

NWACC Honors Program Portfolio



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Honors Courses:

SOCI 2013H	General Sociology, Honors
ENGL 2213H	Survey of World Literature to 1650, Honors
MUSI 1003H	Music Appreciation, Honors
HIST 2003H	Hist of the American People to 1877, Honors

The NorthWest Arkansas Community College Honors Program was the shining moment in my time at NWACC. I was able to grow as a person and as an academic student in ways that I don't think I would have had the privilege of doing had I not been in the program. Honors courses have shown me an idea of what my role is in the world. Because I have gained experience from the opportunities that have been given to me, I see my role now as more than just a student, but as someone who is ready to take on a leadership role. Honors courses have made me open to new experiences; this allowed me to explore different perspectives, such as listening to my fellow honors students, and cultivated curiosity within when it came to approaching education from a positive standpoint, realizing the privilege that is higher education and my desire to learn more through honors courses.

I built a community of friends through the intimate classroom settings that were honors classes. I got to know people in my discipline, gained insight from upperclassmen, and even saw my professors as mentors due to the one on one educational experience I received while in the honors program. I cultivated my curiosity by taking honors classes in subjects I was not previously knowledgeable in, so rather than making an 'easy grade', I wanted to harness the

privilege of higher education and take that time to learn about things of which I was unfamiliar. In doing so, I was able to explore different perspectives on both subjects I was comfortable with, and those I was still learning about. Honors classes, as stated before, are a more intimate classroom setting; with a smaller student to professor ratio and smaller class sizes. So not only did I get to converse with my fellow honors students and get their opinions, I was able to learn more about them and ask more in depth questions.

After my final semester at NorthWest Arkansas Community College, I transferred over to the University of Arkansas to finish my bachelors. The honors program at NWACC helped me to prepare for challenges a new school might throw at me. It helped me to be decisive, assertive, and critical. There were times I was presented with a situation or assignment that required a level of independence when it came to taking control of my education. I left NWACC with better developed soft skills, such as my ability to collaborate with other and function in a leadership role when it came to group projects. I also thought my creativity flourished while in the honors program. That was something I greatly valued about the program; they didn't put STEM about the arts. I've always been a right brained person and I felt like my creative side was my strongest side of me.

To have my talents validated in the program by including assignments that requires a personal creative touch, making my poster for the Great Plains Honors Council, and simply having classes such as Music Appreciation meant so much to me as a Non-STEM major that I now feel encouraged in my academic successes even if my strengths are not typically seen as a conventional form of academic excellence. This encouraged me to pursue my bachelors in a non-STEM related field at the University of Arkansas because, thanks to the honors program, I was able to prove to myself that I was capable of academic success without being a left-brained person.

As for my hard skills, classes such as General Sociology and History of the American People to 1877 helped me become a better researcher. I now knew how to look for pertinent information, use research databases, and know the difference between reliable and unreliable sources. My planning and time management skills also improved. Because the honors program is a little more strenuous and in depth in their subjects, their assignments require more time and there may be more of them. I had to learn how to prioritize and stay on top of myself and my assignments if I wanted to do well. I stay dedicated to my classes by scheduling my time and my assignments. I learned to balance my obligations by putting everything that is due on my calendar. I must learn to say "No." to my friends when I should be working. It's difficult, because I'm still using these skills while at the university, but the reward is coming.

One significant experience I had while a member of the honors program was attending the Great Plains Honors Council in Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2018. A few members of the honors program (myself included) were selected to go a present a paper or poster at the conference. I had worked tirelessly on the poster I was presenting; *Storytelling: An Unforgettable Practice*, and I was beyond excited to present it to my peers, other professors, and teachers attending the conference. The first day there, we were sent to a large room where we hung our posters, awaited judging, and got to see what other colleges were presenting. Not only was it educational, but it helped establish connections with other schools and form friendships. I

befriended a student from Kansas who took an interest in my poster and we are still in contact to this day. Not only did I make connections with students from other colleges, I grew closer to my fellow honors members who attended the conference with me. I got to encourage them in their presentations, and they did the same, and get to know them during down time and at meals. These friendships carried on even after the conference.

Saturday, I volunteered to be a student moderator for the paper presentations. I was lucky to have heard so many pieces of research from honors student in the great plains. Saturday night, we heard from the keynote speaker, Dr. Doug Miller, Assistant Professor of History at Oklahoma State University, who addressed Native American urbanization, mobility, and work in the twentieth century.

It was an incredible experience and I would encourage every honors student who has the opportunity to participate in this conference to do so. You learn how to present your research for a crowd, understand your material beyond what is on your poster or in your paper, and you get to build a network of honors students who are there to better themselves, educate themselves and others, and to make friendships. I would dare to say it has been the highlight of my college career thus far.

This leads to my advice for new members; take risks. Put yourself out there academically. Challenge yourself. Recognize your outstanding potential you have by just being an honors student. Harness that potential and ride the wave of hard work and dedication to reward and self-betterment. If not for anyone but yourself, the NorthWest Arkansas Community College Honors Program is a fantastic way to gain success in your academic career and plan for your future. Additionally, don't be afraid to make friend in the honors program. Going in to it, you may feel intimidated thanks to the perceived esteemed nature of honors programs and honors students. Be confident in yourself and you will find yourself in a group of some amazing, talented, and successful students who desire your success as much as you do.