

**INTERDISCIPLINARY  
HONORS  
PROGRAM  
2023-24**



**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 2023-2024

**Information on the courses will change each year; upper-class students register in late March. Incoming first-year students will register for their fall courses in the late spring or early summer with the help of the Director.**

### **IDHP 342/3: The Politics and Arts of EMPIREs I&II**

We will examine the question of what it means to rule as an empire and why this form of government was so desired throughout history. We will consider how art has alternately advanced, resisted against, and reflected political power realities in empire-type governments. We will also look at the many ways in which political actors have attempted to constrain or empower artists' activities to challenge and subvert empires. This interdisciplinary honors seminar combines the complementary insights of art history and political science.

### **IDHP 350/51: Giving Meaning and Voice to NATURE: Reading, Writing, and Ecology I&II**

In this course, we will read and write – both analytically and creatively – towards new understandings of what it means to live not simply “on” but rather “with” the earth and in relation to our fellow creatures here. We will read widely in novels, poetry, short stories, and essays that reimagine the interrelatedness of humanity and nature. As we read, we will also be writing, producing our own “new nature writing” especially in the genres of creative non-fiction and poetry. We will look for inspiration in the natural surroundings of our campus on the banks of the Wissahickon Creek and in the College’s Mission commitment to upholding our responsibility as stewards of the Earth.

### **IDHP 391/2: The Great CONFRONTATION: Humans in the New World I&II**

Over 12,000 years ago, the first humans entered what will be called the Americas. They cross a land bridge from Northeast Asia, and within a few thousand years inhabit even the most forbidding landscapes. They remain the only humans in the Western Hemisphere until wave after wave of European migrants begin taking up residence in the late 1400s. In confronting their natural surroundings, both groups inflict ecological damage, but European settlers, who have seriously degraded their natural environments before leaving, use increasingly powerful tools to alter their New World surroundings in ways that peoples already living there can scarcely imagine. Through readings, visual media, and discussions, the seminar seeks to unravel this saga and gain valuable insights about the changes in lifestyle that are necessary if humanity is to survive and thrive in the Americas—and around the globe.

### **IDHP 393/4: Media and MEANING I&II**

The way technology both shapes and is shaped by the human creative process will frame the discussions in this seminar. Participants will explore how forms of communication affect the development of language and the evolution of cultural forms. They will also consider how the tools of technology alter in both subtle and radical ways the human construction of meaning. How do we as humans make sense of our lives and understand ourselves and our place in the world thoughtfully engaging with the tools of technology and communication at our disposal today?

## 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: LADS 101, the Writing Intensive requirement, and College Writing ENGL 101, and all 6 Inquiry Curriculum Core courses, including the requirement for an interdisciplinary course. 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; these students will not be guaranteed an IDHP scholarship, but will receive all other benefits.

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 an overall GPA over 3.0 and a grade of "B" or higher in each Honors course. When a student earns a grade below "B" in an Honors course or a GPA below 3.0, 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. If the student desires to continue and the faculty feels it is feasible, a one-semester probation period is granted. If the student does not earn a B or better in Honors classes in the following semester and show a positive trend overall in the GPA, they will lose the IDHP Scholarship. In such cases, the Director will work with the registrar to re-assign any credits earned in the IDHP to the student's core requirements.





## 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.
- After applying to the college, students who meet the IDHP applicant requirements will be automatically invited to apply for the program and given a link to the application. The Director, in concert with the Admissions team, will determine acceptance to the program, based on the materials submitted, and often interviews and writing samples as needed.
- A visit to campus and personal interview with the Director of the Program may always be arranged if candidates would like.

Those who apply by the Early Applicant deadline and are accepted will be guaranteed place in the Program if they deposit with the college by a given deadline in mid-Spring (this past year, March 1, 2023). After that date, the Director will continue to fill the Program spaces with accepted candidates on a first-come, first served basis.

An accepted student who submits a deposit to the college and writes to inform the Director that they will accept their place in the IDHP is asked to read and acknowledge the terms of this handbook. **At that point, we officially welcome you to IDHP!**

Address inquiries and correspondence to the Director:

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