

HON 105 "Contemporary Cultural Literacy"
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HON 105 is intended to prepare students for scholarship competitions, graduate and professional school interviews, and professional lives by providing structured opportunities to learn, reflect, and make connections across their intellectual and social milieus.

The primary goal of this course is **to facilitate the kind of reflection that results in greater self-awareness; a better understanding of your purpose, motivation, and trajectory.**

Three more focused goals emanate from that. They are for students to understand the following:

1. Selection committees *reward those who think thoughts and do stuff*. To perform well in competition, school, and life, your primary job is to find out what kinds of ideas you're interested in and how you engage with them most effectively.
2. Success in applications is not completely random or inscrutable; rather, it is the result of *meeting the objectives of the funding agency* in a manner that *distinguishes you from most other applicants*. You need to work toward knowing who you are and what you can do to understand what distinguishes you from most other applicants.
3. Application essays are neither contracts nor 100% accurate transcripts of one's past words or deeds. They are *exercises in articulating one possible future for yourself* in an internally consistent narrative; therefore, you should practice articulating multiple possible futures for yourself on a regular basis.

Expectations and requirements:

- These are weird and uncomfortable times; existential anxiety is real, and we have a lot of things competing for our attention.
- This course is designed to facilitate reflection, which isn't always comfortable, but always results in understanding better who you are and how you want to relate to the world. Ultimately, this will reduce anxiety.
- Therefore, to get the most out of this class, you should engage in assigned activities—do the reading, the listening, the watching, and writing--and discussion when it happens.

Grading:

- What you get out of this course depends on what you put into it, in tangible (grade) and intangible (personal growth) terms.
- My role as a distributor of grades in this course is to record the apparent quality of your engagement with assignments.
- Your role as a student is to do the work that will help you become more self-aware, build writing skills, and thereby become a more competitive applicant.

Every assignment is worth 2 points (12 submissions, 24 total points possible).

0: didn't submit work

1: adequate effort apparent

2: significant effort apparent

A: 21-24

B: 19-20

C: 17-18

D: 15-16

F: 0-14

Attendance:

- You'll notice the modules and assignments are arranged in a certain order but flexible as to due date.
- However, there are some live or time-specific events scheduled throughout the semester. I'll be keeping tabs on attendance, and you should make every effort to attend live.

Course materials

All available on Blackboard

Modules

Descriptions and instructions for each are on Blackboard under "Content."

1. Introduction: Why are we here?
2. Mindfulness and possibility
3. Semester vision board
4. Study abroad planning
5. Obsessions genogram
6. Informational interview: research
7. Informational interview: alumni
8. Identities
9. Informational interview: letters of recommendation
10. Who you are is how you lead
11. Storytelling/hidden treasures
12. Shitty first draft
13. Vision board redux

If you don't know what you're here to do, then just do some good. (Maya Angelou)
