Honors Program

Course Schedule

Fall 2017
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**Design of an Honors Course**  
**The Value of Honors Programs and Honors Colleges**  
**Honors Philosophy (Or Is It Philosophies?)**

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 2017! 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 different academic fields at Wagner College and give all of you good 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 spring semester!

Dr. Horst Onken
Director of the Honors Program
Associate Professor of Zoology and Physiology
Science Building, Room 411
Office Hours: M, W + F 11:10am - 12:10pm; T + Th 10am - 12 noon; and M - F 9 - 10am, T, Th + F afternoon 2 - 4pm on appointment.
Phone: 718-420-4211
E-mail: horst.onken@wagner.edu

Stephanie Rollizo
Secretary of the Honors Program
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Fax: 718-420-4172
E-mail: Stephanie.rollizo@wagner.edu
# COURSE SCHEDULE FOR Fall 2017

TO BE DONE AFTER I GET ALL THE INFORMATION!!!!

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Art and Aesthetics of the Third Reich

Days/Times: M 1 – 4pm

Course Description:
One of the most murderous regimes in history, the Third Reich was also one of the most deeply invested in all areas of art and aesthetics. Beyond the realm of producing propaganda in every medium, from posters to film to processions, the Nazis stole or destroyed millions of works of art throughout Europe, planned the redesign of many major cities, held the most highly attended “art” exhibit ever held and attempted to control every facet of the visual arts. This course proposes that we cannot fully understand National Socialism without understanding the aesthetic ideology of the party and of Adolf Hitler and shows how “culture was not only the end to which power should aspire, but the means of achieving it.”

Topics to be explored include Hitler’s youth as a struggling painter in Vienna and his rejection from the Art Academy; the systematic expropriation of Jewish art collections and the works of foreign museums; Albert Speer’s plans for a newly designed Berlin; the 1937 Degenerate Art exhibit; the carefully designed parades, processions and rallies; and recent law cases to have stolen works of art restored to their rightful owners. The course ends with a look at memorials and museums dedicated to the Holocaust and ask whether it is possible for art, in any form, to illuminate one of the darkest chapters in human history.

A comment from the instructor:

 lmorowit@wagner.edu
 Phone: 3151
AN 291  Wielecki  Economic Anthropology
Days/Times: M + W 9:40 – 11:10am
Course Description:
Because each and every action of our everyday lives has as an economic aspect, we must consider how we manage our households, what we buy, how we use our time. This course aims at grasping how people use material world to provide for their living and maintain their social groups. We will investigate how people’s economic actions are embedded in non-economic factors such as their values, ethnicity, religious beliefs, etc. Starting from classical case studies and theories, we will investigate a range of topics including work, production, debt, and last (but not least) money. We will ask about limits of commodification and look whether economy of sharing constitutes an alternative for monetization of social life.

A comment from the instructor:

For further information about this course before the fall semester, please, contact Dr. Gagnon.

celeste.gagnon@wagner.edu
Phone: 3126
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 importance 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 fourteenth 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 ten years and find it just as exciting and interesting as the students taking the course.
CH 211  

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.

Carvone isomers in mint and caraway
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
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<th>EN/FR 351</th>
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**French Women Writers**  
**Days/Times:** M 1 – 4pm

**Course Description:**
Why have so many French women writers questioned the prevailing ideologies of their time? What makes their writing unique? This course aims to answer these questions by exploring some of the most thought-provoking works written by women in France. Readings will include short stories, memoirs, novels, essays, and letters, supplemented by documentaries and films. We will discuss themes such as female identity, class, race, exile, marginalization, coming of age, and the representation of the female body.

**A comment from the instructor:**

[kurbanc@wagner.edu](mailto:kurbanc@wagner.edu)  
Phone: 3368
EN/RE 203  Kaelber

**Spiritual Quest in Literature**

**Days/Times:** T 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
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<td><strong>Days/Times:</strong> T + Th 11:20am – 12:50pm</td>
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<td><strong>Course Description:</strong> A survey course dealing with the major fields of psychology, including learning, perception, memory, motivation, development, social behavior, disorders of psychological functioning, and physiology of behavior. An introduction to the methodology, frameworks, and principles of contemporary scientific psychology. No prerequisites.</td>
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<td><strong>A comment from the instructor:</strong> This course will have hands-on work, research projects, and group collaboration in addition to traditional discussion.</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:inolan@wagner.edu">inolan@wagner.edu</a></td>
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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.

michael.tennenbaum@wagner.edu
Phone: 3223

“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)

Intercollegiate forensic competition (speech and debate) is one area in which I have found my honoreducation 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