

Shannon Graham

Courses Taken:

ENGL 1013H- Composition I, Honors

ENGL 1023H- Composition II, Honors

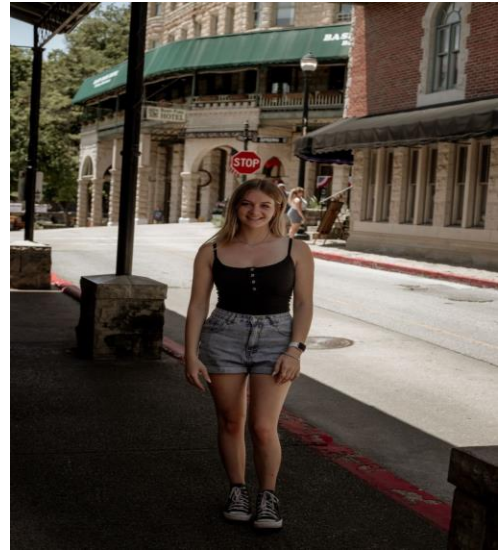
HIST 2003H- History of the American People to 1877,

Honors

ART 1003H- Art Appreciation, Honors

SOCI 2013H- General Sociology, Honors

Graduated: 14 May 2025



Section 1: Community, Curiosity, and Diversity

While attending NWACC For my General associate's degree, I had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of the honors community. This opportunity allowed me to dive deeper into my education, encouraging learning and the ability to form and articulate individual thoughts and perspectives rather than simply memorizing information.

The honor's courses allowed me to get to know peers and professors on the deeper intellectual level and allowed us to have a place where we can challenge ideas, learn from each other, and carry about in-depth conversations relating to the coursework, its meaning and its purpose. With each class I had the ability to explore the coursework and work with it at an advanced level.

Section 2: Soft Skills

As a student, I have always particularly enjoyed subjects such as English, History, and Social Sciences. The honors ability to offer these subjects in a higher level was perfect for me.

Within my English studies I was able to explore and advance my skills in individual thoughts and creativity within poetry, novels, and creative writing. These skills will easily transfer as I move into full time work allowing for faster problem-solving skills and creativity. I was also able to work on projects for an extended period to ensure a deeper understanding of the subject matter and learn how to conduct scholarly research, collect scholarly resources, and write in scholarly manner.

We were also given freedom in forms of presenting the research such as within essays, slides, project boards, sways or any other form of media we see fit. The projects mainly related to social modern issues or things pertaining to the class. For example, within my history class we worked with a partner to create a research presentation about a well-known historical figure as well as a lesser-known historical figure. For this project my partner and I selected Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells. We conducted a presentation on them, detailing their history, importance within activism, their current modern-day relevance, and their achievements. We shared our findings in front of peers, staff, friends and family. The Honors program formed a sense of community for its members. Even for those, such as myself, who could only attend classes. I still had the ability to form a connection with my peers and work with them on many projects. One project included assisting in service learning, of which I participated in twice.

Service learning opened many opportunities for aiding communities both within and outside of the student populace. Projects could range from building beds for the homeless to grave cleaning or could even be on an intellectual basis. I participated in both grave cleaning and intellectual service learning.

Grave cleaning allowed me to explore individuals' history around me as well as doing a service to my community by taking care of lost loved ones. Through intellectual service learning I

worked closely with my class to create a student's guide to generative AI written by and for students. This guide was printed on a pamphlet with a website and QR code attached and placed around the NWACC campus to inform both students and professors alike. This pamphlet aided in preventing misinformation regarding what generative AI is and is capable of, as well as serving as a safety net for students accused of plagiarism using AI. This qualifies under service learning as it benefits students' academic life and integrity. It also aids faculty with easy access to more information regarding generative AI and its role in the classroom as well as ways to include it and protect against it properly. Pictured below is an image from my partner and I's project on the importance of Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells.



Section 3: Personal Interest Inclusion within Honors Classes

My final participation within service learning and my most favorite were the research and presentation on the topic of our choice. With this opportunity, I decided to research beauty, societal influence, biological components and drive, psychological effect and its social effect between sex and culture. [The Origin and Purpose of Beauty Standards](#) is the project that I

worked on for the topic of my choice. I was able to explore in depth perspectives from different scholars and their findings on the existence and purpose of beauty. I created this project in a Word Sway Document to help visualize and stylize my presentation. This presentation is just one small example of the academic and intellectual freedom supported by the Honors Program. Other aspects such as HSA and statewide conferences as well as out of state conferences also support Honors students to further their education and deepen their involvement within the community. Pictured below is a screenshot from my personal interest project on beauty.



Every culture has their own idea of beauty. But what is beauty? By looking through the lens of biology we can observe key factors that help us as humans recognize physical beauty. Physical attributes such as height, weight, BMI (Body Mass Index), facial symmetry, WHR (Waist to Hip Ratio), and averageness are all important indicators of physical beauty. But we all have our personal preferences right?

A recent meta-study suggests that beauty not only stems from human biological factors but also shows signs of being universal. After covering 919 studies with over 15,000 observers, researchers found that people both within and across cultures agree on who is and who is not attractive. This study was conducted by showing diverse groups of people images of individuals and asking them to determine and rank them most attractive to least attractive. Astonishingly, regardless of the participants sex and background, a majority of the participants rated the images the same from most attractive to least attractive.

This points to the existence of a biological component within our human nature that tells us what makes a person physically attractive

Section 4: For New Members

Any new members I would advise to participate in as many events as possible. Each and every event is curated to be a fun and intellectual experience amongst academics. I would recommend taking honors classes in the subjects that interest you the most as you will get the most from them in return. Whether the courses are in person or online joining the Honors community widens

your horizons, builds community, and strengthens one's education as well as providing a great start to a bright future.