember to submit your project proposal signed by your mentor/advisor before the end of April 2016.

Finally, let me wish all of you a successful semester!

Dr. Horst Onken
Director of the Honors Program
Associate Professor of Zoology and Physiology
Science Building, Room 411
Office Hours: T+Th 10-11am,M, W + Th 2-3pm, M, T, Th + F afternoon on appointment
Phone: 718-420-4211
E-mail: horst.onken@wagner.edu

Stephanie Rollizo
Secretary of the Honors Program
Science Building, Room 412
Phone: 718-390-3103
Fax: 718-420-4172
E-mail: Stephanie.rollizo@wagner.edu
## COURSE SCHEDULE FOR Fall 2016

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Introduction to Management and the Arts  
**Days/Times:** T + Th 11:20am – 12:50pm

**Course Description:**
An introduction/overview of management of arts organizations. Managers and organizations, the management process, profile of the arts manager, evolution of management thought, staffing process in the arts, modern management, fundamentals of leadership and group dynamics, technology and information systems management. This course is a prerequisite for all the advanced upper level Arts Administration courses. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing.

**A comment from the instructor:**
Students will analyze issues and express reasoned opinions to determine what constitutes art versus commerce and how and when they intersect. Since arts administrators must not only understand the business principles, but must have grounding in all arts fields, the class will attend arts events and both write about and present their experiences orally to the class. The course will provide ample opportunity to improve written and oral communication skills, which are essential attributes for the successful manager.

todd.price@wagner.edu  
Phone: 4338
AH 324 Morowitz Gender in the Visual Arts
Days/Times: M 1 – 4pm
Course Description:
This course explores the relationship between gender and the visual arts, concentrating on representations of women throughout history, as well as the work of women artists. Issues of gender are examined in relation to subject matter, stylistic preference, media, reception and criticism. Issues and topics to be explored include: sexual identity in artistic production; gender, race and art; queer theory in relation to the visual arts, post-colonialism and gender, themes of motherhood, prostitution and the female body; constructions of masculinity; the gaze and the gendering of vision. We begin in the Middle Ages and continue up through the work of contemporary artists in all media including painting, sculpture, installation, photography, architecture and cinema. We will learn about these issues through seminar discussion, readings, films and first-hand viewing of works of art. Pre-requisite: any art history or gender studies course.

A comment from the instructor:

lmorowit@wagner.edu
Phone: 3151
AN 325 (I) Dietrich

Culture, Power, and Place
Days/Times: T + Th 9:40 – 11:10am

Course Description:
This course introduces the student to the field of political anthropology, the study of power in situated cultural contexts, with an emphasis in international examples. Case studies examine a variety of social movements, notably environmentalism and nationalism. We will consider the importance of ecology, religion, symbolism, and local politics in the context of a long and continuing process of globalization. Offered alternate spring semesters. **May be used to fulfill the minor in Environmental Studies.**

A comment from the instructor:

alexadietrich@wagner.edu
Phone: 4373
AR 105  Murphy

**Drawing I**

**Days/Times:** Th 1 – 4pm

Course Description: The development of skills in the representation of objects and the figure in terms of line, space, composition, and value. Emphasis is placed on basic drawing techniques and interpretative qualities of various media.

A comment from the instructor:
Although it is a class designed for absolute beginners, the Honors section of Drawing I attempts to challenge the student by assigning a writing component where the student reflects on how the class topics are utilized by both contemporary artists and artists of the past. We will include field trips to view art to help facilitate this process.
AS 108          Kozak

Astronomy: Stars and Galaxies
Days/Times: T + Th 9:40 – 11:10am

Course Description:
This course in astronomy is given for both science and non-science majors, and is multidisciplinary. One aspect deals with astrobiology—the evolution of our solar system, the formation of the earth, and the sequence of events leading up to the evolution of our own species. These topics serve as a model in the quest for discovering extrasolar planets, as well as extraterrestrial life.

Another aspect of the course deals with astrophysics—the application of the theories of Newton and Einstein in studying the life cycle of stars, as well as the formation of galaxies. Included will be a discussion of black holes and the future possibility of time travel.

The final aspect of this course will deal with cosmology—the big bang theory of how the universe began, as well as the possibility of a multiverse consisting of an infinite number of universes existing in space-time. The most recent research with high-speed particle accelerators and the possible existence of the Higgs boson will be explored as well.

Lectures will be supplemented by slides, science and science fiction film clips, and recent articles from newspapers and magazines.

Students will be required to do research at the Rose Planetarium of the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan.

A comment from the instructor:
This honors course differs from the non-honors section because students in this course will be required to select either a science book, science fiction novel, or a periodical from a selected bibliography given by the instructor. This assignment will count as a lecture exam, giving the honor student an enriched experience with the possibility of earning a higher course grade than if the student were not enrolled in the honors section. In addition, the instructor, currently serving his thirteenth year as a Solar System Ambassador for NASA/JPL, will supplement all lectures with the most up to date information on stars and galaxies.

I have taught this course for the past nine years and find it just as exciting and interesting as the students taking the course.
CH 211 | DeCicco

Organic Chemistry I
Days/Times: M, W + F 11:20am – 12:20pm

Course Description:
Three hours of lecture and three hours of laboratory weekly in each course. A presentation of the fundamental principles of organic chemistry in which the mechanisms of organic reactions are stressed. The nomenclature, structure, synthesis, reactions, and properties of the principal classes of organic compounds are described. The fundamental principles of qualitative organic analysis are presented. Prerequisites: Chemistry 111, 112.

A comment by the instructor:
This course will cover topics more quickly than a regular section of Organic Chemistry, and less time will be spent reviewing fundamental concepts from General Chemistry. Students will be expected to read through portions of the textbook before the material is covered in class. This will allow for a deeper exploration of topics that are presented, and will provide students with the opportunity to analyze, discuss, and work through more challenging problems in class. Students will also be required to attend two of the three science seminar series presentations during the semester, which will count towards their participation grade in the course.

![Chemical structures and images](image_url)

Carvone isomers in mint and caraway
EC 304 Leacy

International Finance
Days/Times: T + Th 2:40 – 4:10pm

Course Description:
This course will demythologize the worlds of foreign exchange markets, balance of payments and international financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and their affiliates. It will take an historical approach to unveil some of the major conflicts that are currently unraveling the world monetary system. We will also be discussing and structuring some possible directions for the future restructuring of the system. The course requires several policy papers in addition to in class exams and presentations. Prerequisites: Eco 101 or 102.

A comment from the instructor:

mleacy@wagner.edu
Phone: 3289
EN 111 (W, I)  Florescu

World Literature: Women’s Voices
Days/Times: M + W 11:20am – 12:50pm

Course Description:
This course offers a unique exploration into the vastness of world literature as seen, lived, and transposed into words from women’s perspectives. By focusing on the exclusive feminine vantage point, students will sophisticate their understanding and reading of literature. Selection-wise, whether belonging to Africa, Central America, South America, Eastern Europe, or Asia, this course also teaches students how to identify themes which are universally voiced out from different geographical spaces. Consequently, students start thinking about literature as a valid form of international “language.”

Required texts: *The Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri (India); *Everything is Now* by Michelle Cliff (Jamaica); *Love in a Fallen City* by Eileen Chang (China); *Krik? Krak!* by Edwidge Danticat (Haiti); “Girl” and “Biography of a Dress” by Jamaica Kincaid (Antigua); *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi (Egypt); *Second Class Citizen* (Nigeria); *The Passport* by Herta Müller (Romania-Germany); *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (Iran); Mariama Bâ, *So Long a Letter* (Senegal); Jean Rhys, *The Collected Short Stories* (Dominica); and *Short Stories by Latin American Women: Magic and the Real* (ed. by Celia Correas de Zapata).

A comment from the instructor:
Grading: Leading Discussions [30 %], 1 Journal [20%], 3 Papers (5-6 pages) [30 %], 2 Research Writing Prompts [10 %], 1 Oral Presentation [10 %]
EN/FR 356 Stalcup
(W, I)

French Cinema: Retrogrades, Rebels and Realists
Days/Times: T + Th 2:40 – 4:10pm

Course Description:
This course introduces students to the major developments in the history of French cinema. The course aims to develop students’ skills of analysis and interpretation in order to enable them to read and appreciate film as an art form. The course is divided into three parts which present the three principal moments of French cinematic history; the films of Poetic Realism from the 1920s and 1930s; the films of the New Wave from the 1950s and 1960s and fin-de-siècle films of the 1980s and 1990s. Film-viewings are supplemented by the study of film theory. The class is writing-intensive and fulfills the International Perspectives requirement. Taught in English.

A comment from the instructor:

dane.stalcup@wagner.edu
Phone: 3256
EN/RE 203  Kaelber  

Spiritual Quest in Literature  
Days/Times: W 6 – 9pm  

Course Description:  
An examination of some major pieces of fiction concerned with heroes on a search for meaning and purpose in their lives? Their search often leads them far from traditional religious beliefs. (Cross-listed as English 203 and Religion 203).

A comment from the instructor:

wkaelber@wagner.edu  
Phone: 3373
GOV/HI 260 Guarasci, Rappaport

Darwin, Marx, Freud and Picasso
Days/Times: M 6 – 9pm

Course Description:
Darwin, Marx, Freud and Picasso changed the world. Their ideas, methods and techniques affected the way we understand, practice and study: biology, medicine, human evolution, human societies, human minds and cultures. Their insights and theories changed our language and have led to social revolutions. In this course we will explore Darwin, Marx, Freud and Picasso’s basic insights and theories. We will carefully read and discuss significant portions of their work as well as some interpretive texts. The class will be run as a seminar combining lectures and class discussions but the emphasis will be on the latter. There will be a required class trip to the American Museum of Natural History and to the Museum of Modern Art, and we will use films and documentaries as supplementary material.

A comment from the instructor:

guarasci@wagner.edu
Phone: 4468

gdrapp1@verizon.net
Phone: 3253 (History Dept.)

This course is reserved for incoming freshmen!
HI 103  Palfreyman  American History Survey to Civil War  
**Days/Times:** M + W 2:40 – 4:10pm  

**Course Description:**  
An introduction to the social, cultural, political, and economics history of the nation from the conquest and colonization of North America to the reunification of the United States at the end of the Civil War. Topics include: How did Europeans, Indians, and Africans give meaning to their experiences in the “New World” created by European colonization? How were the cultures of each group transformed by their interaction? How and why did the institution of slavery begin? How was the egalitarianism of the American Revolution reconciled with the reality of American slavery? What did “democracy” mean to the Revolutionary generation and which philosophical ideas most influenced the structure of government in the new nation? How did the rise of capitalism transform gender roles in American society? What has been the relationship between democracy and capitalism? How did the political controversy over slavery cause the American Civil War?

**A comment from the instructor:**

Dr. Palfreyman has applied for this course to receive a “D”. The proposal is currently being processed by the Academic Policy Committee.
HI 362 (W, I)  Smith  Renaissance Italy  
Days/Times: W 6:00 – 9:00pm  
Course Description:  
The period of great wealth and cultural magnificence in Italy that was fostered by rapid growing city-states such as Florence and Venice. The course will focus on Renaissance music, literature, art, and architecture, as well as political life, the culture of the laboring classes, the roles of women, and the rise of highly sophisticated urban aristocracy.  

A comment from the instructor:  
We will focus on Petrarch's poetry, the power politics of the Medici, the artistic innovations of Florentine artists, humanist philosophy, Italy's fear of and fascination with the Ottoman Turks, Machiavelli and the Italian Wars, the printing revolution centered on Venice, and the complex "gendering" of Renaissance culture in the sixteenth century. This course offers students from all majors the opportunity to delve deeply into topics that connect the Renaissance to their own interests, particularly in their choice of a research project. In the past students have worked on the history of accounting (invented in Renaissance Italy), criminal procedure, sexuality and prostitution, weaponry and changing military technology, early Italian theater, Machiavelli's political thought, the rise of lute-playing, madrigal singing and viol playing, the sculpture of Michelangelo, the bawdy poetry and letters of Pietro Aretino, and the feminist writing of Moderata Fonte and Arcangela Tarabotti, among many others. The history of food and cooking is a particular interest of mine, so the class will prepare at least one renaissance feast.

 asmith@wagner.edu  
Phone: 3485
Psychology and Literature

Days/Times: T + Th 11:20am – 12:50pm

Course Description:
Overview: Essentially interdisciplinary, the course provides students with an opportunity to read a broad range of drama, poetry, and fiction from the ancient Western classics to modern literature from a psychodynamic perspective on human experience. We consider the many themes about which literature has provided insight into human feeling, thought and action long before psychology as a human science attained similar insights.

Readings: Authors and works will be chosen from among the following but does not include all of them: Euripides (Medea, Elektra), Sophocles (Oedipus Rex, Antigone), Shakespeare (Hamlet, Othello), Jonathan Swift (Gulliver’s Travels), Herman Melville (“Bartleby the Scrivener”), Joseph Conrad (“The Secret Sharer”), Emily Dickinson (selected poems), Mary Shelley (“Transformation”), Bram Stoker (Dracula), Robert Louis Stevenson (The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde), Henry James (“The Turn of the Screw”), Fyodor Dostoevsky (Notes from Underground), Edgar Allan Poe (“The Black Cat,” “The Tell-tale Heart”), Thomas Mann (Death in Venice), Lewis Carroll (Alice in Wonderland), T. S. Eliot (The Four Quartets), Hermann Hesse (Steppenwolf), and Peter Shaffer (Equus).

Selected Themes: madness, dreams; “the double,” “split personality”; perceptual disturbances (illusion, hallucination); love, jealousy, paranoia; paraphilias (odd sexual practices); incest, infanticide (murder of one’s children).

Format: The course will be a seminar in setting, with generous opportunity for presentations and discussions led by students.

This course does not require prerequisites!
Military Law

Days/Times: M + W 8:00 – 9:30am

Course Description:
This course is an introductory look into the complex world of military law. The course builds upon the general concepts of criminal justice to examine the similarities and differences between the civilian and military justice systems, to explain why the military has its own special set of laws, and to trace the evolution of today's substantive and procedural military law.

A comment from the instructor:
Military Law provides the student with an introductory look into the complex world of military law. It builds on the general concepts of criminal justice and examines the similarities and differences between the two justice systems. The students learn why the military has its own special set of laws and why the U.S. Supreme Court declared, “The military is, by necessity, a specialized society separate from civilian society. . .[and] has, again by necessity, developed laws and traditions of its own during its long history”, Parker v. Levy. The course is designed to be taught in two halves: the substantive criminal law and the procedural law. This course is taught as an honors class because it uses the "Socratic Method" of study that is used in law school. This is a course for anyone who is seriously considering law school. Former students say that this is the closest to a law school class that is offered at Wagner.
SO/FM 291  Esser  The Role of Media in Crisis Situations  Days/Times: T 9:40am – 12:50pm
ILC  Greenwald  Course Description:

This honors course will examine the role the media play in crisis situations. It will examine the public responsibility of the media in public emergences, as well as the moral and ethical limits in how the media report and interpret such situations. Case studies of the role the media have played in recent emergency situations will be examined to consider whether the media meet their professional and ethical obligations. Particular attention will be given to cross-national comparisons between the role of media in crisis situations in the United States and Israel. Wagner students work with Hadassah Academic College (Jerusalem) students to draft joint projects comparing media response to crisis situations.

THIS IS A TEAM-TAUGHT ILC!

A comment from the instructor:

jesser@wagner.edu  Phone: 3497
stephen.greenwald@wagner.edu  Phone: 3211
SPC 103 Tennenbaum

Public Speaking

Days/Times: T + Th 2:40 – 4:10pm

Course Description:
A hands-on, practical approach to the study and practice of effective oral communication. Through a series of speaking assignments students will develop strategies to assist them in organizing their thoughts and overcoming performance anxiety on their way to becoming effective speakers. Different types of speeches will be covered including informative, demonstrative and persuasive. The course also includes preparation for special occasion speeches (awards, honors, ceremonies, weddings, etc.) as well as one-on-one situations. The primary goal of the class is to create relaxed, confident speakers who can be comfortable in any situation, whether formal or socially casual.

A comment from the instructor:

"I have three hints for becoming a good speaker, Charlie Brown. You must know when to stand up, when to speak up and when to shut up."
DESIGN OF AN HONORS COURSE
(From the web site of the National Collegiate Honors Council)

Every Honors instructor is different and every Honors course is different. Still, there do seem to be some characteristics that are common to many, if not most, Honors courses. Below are some guidelines that you may find helpful. In the words of one Honors faculty member, the finest instructors are those who are "willing to share the responsibility for teaching and learning with their students. The key to a successful Honors program is not the intelligence of the student or the subject matter of the course, but the attitude and approach of the instructor."

Objectives

Most Honors courses will have the following five objectives, or some variation:

1. To help students develop effective written communication skills (including the ability to make effective use of the information and ideas they learn);
2. To help students develop effective oral communication skills (while recognizing that not all students are comfortable talking a lot in class);
3. To help students develop their ability to analyze and synthesize a broad range of material;
4. To help students understand how scholars think about problems, formulate hypotheses, research those problems, and draw conclusions about them; and to help students understand how creative artists approach the creative process and produce an original work;
5. To help students become more independent and critical thinkers, demonstrating the ability to use knowledge and logic when discussing an issue or an idea, while considering the consequences of their ideas, for themselves, for others, and for society.

Let us consider each of these briefly.

Developing written communication skills

Discussion and writing are the hallmarks of Honors classes. Students become better writers (Objective 1) by using writing, both in class and out, as a means to express their ideas. Therefore, Honors courses should emphasize papers and essays, not multiple-choice exams, and emphasize ideas and active learning over information and lectures.

How Honors faculty choose to help students develop written communication skills will depend on the discipline and on the instructor’s individual views about teaching and learning. Instructors can help students develop written skills through traditional writing assignments or through other methods such as journals, creative writing, reports, critiques, reviews, in-class writing, or the use of writing as a preliminary to discussion of issues. (In fact, the latter works extremely well to stimulate discussion. Students who have written something ahead of time are more willing to share their ideas and are less likely to talk off the top their heads in class.)

Developing oral communication skills
Students become better speakers (Objective 2) by participating in class discussion and, where appropriate, by leading class discussion. Therefore, Honors program courses should be discussion-oriented rather than lectures. Students benefit most from discussion when they are given the topic several days in advance and are asked to prepare their responses in writing ahead of time. The instructor might wish to provide some background to inform the discussion, which can then be used as a springboard to other ideas.

**Developing the ability to analyze, to synthesize, and to understand scholarly work**

Students develop the ability to think about a broad range of ideas (Objective 3) and come to understand how scholars and artists work (Objective 4) by reading and responding to primary source material, by exploring issues and problems in depth rather than quickly and superficially, and by being carefully exposed to and guided through the methods of many disciplines. Therefore, Honors courses should try to explore with students the questions and methods common to all intellectual endeavors and those that differentiate the disciplines, to give students real-world, hands-on problems to explore, and to help them understand the place of intellectual pursuit in the greater society.

The use of primary sources allows students to develop their own interpretations instead of relying on someone else’s. Cross-disciplinary readings are especially valuable, in that they give students the opportunity to synthesize ideas. But primary sources are not necessarily limited to published texts or original documents. They can, for example, be the students’ own experiences, the results of surveys or questionnaires, works of art or music, films, videos, and the like. What is important is that students have an opportunity to be engaged by primary material.

Exploring issues and problems in depth may mean that the course covers less material than conventional courses. In many courses, the amount of material covered is less important than the way the material is handled. Students need to learn to see the broad implications of each issue, as well as learning to analyze and synthesize the material. In this way, students will be able to apply what they have learned to other situations.

**Helping students become independent and critical thinkers**

Students become independent thinkers and critical thinkers (Objective 5) by working independently, yet under the guidance of responsive teachers. Therefore, an Honors course should give students a great deal of opportunity to think, write, and produce on their own (and in collaboration with their classmates) - as with papers and projects - and should give their work on-going feedback and encouragement. Honors courses should help students learn how to utilize their ideas in a broader social context - by helping them understand the origins, consequences, and principles underlying their ideas.

Honors courses should also create a classroom environment that is open to many perspectives and points of view, where students are encouraged to take intellectual risks and feel safe doing so, where they learn to respect each other (although not necessarily each others’ ideas), and where they are taught to consider both the immediate and long term consequences of their own ideas.
When students become active learners through direct involvement with an issue, they develop attitudes and habits which may make them more active in the intellectual and cultural life of the community. It also makes them more aware of the political and social realities of that community.

But for students to become truly active participants in their learning, they must become intellectual risk-takers. Therefore, Honors instructors themselves should be willing to take risks - to teach in a different manner, to be open to challenges from students, to be willing to let the classroom discussion roam freely yet fruitfully.

While Honors courses need to help students develop intellectually, instructors also need to hold them responsible for meeting the course requirements. Honors students may be brighter than the average student - more intellectually skeptical and (usually) highly motivated - but they are not necessarily better organized, better informed, or better prepared for their classes. Just like other students, they need to learn good work habits. Still, it would be unfair to hold them to a higher standard in this regard; most are, after all, 18 to 21 years old. Also, when designing an Honors course, it is important to remember that Honors courses are not meant to have more work for the sake of more work or harder work for the sake of harder work. The amount of work and its difficulty should serve a legitimate pedagogical purpose.
The Value of Honors Programs and Honors Colleges

(From the web site of the National Collegiate Honors Council)

Overview

The value of Honors programs and Honors colleges for students cannot be overemphasized. For high achieving students, Honors programs and colleges offer many opportunities to make the most of their higher education.

For the bright and talented students, participating in an Honors program provides the challenges necessary to stay motivated and stimulated. Honors education promotes lifelong learning through personal engagement, intellectual involvement, and a sense of community.

Honors classes are generally smaller, allowing students to engage in thoughtful discussion with their professors and with each other. Honors education encourages independent learning, often involving undergraduate research or creative projects. National and regional Honors conferences provide opportunities for students to present their research. Participation in co-curricular activities is also an integral part of the college Honors experience. Honors programs and colleges encourage students to develop their leadership skills, to assume mentoring and teaching responsibilities at their institutions, to study overseas, and to take internship positions. And scholarship opportunities abound in Honors!

Student Viewpoints and Experiences

On the surface, an honors program may seem like an elite club for overachievers and the exceptionally intelligent. But anyone who takes the rigorous honors courses can testify that the real reason for their membership is actually is that they simply love to learn. It is the perfect place for the student hungry for information. In my experience, an honors class is comprised of enthusiastic intellectuals who are not only smart but also supportive of each other. Among the other curious minds, I can share my ideas with people who will respond to me with their own perspectives. I have no fear of sounding “too smart,” or being a labeled a “dork” for being knowledgeable or wanting to understand more. The teacher and students facilitate a stimulating environment where each person is a welcome and prized contributor. As intellectuals, we seek insightful discussions and enlightening viewpoints, not just to pass a class but for our own personal enrichment. I believe that along with the heart, the mind is a person’s greatest gift. In an honors program, both are nurtured.

~Leticia Henry (Point Park University, class of 2011; Broadcast Journalism major)

Intercolligiate forensic competition (speech and debate) is one area in which I have found my honors education to be particularly valuable. Most other forensic teams throughout the country are composed of students studying public speaking and communication theory. While they are
often successful, the education at my honors institution has enabled us to far exceed the expectations originally set for us. In the two years our debate program has existed, we have won our division at the state championship both years. We have done all this without the monetary resources and coaching experience that other teams throughout the state and country possess, making our accomplishments that much more noteworthy. Rather, it is our honors education that has given us the tools to succeed in as competitive and aggressive an activity as speech and debate.

~Alan Gray (Florida Atlantic University; class of 2011; Law & Society and Spanish majors)

We all know living on campus is awesome. Classes are within walking distance, you can wake up ten minutes before class starts and still be on time, and there are plenty of activities on campus to be a part of. There’s only one thing that can make living on campus even better: an honors residence hall. Students in honors residence halls bond over food and fun, but we are also bound by a common priority to keep our grades up, to maintain our scholarships, and further our education. We have a variety of majors and disciplines, so help with any class is never far. Because we all live in a tight-knit community, we are able to remind one another about deadlines or activities.

~Andrea Schoeny and Molly Sroges (University of New Mexico)

Being in The Honors College has really been a wonderful experience. Not only have I received great care and attention, I have had the opportunity of meeting students from across the globe, of receiving top-of-the-line education from professors who are professionals in their field, and of attending countless events. For example, I have met students from all over the world; interacting with them, I have learned about their cultures and have introduced them to my own Cuban-Spanish heritage. The professors provide a rigorous curriculum that helps students excel and learn things not only about the material but also about themselves. Because there are smaller class sizes, the professors actually get to know you on a first name basis and go the extra mile to assist you. As for the opportunities, there are countless ones. The Honors College has provided me with the chance to attend a Poverty Conference at the University of Miami, a symposium on the European Union, and the Salzburg Global Seminar in Austria.

With a year to go in The Honors College, I feel very confident and well prepared to go on to the most prestigious universities across the nation.

~Laurie Charles (Miami Dade College; class of 2010; International Relations major)

My horizons have been greatly broadened already through my first year spent in the Honors program. The opportunities that have been made available to me are astounding. For example, I completed over 10 hours of community service for one of my Honors courses this semester. By working with individuals with intellectual disabilities, I became more understanding of what life is like for them and found that we are more similar than I had previously thought. Next year, I will begin to work on my Honors thesis. I am looking forward to this since I am planning on choosing a topic that will combine both my double majors of Health Science and Spanish. When
it comes time to find a job, I am sure that potential employers will look at my work and see the ways that I have gone above and beyond other college students.

~Noel Barber (St. Francis University, PA)

Honors Philosophy (Or Is It Philosophies?)
(From the web site of the National Collegiate Honors Council)

“Tell all the Truth but tell it slant,” Emily Dickinson says in one of her dazzling poems, a reminder that sometimes we cannot describe, define, or delimit certain essential, ineffable ideas. We cannot stare directly at the sun; we see it better when we view it from the corners of our vision, when we take the “slant” view. The insight applies to trying to capture the amazingly diverse and dynamic aspects of Honors. Indeed, there is no “philosophy,” no single statement that emerges from common hegemonic assumptions about Honors education, but instead Honors grows out of a rich, alert, ever changing dedication to deep, creative, active learning—the kind of learning that happens within and outside Honors classrooms, the kind of pedagogies that pay attention to how “slant” approaches to teaching and learning result in truly engaged, exemplary, transformative education.

Indeed, we recognize that Honors is a nexus of various philosophies about teaching and learning, all of them reflecting the wide variety of Honors programs and colleges that comprise the Honors community. But several qualities do cut across many approaches and missions in Honors education—hallmarks that distinguish what we believe in Honors about teaching, learning, service, administration, our lives inside and outside the academy. Certain words come to mind readily as we survey the Honors landscape for core philosophical values, for what we believe about Honors, for our “philosophies”:

Academic excellence
Challenge
Rigor
Risk
Creativity
Innovation
Interdisciplinarity
Community
Leadership
Reflection
Motivation
Curiosity
Integrity
Service