

Abstract

The Honors College had long offered a combination of full honors and contract courses. Departments paid faculty to teach full honors courses as part of their regular teaching load. Full honors courses in U.S. History, General Psychology, Introduction to Philosophy, and English Literature were routinely offered as were one offs. Contract instructors were provided with up to \$300 to help with course expenses by the Honors College. Students in all those courses earned credits toward the required minimum 24 honors hours and toward fulfilling general education requirements. The onset of Covid in 2020 led to severe cost saving measures university wide. Only contract honors courses remained. After Covid, travel budgets gradually grew to near pre-pandemic levels. But full honors courses were not restored because of lack of departmental funds. In 2023 two full honors courses per semester were restored and funded by the Provost. Because of the College's small size ($N = 175$) offering more courses would dilute enrollments. A new rule requires all incoming students to enroll in one full honors course before they graduate. The courses had to attract at least eight students to make. Faculty offered three honors courses in Fall 2023: Ancient Egypt (online), Sustainability of Natural Resources (hybrid), Psychology of Serial Killers (in person). For Fall 2024, faculty submitted four honors course proposals. Through an online survey honors students selected Positive Psychology: The Science of Well-being and Politics and Popular Music for Fall 2024. Only the former made. Projected full honors courses for Spring 2025 will be 3-D Printing, Guitar Making and World Literature II.

Post Covid Honors Courses

☐ Ancient Egypt (Fall 2023)

- Svetlana Paulson, PhD Format: Online Enrollment: 11
- Course Description (HC4031): This course covered essential historical information about ancient Egypt, including major events, themes, personalities, and issues.
- Special Assignment: Virtual conference-style discussion about food in Ancient Egypt: food production as a part of an ancient economic system, impact on health, and facts about what kind of foods the Egyptians ate, and what their favorite dishes were.



☐ Sustainability of Natural Resources (Spring 2024)

- Kathryn Watson, PhD Format: Hybrid Enrollment: 4
- Provost allowed low enrollment
- Course Description (HC3013): In this course, the different types of natural resources and explore how those resources have traditionally been managed in the past, how those resources are currently managed based on the emerging goals of sustainability and to provide for a growing population, and ideas to push society towards a more sustainable future were defined.
- Special Assignment: The semester was concluded by students synthesizing sustainability ideas into the creation of their own personal utopia. If they could control the future and design a city, lifestyle, and society that were as sustainable as possible, what would that look like? They saved collected materials throughout the semester to put this project together. The final project was a 15 to 30-minute presentation to the class on each utopia.

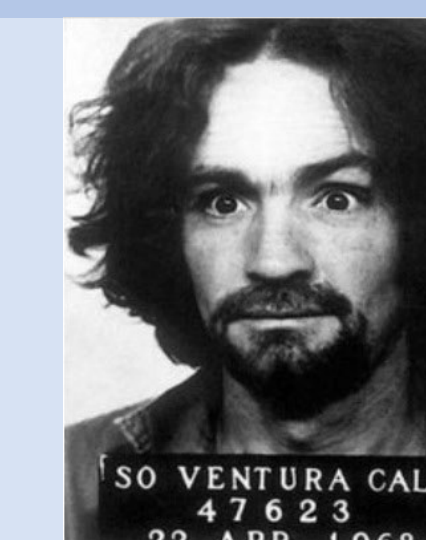


Selecting Honors Course Proposals and Funding

- Honors College solicited course proposals from faculty.
- Courses were selected based on submissions and Honors students preferences.
- Spring 2024 courses will include: Objects Fabrication with 3D Printing (Hayder Zghair, PhD Engineering), and Guitar Making (Nathan Lambert, MA).
- Currently funding for the special honors courses above comes from the Provost in the form of overload pay.
- An honors section of World Literature II will also be offered in Spring 2024; it will be paid for by departmental funds.

☐ Psychology of Serial Killers (Spring 2024)

- Krista Nelson, PhD Format: Face-to-face: Enrollment: 20 (7 non-honors students)
- Course Description (PSYC4113): This class highlighted the various causes of antisocial personality disorder and discussed various serial killers and their personality development.
- Special Assignment: The Honors course, Psychology of Serial Killers, began a research project in the spring 2024 semester. The project, examining student beliefs about serial killers, is still in progress. Expected completion of the project is spring 2025.



☐ Positive Psychology (Fall 2024)

- Brianna McCartney, PhD Format: Face-to-face: Enrollment: 8
- Course Description (PSYC4113): This course provides an in-depth exploration of key these and concepts in positive psychology, including strength assessment, goal setting, and the impact of gratitude, hope, and optimism. Students will evaluate the role of emotional intelligence, growth mindset, grit, and resilience in predicting positive outcomes, while also discussing the significance of flow, mindfulness, and positive relationships in enhancing well-being. Additionally, the course will involve a critical comparison of various scales and measurements used within the field of positive psychology.
- Special Assignment: Students will design a positive psychology newsletter targeted at college students and then implement a key component of that intervention as an interactive workshop. This project includes designing an intervention presentation, developing and leading an in-person workshop to peers, and evaluating its effectiveness. The project will include a writing a literature review, creating a newsletter on a concept of positive psychology, and then developing a presentation of a specific intervention that other students can refer to and use in the future.

