

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 2022: **HONOR 105, The Apocalyptic Worldview***

This section of HONOR 105 is an interdisciplinary study of the Apocalyptic worldview. Beginning in 2nd century BCE Jewish writings such as Daniel and taken into Christianity as reflected in the book of Revelation, the Apocalyptic worldview has become central to Christian thought and has been influential on almost every culture Christianity has encountered. The apocalyptic worldview has deep roots in both secular and religious American culture influencing everything from our own sense of destiny, our relationship to the environment, and our understanding of power and leadership. This course will explore the development of the Apocalyptic worldview in its ancient Jewish context in order to help the student recognize its influence on their own worldviews, identify its influences on our modern world, and assess its strengths and weaknesses.

*From Fall 2022: **HONOR 105, Latin American Cultures***

The section is a study of Latin American “cultures” from a multidisciplinary perspective. The main emphasis will be music, arts, food, and literature. We will pay special attention to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. This course will be divided into several distinct themes in Latin American and U.S. Latino culture including cities, music (cumbia/corridos), food, family, race, migration, and gender. Students will appreciate these topics through a variety of media including documentary films, literature, photography, music, and Mexican food or recipes (cooking).

*From Fall 2021: **HONOR 105, The Drama of Citizenship***

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 HONOR 105, 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 2021: HONOR 105, Biodiversity

This section of HONOR 105, Self and World, will analyze the biodiversity of animals, plants and microorganisms, the history of their discovery, and the aspects that contribute to maintenance of or decline of biodiversity. Animal, plant and microbial model organisms will be presented by the instructor with a special emphasis on humanity's role in biodiversity of the model organism. Students will select and present additional organisms based on their interest including historical, cultural, scientific, economic, political and technological perspectives.

From Fall 2020: HONOR 105, Redemption Stories in Narrative Psychology and Literature

This section of HONOR 105, Self and World, 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: HONOR 105, Exploring Underserved Communities

This section of HONOR 105, Self and World, 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: HONOR 105, What is Enlightenment?

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 section of HONOR 105, Self and World, 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: **HONOR 105, Ethical Issues in Biotechnology***

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 2022: **HONOR 107, Vietnam: The Conflict, The Era, the Aftermath***

This section of HONOR 107, Documents, 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.

*From Spring 2022: **HONOR 107, Heroes and Monsters***

This section explores the creation and function of heroes and monsters in texts from ancient to contemporary (including TV and film). Using a variety of theoretical frameworks, we will seek answers to questions such as: What cultural influences produce these larger-than-life figures? Why do we need them in our imaginative lives today? What is the difference between a hero and a monster? How can ordinary people be heroic or monstrous?

*From Spring 2022: **HONOR 107, Leading Underserved Communities***

This section is a follow-up to “Exploring Underserved Communities,” and it provides an introduction to leading change in rural and underserved communities. Key topics covered include major theories and

research findings from psychology on leading social change related to prevention, empowerment, resiliency, stress, and coping. Topics covered include addressing social problems related to racism, classism, sexism, health, and education. Leadership in the realms of healthcare, education, religion, business, government, and/or law enforcement will be explored. Instructor permission required.

*From Spring 2021: **HONOR 107, Religion and the Civil Rights Movement***

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.

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

*From Fall 2022: **HONOR 205, The Portrayal of Jesus in Gospel and Film***

This course will combine the exploration and discussion of the person and work of Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospels with a study of Jesus-figures and Christ-figures in contemporary cinema. Through the analysis of the Gospels, secondary literature, and film texts, students will gain an understanding of the both the Gospel accounts of Jesus Christ and the cinema's adaptation of his person and work. In addition, students will develop an understanding of the principles of film form in order to become more sensitive and mindful film viewers.

*From Fall 2021: **HONOR 205, Experiencing Art***

What happens when we experience visual art? Is the appreciation of art purely subjective? Are there, or should there be, aesthetic standards? How do our experiences in other areas of life affect our experience of art, and vice versa? This section investigates the many ways we can experience visual art and the critical, perceptual, and design skills which can enrich that experience. Through interactive, multi-modal activities, students in this section of HONOR 205 will encounter the contextual nature of visual perception, the many applications of design thinking, and how our interactions with visual objects and works of art can be enriched by an awareness of their design.

*From Fall 2021: **HONOR 205, Therapeutic Modalities in Music***

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 2020: **HONOR 205, The Art & Science of Color***

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: **HONOR 205, Clothing and Identity in Literature***

This section of HONOR 205 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.

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 2023: **HONOR 207, From DNA to Dolly: Modern Inventions in Molecular Biology***

This section of HONOR 207 will review the major discoveries in biochemistry and molecular biology during the latter half of the 20th century. We will focus on the historical context of these discoveries and the research process, emphasizing the evolving nature of research questions and how knowledge matures over time.

*From Spring 2021: **HONOR 207, Technology and Popular Music***

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).

*From Spring 2020: **HONOR 207, Design Thinking for the Campus Community***

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.

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 2021: **HONOR 305, Revolutions in Media***

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 2022: **HONOR 305, Off with Their Heads! The Political Thought of the French Revolution***

The French Revolution remains controversial. For some, it embodies the liberal principles of political modernity, the triumph of liberty and equality over oppression and hierarchy. For others, the extremism, chaos, violence and social decay arising from the Revolution are taken as proof that the principles of the 18th century Enlightenment were wrong. Still others see the French Revolution as a precursor to the totalitarian and anarchist movements of the 20th century. In this course we will investigate controversies over fundamental principles of modern politics, such as sovereignty, representative democracy, constitutionalism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, the relationship between church and state, individual and group rights, and the application of such principles to practical politics. We will also look into the causes of the extreme political polarization and violence that erupted during the French Revolution and consider what lessons this may have for present-day America.

In this interdisciplinary course, our focus will be on political thought, such as the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau, and of revolutionary leaders such as Robespierre, Sieyes, Saint-Just and many others, and conservative and liberal critics of the Revolution. In addition, we will also consider representations and interpretations of the Revolution in film, literature and current academic historiography.

*From Fall 2020: **HONOR 305, Scientific Revolutions***

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.

HONOR 307, Global Encounters, is a course that examines culture and cultural identity and builds cultural competence and understanding.

*From Spring 2023: **HONOR 307, Politics of Music: History of Rock and Other Genres in Latin America***

This section is an interdisciplinary scholarly study that will analyze the historical and political connections between Latin America and the United States. We will find the reasons “Rock and Roll” was able to germinate in Latin America creating “el rock en español/castellano” Our discussion is framed by a gamma of concepts such as historical, political, social, economic, diaspora, hybridity, mestizaje, migration, and globalization. The course aims to provide knowledge about the different forms of social actions and cultural resilience that are specific to the Latin America. It will allow students to analyze protest music movements along with different musical genres such as merengue, cumbia, tango, reggaetón, corridos/narco-corridos, norteña, among other that shaped Latin America’s cultures (plural).

*From Spring 2023: **HONOR 307: Non-Western Theatre***

Though reading and attendance at theatrical performances of various non-Western plays, this section examines cultural identity & develops cultural and global awareness. Traditions to be considered could include African (Middle-Eastern, Sub-Saharan, Post-Colonial theatre), Asian (Chinese, Japanese (Kabuki, Noh, Bunraku), Southeast Asian), Caribbean (including traditional Taíno performance), and others. Students will read a variety of playscripts and discuss them from a perspective of theatre practice/performance combined with other disciplines, such as Literary Analysis, Cultural/Global Studies, Social History, etc. The scripts will be understood as documents of performances best understood as unique to a particular time and place.

*From Spring 2022: **HONOR 307, Violence in the Name of God***

Utilizing interdisciplinary perspectives, this section will critically evaluate historical examples of, motivations for, and ways to address violence committed in the name of religion. While the concept of culture is vague [Tomoko Masuzawa calls the term “dangerously capacious, semantically vague and confused, and taken as a whole, inconsistent”], it does for many people signify the customary way of life for a particular society. Religion is a significant element of culture, both shaping that customary way of life and being shaped by it. One essential function of religion in society is the promotion of peace.

All the major world religions claim to promote peace. Christians, for example, worship Jesus as “the Prince of peace.” Yet the sacred texts of the world religions do contain violence, and heinous violence is done in the name of religion. The three primary monotheistic religions[Christianity, Islam, Judaism] have in fact been the most violent. How should that paradox be understood? Is religion inherently violent, in spite of its claims to peace, or is religion co-opted to justify violence which is essentially political, psychological, economic, or other in nature? Are there, on the other hand, resources within religions for confronting violence committed in the name of religion?

*From Spring 2022: **HONOR 307, Migration and Culture***

Within the context of topics of current sociocultural relevance, this section will examine economic, social, personal, interpersonal and cultural aspects of migration and their connection to intercultural awareness, identity, and identity formation. We will address questions of assimilation, nationality/origin, language, class, and others and how they affect expectations about intercultural

awareness. We will also examine how local as well as global conditions, including COVID, have affected recent migration patterns.

*From Spring 2021: **HONOR 307, Cross-Cultural Communication***

This section of HONOR 307 studies *cross* cultural contacts and interactions when individuals are from different cultures. We will analyze verbal and nonverbal communication and related factors within and between various cultures, predict patterns and effects, and discuss global communication barriers.

*From Spring 2021: **HONOR 307, Cross-Cultural Responses to the Pandemic***

This section of HONOR 307 will compare how responses to the current pandemic vary by culture, both on the societal and individual level. We will examine how the restrictions associated with COVID-19 affected social systems (e.g., health care, education, etc.), the economy (employments, business, etc.), families and individuals.