INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS PROGRAM 2017-2018

CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

The Interdisciplinary Honors Program at Chestnut Hill College challenges students to pursue a creative approach to the liberal arts. The Program offers a variety of team-taught interdisciplinary seminars that promote liberal education by stressing the interconnections among different fields of study and by encouraging students and faculty alike to teach and to learn.

THE HONORS LEARNING EXPERIENCE

This reading- and writing-intensive Honors Program is an interdisciplinary learning experience in a group context. Students are encouraged to learn not only from the faculty but also from each other and from their independent studies. The Program allows faculty the opportunity for creative course structuring and collaboration with colleagues from other departments.

To achieve the desired integration of different disciplines into a unified whole, the Program focuses on the interdisciplinary character of the learning experience rather than on individual academic fields. Since faculty from at least two academic departments cooperate in teaching each seminar, the Program offers a learning experience which crosses department lines and which exemplifies the unifying and integrating experience that is the purpose of a liberal education.

Although the content of Honors seminars is considerably more demanding than the content of most introductory courses, these seminars are designed for the inexperienced student and so cannot achieve the depth of upper-level courses for majors. Ideally, the Honors seminar leads the student gradually to a mastery of methodology and a consideration of advanced topics, aiming always at the integration of the student's learning experiences. Faculty members provide background information and instruction in methodology as needed.

The Interdisciplinary Honors Program consists of a sequence of three six-credit, two-semester seminars. In addition, Honors students take IDHP 210-220: Writing in the Disciplines I-II, in the fall and spring semesters of their first year.

IDHP 210-220: WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

This course focuses on writing in various disciplines. It serves as an introduction to the structure, methodology, and skills of the Interdisciplinary Honors Program.

INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS PROGRAM SEMINARS

2017-2018

IDHP 350-351
GIVING MEANING AND VOICE TO NATURE

Maybe you don't think much about nature, or maybe you are someone who likes to be outdoors a lot. What does "nature" mean to you, and what are the important conversations about it today? One important conversation is about saving it, but there are others as well. Each generation of Americans has defined nature in a different way. And because nature cannot speak our language, humans have for centuries attempted to give voice to nature in poetry and prose. This seminar will explore nature writing from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century and will challenge students to add their own voices to nature.

IDHP 352-353
NAVIGATING THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT

Members of this interdisciplinary seminar will use the lenses of spirituality, sociology, and literature (*memoir*) to explore *otherness.* During the first semester we will attempt to understand whom we designate as *other*, how and why we do this, and the impact the resulting shame and stigma have in people's lives. During the second semester we will move from stigma and shame to pride, resilience, and witness.

IDHP 354-355
WHAT'S THE STORY?

The seminar offers an exploration of how our admirable but vulnerable perception of reality relates to pivotal moments in history, including the history of ideas. We will examine texts from different disciplines—the natural and social science, philosophy, literature—in order to show the crucial interplay between our dynamic perceptions of reality and our mutable values. Attention will be given to how our collective perception/ construction of reality moves us forward, even during critical moments when ideas are the source of distress and even violence.

IDHP 358-359
SELF-DISCOVERY THROUGH LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

This seminar will explore scientific discoveries from Galileo to the present day and examine their reflections in art, literature, and film. Some scientific topics will include optics, matter and energy, the stars and the atom. Literary figures will include authors such as Pascal, Voltaire, Tennyson, and Samuel Beckett. Through discussion and reflection, students will gain insight into the depths of the spirit as well as the magnitude of the universe.

THE PLACE OF THE HONORS PROGRAM IN THE CURRICULUM

The full Interdisciplinary Honors Program consists of 22 credits: two two-credit courses, Writing in the Disciplines (IDHP 210-220) and three two-semester Honors seminars. Completion of the Program fulfills the following elements of the core curriculum: all Core courses (except Science, Religious Studies and Math), the core seminars FILA 101 and GLST 201, the Writing Intensive requirement and College Writing. For seminars which include a religious studies or scientific component, that seminar may be substituted for one of the two courses required in that area; in this case, an additional elective is required. An advantage of this program is that fewer credits than usual are required to fulfill the core requirements of the College.

Students who complete only part of the Honors Program must satisfy all degree requirements as described in the college catalog, and must therefore match their credits in Honors seminars with those of the core curriculum.

Students may apply credits earned for Honors seminars toward their major field of study or toward a minor at the discretion of the faculty conducting the seminar in consultation with the faculty of the department of the major or minor. Students wishing to apply credits for Honors seminars toward a major or minor should consult the Director of the Honors Program.

Students not in the Honors Program who would like to take a specific seminar may contact the Director; however, preference is given to students pursuing the complete program.

SELECTION OF COURSE OFFERINGS

To ensure fresh and appealing choices for all students in the Program, each Honors seminar is offered for a maximum of three years, and seminars are rotated on a regular basis. Honors seminars may be offered by any faculty member with at least one year of full-time teaching experience at Chestnut Hill College.

STRUCTURE OF SEMINARS

Approximate Honors seminar size is twelve students and two faculty members. Meetings are conducted primarily by group discussion, but all types of experience and activity are included as appropriate—lectures, demonstrations, field trips, audiovisual experiences and more. These are always oriented toward growth in interdisciplinary understanding, discussion, and writing. Performance in discussion and writing is emphasized equally in assigning grades.

Most Honors seminars meet regularly for a two-hour session once a week. In addition, an unscheduled third hour each week is available as needed; when this hour is used, the entire seminar group decides the scheduling. The use of this hour may vary to suit the content or the approach of individual seminars and faculty.

In Honors seminars students are encouraged to learn in an active, independent, and open- ended atmosphere. There are no formal tests or examinations. Evaluation of the students' work in each Honors seminar is communicated to them through interviews scheduled twice a semester. At these interviews, held one-third and two-thirds through each semester, the student and both faculty members from an Honors seminar discuss the student's participation, level of performance, and progress.

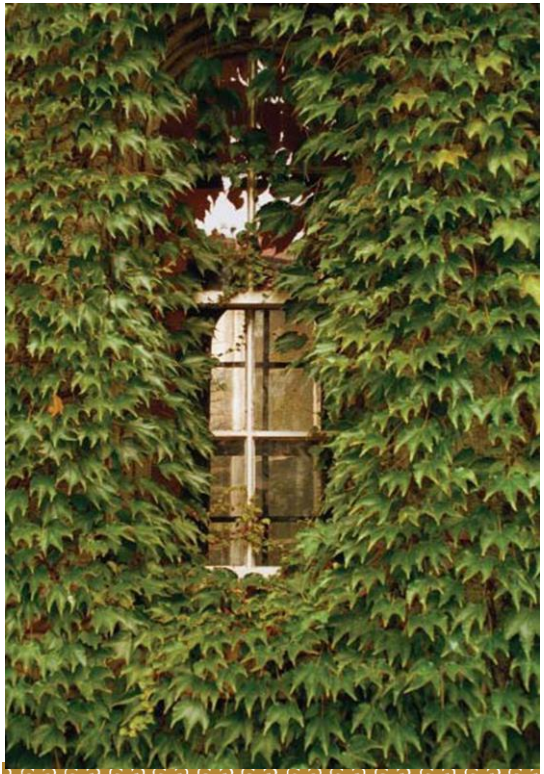
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

The Interdisciplinary Honors Program provides a dynamic learning situation which fosters growth through interaction of persons and sharing of ideas. Competition for grades is strongly discouraged; the members of each seminar, faculty and students, work to establish an atmosphere of collaborative learning.

The invitation to participate in the Honors Program is an expression of confidence in the student's ability to achieve a high level of academic performance. However, enrollment in the Program is no guarantee of high grades. Honors students are expected to earn a grade of "B" or higher in each Honors course. When a student earns a grade below "B" in an Honors course, the Director of the Program will consult with the Honors Program faculty and with the student to ascertain whether it is in the best interest of the student and of the Honors Program for the student to continue in the Program. However, first-year students will not be dropped from the Program after the first semester because of grades.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

Participants in the Interdisciplinary Honors Program are selected from among qualified and interested applicants to the college. Selection is based on the applicant's interest in the Program, test scores, high school record, writing sample, and personal interview. Only a limited number of students can be accepted each year. Because special enthusiasm and a variety of viewpoints are needed to facilitate learning through discussion, it is not necessarily applicants who rank highest academically who are admitted into the Honors group.



THESE STEPS ARE REQUIRED OF THOSE WHO WISH TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO THE INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS PROGRAM:

- A completed application to Chestnut Hill College; directions and application forms are available from the Admissions Office.

- A completed application form available at http://www.chc.edu/honors in which the student states his/her reasons for wishing to participate, the contributions s/he feels s/he can make to the Program, and the ways in which the Honors Program will help him/her to attain his/her educational goals.

- A visit to campus and personal interview with the Director of the Program; if necessary, telephone interviews may be arranged. If students wish to stay overnight on campus, they should contact the Admissions Office.

Applications received by early April will be given full consideration.

Address inquiries and correspondence to the Director:

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