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**Honors:**

Survey of World Literature from 1650

Survey of World Literature to 1650

Introduction to Philosophy

## **Section 1: Cultivating Curiosity, Exploring Perspectives, and Engagement**

Dear reader, I want to tell you on a more realistic level of detail my engagement with honors, and how this affected my performance in my educational pathway. As you may or may not know, Northwest Arkansas Community College is a “working college.” A coined term used to describe a large portion of the student body. I am a part of that working body. However, I work forty hours a week minimum while attending a total of twenty total credit hours of class time this year. This provided me a unique opportunity to discuss a worker’s perspective on the honors program. While this wording has serious negative connotation, I do want to emphasize; despite the challenge of time, I still valued my time spent in honors. Honors provided me with a level of connection to a community that kept me going.

The major honors courses I took were World Literature classes. These classes, and their coursework, promoted good reading habits and analytical skills. The discussions in class were purely related to perspective. We discussed timeframes, what the world looks like at the time of writing, how it may relate to current events, and what it shows about you, the reader, or the world around you. On the note of good reading habits, I would argue that these classes can teach you to be a better reader. A more open-minded reader to be specific. Keeping your mind open to the material, the author, and the character’s perspectives, it’s possible that it may shift foundational stones of understanding of ancient society, catalysts for historical events, and highlights painfully obvious inactions of modern society. Open-mindedness followed me in my philosophy course and taught me more of the world and perspectives I’ve never heard of. With the addition of Philosophy, I felt as if the world and its flaws had been laid bare to me. I assure you; this is not all made up hyperbole. I felt a lot of foundational stones shift within me, doors open, and the obvious blunders of humankind were revealed in a fuller light.

All the while I struggled. I kept well enough grades, but I will admit I was slipping. I’m only nineteen, I graduated high school in May, I’m unbearably naive, and I took on more than I could handle. A full-time job at my age is a blessing, and I cannot stress how thankful I am that I have a job in this climate, but my goal of earning my degree was quickly being overshadowed by reality. My job was becoming my soul, even if my heart wasn’t in my work. Regardless, I pressed on with my education with vigor, and honors in part brought me to that conclusion.

This is where the term “working college” is rooted for me. School ended up shifting from my main priority to the second. Many students I met have jobs that keep them from fully engaging on campus. My experience in orchestra was limited, mainly because my time was eaten up by my full-time job and other classes. I was restricted in what I could allocate my time to, even my studies.

I nearly gave up on my degree last semester. However, the connections within the honor’s program made my long hours worthwhile. The professors and students. That emphasis on the people shouldn’t be lost dear reader, and yes, it’s corny, but it’s true. I really did want to visit World Lit for the discussion. It was enriching to my mind, and it became an outlet I leaned on.

## **Section 2: Preparation for the Future**

The honors program has cultivated a support system that I feel connected to, despite being distant. This really pushed me to create support systems in other areas in my life. At my work, I do my best to be involved with my team, show kindness, and be genuine with them. My job and school hours lead me to be away from home most of the time. I take time to backtrack and

reinforce that support. I let my family know I'm still alive and thriving, and I always let them know I'm still in their lives. After all, it's a tremendous transition for everyone.

While writing this, I'll be moving into an apartment to live on my own. Since graduating from high school, this transitional period of my life has never stopped. Between moving after graduation, my first and last semester of college, new jobs, and now an apartment, I desperately needed stability. The support system honors offered me was an invaluable amount of stability I could cling to for comfort, and it made a positive impact on my mental health. There was something about knowing every Monday and Wednesday I had a good discussion to look forward to that egged me on.



I realized I needed more of a support system. Despite my family and honors, I felt like I was living in a world of moving pieces. So, I shifted to keeping myself up and focusing on other things that gave me stability. My fiancé, my friends, and therapy. That kind of support helped me move forward. I focused on fostering support and improving my mental health. Essentially giving myself something to look forward to on the weekends besides weekly reading and getting flustered with math programs. When I made that shift, things felt solid enough to keep me grounded and pushing forwards.

### **Section 3: Highlighted Experience**

Highlights of my entire experience in honors took place in professor's offices. Speaking with professors that offer honors gave me insight into what we were looking at, but they were an endless source of information and advice. I was having a crisis this last semester, I didn't know how to use my degree or where I could go. An honors professor I spoke to took some of their time and helped me through the debacle. My fondest memories though, were just pestering them with anecdotes and silly questions. Telling my literacy professor about dire fishing trips and having strange conversations that could go any which way are dear memories to me.

So, all in all, dear reader, if you have time to bother your professors, do it. I met honors members this way and made surprisingly impactful connections with professors just from stopping by a few afternoons. Small things like that can make you feel rooted, and it made me feel like I belonged. The best part of the whole fiasco is that they stay even when the semester is done. In theory, you can bother them during any semester. Despite not having a lot to share in terms of group trips to Dallas, or wherever honors people go, they always made me feel welcome.

### **Section 4: Personal Advice**

My advice to you is to put what time you can into honors but remember your support group. Having friends and a community can suddenly become strangely difficult after high school. Enrolling in a university is a new environment which can have some distancing effects on everyone. People get busy at this point but having a small group or a few friends has a major effect on your mental health. Honors can help with that, but it may not be the end-all solution for a social life. There are plenty of opportunities to connect with honors, but if you're working or have a family to take care of, just remember to never be afraid to talk to anyone. We're all

human. If you feel drained or lost, do not ever hesitate to ask for help. Visit counseling, even if you don't think you need it. Most of us don't realize how much we hold on to. Take care of your mind and never be ashamed to ask for support.



Take care of yourself. A few mental health days never hurt.

