

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:

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.

HONOR 105, Latin American Popular 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).

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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?

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.

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.

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.

HONOR 205, Pop Music Matters: Memorials and Protest

From Moses singing to mark the crossing of the Red Sea to the Holderness Family parodying hit songs to document life during COVID lockdown, people have used songs to mark, remember, and protest current events. In this course, we will examine historical and contemporary examples of pop music that responds to current events. How do these songs shape the historical narrative? How do musical and literary techniques change the way we view the events in these songs? What is the relationship between pop music and "official" history? How does faith shape the way we process and remember events? Applying both cultural studies and literary lenses, students will engage with and create popular music responses to current events, past and present.

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.

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.

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 205, Theatrical Prop Design and Creation

This section will explore the process of designing and creating theatrical props from script to stage. Students will have the opportunity to experience first-hand the interdisciplinary nature of this process which involves script analysis, historical research, application of diverse artistic and crafting techniques, understanding of both on-stage and behind-the-scenes aspects of theatrical show development, and sometimes even a little chemistry. After learning and practicing some essentials of props design, students will get to try out a range of prop crafting techniques. The course includes opportunities for service learning through design and creation of props that can potentially be used in upcoming shows at a local volunteer-based community theatre where the instructor serves as the primary props master.

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.

HONOR 207, Chemistry Changed the World

In this section, students will explore how the need and desire for the chemical substances contained in spices, crops, tobacco, coffee, drugs, explosives, durable materials, and medicine shaped the course of history for good and for bad. The search for these materials hastened improvements in ship building, navigation, commerce, nutrition, agriculture, medicine, building, fashion, and much more. However, these advancements have a dark side. The quest for these substances led to slave trade, wars, crime, pollution, birth defects, and addiction. Students will examine the molecular structure of these substances at a very basic level. Students will examine the complex relationship between the positive and negative effects of innovation.

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).

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.

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.

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.

HONOR 305, Liberation Theology

This course introduces students to liberation theology: the history of this movement, the political contexts within which it arose, and its contemporary manifestations in the United States. Students will read selections from major liberation theologians throughout history, getting a sense of the diversity within this movement, as well as a text on basic themes of liberation theology. Such themes include the “preferential option for the poor,” God taking the side of the oppressed in situations of injustice, the importance of thinking structurally about injustice, and the importance of combining theory and practice as one thinks through matters of ethics, theology, and politics. By the end of the course, students will be familiar not only with the “what” of liberation theology, but the why: that is, the questions and struggles that gave rise to liberation theology in the first place, and the ways in which those questions continue to haunt the world today, even if we might answer those questions differently.

HONOR 305, Scientific Revolutions from Copernicus to Newton

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.

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).

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?

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.

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.

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.

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.

HONOR 307, Global Encounters: Vaccines in Global Contexts: Science, Society, and Public Health

This interdisciplinary honors course explores the invention and evolution of vaccines as one of the most impactful innovations in human history. From early experiments with smallpox to the rapid development of mRNA vaccines, students will examine the scientific breakthroughs, historical milestones, and societal debates that have shaped vaccine development and public perception. Through readings, discussions, and case studies, the course will investigate how vaccines work at the molecular level, how they've transformed global health, and how innovation intersects with ethics, policy, and public trust.