

HONORS COLLOQUIUM

This colloquium will provide a forum in which participants in the English Department's honors program can discuss their evolving ideas about their honors projects. We will explore the nature and goals of literary and cultural criticism, examine some conventions about and formats for written interpretation, and talk about the process of planning and writing an honors essay. The class will give you the chance to try out your early thinking on each other, with the aim of eliciting cogent and constructive response. We'll look at some honors essays written by English honors students in past years and have a session in the library on resources and research strategies. I also plan to invite department members who are currently in graduate school or have recently completed the PhD to meet with us to talk about graduate school. The semester will conclude with discussion of your final prospectuses/plans for your essays.

Material to be read will either be posted on the Blackboard site for this class (<http://Bb.oberlin.edu> [abbreviated BB below]), on reserve in Mudd, or handed out in class. There are no required textbooks.

You'll be asked to write comments on the readings, which will provide a basis for discussion, and to give each other written comments on prospectuses. The colloquium is graded on a Cr/NE basis. To receive credit you must do all reading and written work and participate actively in discussion. Absences are discouraged; more than two (except in the case of illness or genuine emergency) will result in a grade of NE for the colloquium.

You will be meeting regularly with your honors advisor over the course of the semester. I'll also expect to see you whenever you have questions or problems you think I can help you with. My office hours are M 4:30-6:00, Th 1:30-3:00, and other times by appointment.

SCHEDULE (subject to change as necessary)

Sept. 5	Preliminaries
Sept. 12	<u>Literature/criticism/theory.</u> Read Helena Echlin, "How Yale Strangles Literature," and Denis Donoghue, "Three Ways of Reading," both on BB. Come prepared to talk about your own interests and biases as a reader and critic.
Sept. 19	<u>What's an honors essay?</u> Read Clara Van Zanten, "A Dance Over the Body of the World: Experiencing William Carlos Williams' <i>Spring and All</i> " (Honors essay, 2001) on BB.
Sept. 26	<u>What's an honors essay for?</u> Read Jennifer Sherer, "Reading in Place: Partial Perspectives on American Literary Geographies" (Honors essay, 1995) and Joshua Emmons, "Forging <i>Miller's Crossing</i> " (Honors essay, 1995), both on BB.

Oct. 3, 10, 17	Individual presentations on work in progress.
Oct. 19-27	FALL BREAK
Oct. 31	Library session with reference librarian Jessica Grim, Mudd 443.
Nov. 7	Grad school session with department faculty.
Nov. 14	NO CLASS. Instead, I'll meet with you each individually this week.
Nov. 20	FINAL PROSPECTUS DUE.
Nov. 21	Final presentations of project/prospectus.
Nov. 28	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving).
Dec. 5, 12	Continued final presentations of project/prospectus.