

Sample CU Honors Program Course Descriptions

HONOR 105, Self and World, is a course that examines the relationship between the individual and the broader world.

Here are some sample course descriptions for HONOR 105:

From Fall 2020:

This section of HONOR 105 is an interdisciplinary study of narrative (story) as a framework to understand the self in two ways: as an individual identity and in relationship to American culture. We will study primary sources in psychological science and apply concepts to works of American literature, giving special consideration to themes of personal redemption and life success/generativity. Students will be expected to apply what they have learned about the narrative model to figures from history, literature, and everyday life.

From Fall 2020:

Do I really have a responsibility to the common good? Who is a good leader? What does justice look like when I am not the person meting out punishment? When should the laws of a democratic state outweigh my personal beliefs? How should I take a stand? What am I to do when a democratic society treats me badly?

Historian Paul Cartledge argues that the theater festivals of ancient Greece were more than mere entertainment; they were “a device for defining Athenian civic identity, which meant exploring and confirming but also questioning what it was to be a citizen of a democracy” (6). He also observes that the religious and political were “woven from the same threads” (6). Theatricality infused Athenian politics as politicians were expected to be great orators persuading large gatherings of voting citizens. Today, politics are somewhat similar in their reliance on theatrical photo-ops, sound-bites, and sensational rhetoric. Thus, the plays of Ancient Greece give us an opportunity to explore, confirm, and question what it means to be an independent individual of faith living in a contemporary democracy.

This section of Self and World will focus on exploring what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society with the tools used by the Ancient Greeks: the plays of people like Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Secondary readings from Greek philosophers and modern thinkers and theologians will shape our conversation about and inquiry into the complex relationships between faith, individuality, citizenship, and the common good. In addition to reading/viewing and discussing classic drama, students will investigate the application of ethical ideas to their individual fields of study, present/debate ideas in class, and consider practical applications of citizenship.

From Fall 2020:

This section of HONOR 105 is an introduction to the analysis and understanding of micropolitan, rural, and underserved communities. Course content will focus on the theory and practice of exploring communities with the goal of discovering potential pathways that may lead to change. The course supports the University’s mission by preparing students for meaningful service in their respective communities of work through critical and creative thinking.

From Fall 2019:

The question of enlightenment is a topic that covers diverse traditions, eras, and people and raises myriad questions. *Who is enlightened? How is enlightenment achieved? What is enlightenment?* This course will consider these and related questions (e.g., *cui bono?* Good for whom?) through the lens of key-figures and texts in western thought and literature. Among the authors and readings to be dealt with in the course are: Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"; Aristotle, *On Happiness* (selections from *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*); Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*; Petrarch, "Ascent of Mont Ventoux"; Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"; Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*; Henry David Thoreau, "On Civil Disobedience"; Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov*; William James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings"; Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper* (selections); Adorno and Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (selections); Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"; and Zadie Smith, "The Limited Circle is Pure."

This necessarily truncated sampling of texts points to an important theme, which will be a central topic for discussion: Mental well-being is necessary for physical and emotional well-being. A society that lacks a healthy activity of freedom of thought is a society that is prone to produce a lack of intellectual vitality among its people. Individual enlightenment can originate in a political climate of mental despotism, but wide-scale intellectual creativity can only develop in a society that promotes mental freedom.

From Fall 2019:

At times, as we embark on new areas of scientific research and face breakthroughs in technology, we ask two important questions: *Can we? Should we?* Yet we sometimes fail to consider whether we can really ask the latter question if we do not actually understand what scientists and medical practitioners are doing. An example of this is that many politicians will be against the use of human embryonic stem cells but be for in vitro fertilization even though they have the same ethical basis. Are we fooling ourselves and instead of taking a stand for moral issues; are we just being swayed by what is considered politically correct? Unless we understand the underlying principles, we will be incapable of making informed decisions. In this course, we will explore together some of these important issues that are increasingly facing society in this post-genomic era as biotechnology is used to develop a wide variety of technologies and treatments that not only push the forefronts of science and medicine, but raise the question, "Who are we?"

In this section of HONOR 105, we will discuss a variety of areas of biotechnology that have ethical implications. Students will be encouraged to evaluate the topics from various perspectives and assess the implications and ramifications of the biology, ethics, economics, social issues, etc. Many of the topics have implications for the environment and human health.

HONOR 107, Documents, is a course that examines significant documents from the perspective of one or more disciplines.

From Spring 2020:

This class of HONOR 107 will explore the era of the Civil Rights Movement in American History. The focus of the course will be the influence that religion played in motivating and sustaining the Civil Rights Movement. Students will analyze primary sources such as writing and music that helped shape the Civil Rights movement.

From Spring 2020:

This section of HONOR 107 will explore the era of the Vietnam conflict by examining a variety of sources, such as government documents, print and television news reporting, political cartoons, music, film, and scholarly accounts. By doing so, students will develop skill in understanding, evaluating, and interpreting different kinds of source materials.

HONOR 205, Aesthetic Creations, is a course that examines significant aesthetic productions or creations from the perspective of one or more disciplines.

From Fall 2020:

This section of HONOR 205 is an interdisciplinary Honors course that investigates the interaction of science and art in the creation and use of color. The course will address the chemical composition and cultural impact of natural and synthetic pigments and dyes as well as the development of their application techniques in artistic and industrial contexts.

From Fall 2020:

This section explores the intersection of clothing and identity—particularly how individuals, in a sense, author a self through clothing that is in turn read by other members of their community in a specific cultural context. This sartorial literacy will be examined in a number of literary works and films. Students will also encounter historical documents that help to place clothing within a nuanced framework.

From Fall 2019:

The study and practice of music in therapeutic settings reveals that music can lower stress levels, raise certain immune markers, provide social connection, support team building, and provide emotional release—all enhancing the human experience mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

This research-based section of HONOR 205 will blend arts, science, current research, medical practice and the historic practices of world culture in order to examine arts therapies. It will incorporate lecture, research, presentations, and weekly therapeutic drumming protocols and activity where student have a hands-on opportunity to play.

From Fall 2019:

This section of HONOR 205 will explore the literary creation and function of heroes and monsters in texts from ancient to contemporary. Where do these larger than life figures come from? Why do we need them in our imaginative lives? What is the difference between a hero and a monster? How can ordinary people be heroic or monstrous?

HONOR 207, Inventions and Innovations, is a course that examines significant inventions and/or innovations from the perspective of one or more disciplines and with attention to historical context.

From Spring 2020:

In this section of HONOR 207, students will use design thinking (LAUNCH, Human Centered Design) to innovate and solve real life problems. The course will have an emphasis on research and teamwork to ideate and prototype solutions to the problems. Coursework will encourage risk taking and failure with an end goal of creating solutions for actual needs on campus.

From Spring 2020:

This section of HONOR 207 will be comprehensive study of how innovation and technology have impacted music creation, production and listening from the notated manuscript to the very latest technology. Special emphasis will be given to the music of the 20th and 21st century, particularly popular music such as jazz and rock and roll (including sub genres where applicable).

HONOR 305, Revolutions, is a course that examines significant revolutions (philosophical, political, social, cultural, scientific, artistic, etc.) from the perspective of one or more disciplines and with attention to historical context.

From Fall 2020:

We're consuming media more than ever before, but is the content we're taking in (and sharing) enriching our lives? Because of advances in technology, good and bad information looks very much alike, and we're often quick to repeat things that turn out to be wrong. Together, we'll take a critical look at traditional news, advertising, social media, and many other sources. This course will empower you to be a savvy media consumer who makes the most of your life, both online and offline.

This section of HONOR 305 will examine the history, evolution, and current state of media (journalism, advocacy, and social) by examining a variety of sources, including news archives, social media accounts, web sources, and different kinds of scholarly materials. Examination will include introduction to communication theories such as media ecology and agenda setting. By doing so, students will learn to sift through the overwhelming amount of information they face each day, distinguish reputable sources from others, and make informed decisions based on trustworthy information.

From Fall 2020:

This section of HONOR 305 will cover the roughly 100-year period where the understanding of the structure of the Universe changed from the ancient geocentric to the heliocentric model. This development was in fact when the word "Revolution" acquired its second meaning. The course will begin with a description of the political and religious world at the time of Copernicus. His contributions as well as those of Kepler, Brahe and Galileo will be explored as well as the world in which they lived changed dramatically. Finally, Newton's all-encompassing work will be considered.
