

**INTERDISCIPLINARY
HONORS
PROGRAM
2021-2022**



**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.

In addition to coursework, extracurricular opportunities such as lectures, trips and social events offer Honors students ways to form a community. Honors housing is also available for first-year students .

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 2021-2022

IDHP 303-304: THE MATERIAL IMAGINATION in MEDIEVAL ART AND LITERATURE

Recent scholarship on the cultural life and production of the Middle Ages employs the lens of “materiality” to explore the “significance of things” for medieval people. What do the crafted objects of their daily life—the cloth, the pilgrim’s badge, the armor, the Doomsday book, the moat of a castle—and the created expressions of their highest literary and artistic ideals—the tapestry, the Ellesmere Chaucer manuscript, the jewelry, the illuminated Book of Hours, the stained-glass windows of a cathedral—tell us about medieval people and their worldview? We will pay attention to the manuscripts of this period both as physical objects themselves and as repositories for the highly wrought poetry, tales, treatises, and dramas that imaginatively represent both the material world as their creators experienced it and the spiritual realities it revealed to them. (Literature/Art History)

IDHP 305-306: SCREEN MEMORY: STORYTELLING & SPIRITUALITY

This course explores the integral spirituality of the human condition through the power of story and cinema. What does it mean to shape and project our stories on screen? How does the cinema respond to our changing world through the matrix of seeing and being seen? Central questions include the power of cinema to frame and reframe histories and social memories, raising further questions about representation and identity, emergence and transformation, fragmentation and wholeness. Readings, screenings, and interactive exercises will serve as the primary source material for our exploration

of these issues (Communications/Religious Studies)

IDHP 326-327 EMERGENCE of the HERO

This course uses the hero’s search for personal excellence (*eudemonia*) as a conduit for the study of modern works of fantasy/science fiction by tracing an arc from universal principles to specific individual identity. At base, this course asks the question of “what is truth?” from both the scientific and religious perspectives. While exploring works of fiction, students will be challenged to analyze the philosophical and religious foundations established in the novels/films and analyze their own personal responses to the ideas presented. The course also explores the competition between science and religion for the interpretation of human meaning and purpose. The course intends to awaken students to a subjective and spontaneous discovery of their own concern for reflective moral integrity. It also intends to inspire students to an acknowledgement and acceptance of their own heroic call to individual and fulfilling excellence. This course requires students to read Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* and Rowling’s complete *Harry Potter* Series. (Religious Studies/Natural Science)

IDHP 346-347 IT’S ABOUT TIME

What is time? Throughout the ages, scientists and poets, philosophers and artists have pondered this question. This course will explore their reflections, from Aristotle to Einstein and beyond. It will include time keeping, from the stars to atomic clocks, scientific theories of time and spacetime, the literary imagination from the Greeks to time travel, and the many unknowns that challenge us today. (Literature/Natural Science)

THE PLACE OF THE HONORS PROGRAM IN THE CURRICULUM

The full Interdisciplinary Honors Program consists of 24 credits: two first-year 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 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 component, that seminar may be substituted for one of the two courses required in that area. An advantage of this program is that fewer credits than usual are required to fulfill the core requirements of the College. While most Honors students begin the program in their first year, a small number of sophomores who have excelled as first-year students are invited to join after their first year.

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, 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 to students who qualify based on their CHC applications. In this application 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, remote interviews may be arranged.

Address inquiries and correspondence to the Director:

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