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## HNRI00: Honors College Forum

### Spring 2010

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### Course Description

The purpose of this course is to expose students to a broad range of fine arts experiences in order to help them understand the important roles that aesthetic spheres of expression play in a Christian liberal education. In particular, the course challenges students to ponder the unique ways that art, music, theatre, and the literary arts can illuminate the meaning and significance of human life, intellect, and the Christian faith. The intent of such learning experiences is to help students broaden their powers of critical thinking, creativity, and discernment beyond the cognitive limits typically perpetuated by the rationalistic discourses of the modern academy. Through participation in a program of fine arts events, readings, group discussions, and reflective writing, students are equipped to appreciate aesthetic pursuits as integral to lifelong learning and the cultivation of a Christian life well-lived.

### Course Objectives

Through their completion of course requirements, students should gain the following:

- A general understanding of the fine arts and the capacity to reflect critically on artistic expressions from various cultures and periods of human history.
- A basic proficiency in assessing the meaning and value of works of art, music, drama, poetry, etc.
- A fundamental grasp of the contributions that aesthetics make to the goals of a liberal education.
- A developing comprehension of the theological significance of the fine arts and its implications for pursuing a life of “faith seeking understanding.”

### Requirements

In order to complete Forum, each student will:

- Attend the **Forum Plenary Event** (Chapel, April 6, 7:00-8:00 pm). Dr. Debbie Luttrell will share about the arts and sacred spaces, reflecting on her role in the creation of the stained glass windows in our new chapel and about how these artistic elements serve and enhance the purposes of the chapel.
- Complete *at least six credits of elective events* (see list of elective events, starting on page 4).
- Attend the **Athens & Jerusalem Seminar** (on March 18 at 4:00 pm in the Globe Theatre with Dr. William Abraham, author of *Athens & Aldersgate: John Wesley and the Foundations of Christian Belief*). The seminar is offered to students and faculty throughout the university and provides an opportunity for our community to wrestle collectively with a topic related to Christian vocation and scholarship.

*Optional elective credit:* If students would like to read this book and participate in a discussion group, they should select elective #20 when they reserve their elective events (*one elective credit*). A free copy of the book will be provided.

- Attend *at least three presentations* during **Celebration of Scholarship**, March 24 and 25. IWU students present their original research during COS. A full schedule of presentations will be sent to you a week or so before the event, and you will choose three 20-minute presentations. You must confirm your attendance! See the Confirmations section (page 2).
- Complete a **final reflection paper**. Details for this assignment are provided at the end of the syllabus. Assignments must be turned in on Blackboard by **Friday, April 16, at 4:00 p.m.**

## Required Readings

The required readings must be completed by the Forum Plenary Event and are available on Blackboard.

Brown, F. B. (2000). "The Taste for Art and the Thirst for God." [Chapter 4 of *Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life*]

Cook, J. (2009). "Where the Spirit Abides." [Chapter in *Visual Theology: Forming and Transforming the Community through the Arts*, edited by Robin M. Jensen and Kimberly J. Vrudny]

Howes, G. (2009). "Art in the Service of God." [Chapter in *Visual Theology: Forming and Transforming the Community through the Arts*, edited by Robin M. Jensen and Kimberly J. Vrudny]

## Optional Readings

For those interested in participating in an Athens & Jerusalem discussion group, elective event #20:

Abraham, W. (2010). *Aldersgate and Athens: John Wesley and the Foundations of Christian Belief*.

## Participation and Attendance Policies

**Athens & Jerusalem Seminar and the Plenary Event:** Full participation in these events is mandatory for all Forum students. If a student cannot attend an event, he or she must send an email to [honors.forum@indwes.edu](mailto:honors.forum@indwes.edu) at least two weeks in advance.

**Elective Offerings:** Participation in **six elective credits** is required. The credit value of each event is listed on pages 4-6. Students may participate in more than six credits of electives, depending upon availability. Students must choose one elective each from the performing, visual, and musical arts.

**Cancellations:** You may cancel your reservation up to two weeks before the date of the event, provided that you have a justifiable reason for canceling. You may also cancel within the two weeks leading up to the event, but you will be responsible for finding another Honors Forum student to take your place. Exceptions for emergency situations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## How to Reserve and Confirm Elective Events

**Reservations:** On the left hand side of the JWHC website ([jwhc.indwes.edu](http://jwhc.indwes.edu)), select "JWHC Academics", then "Honors Forum," then "Reservation Form." Click on that link, and type in all of the Forum events, on-campus and off-campus, that you would like to attend this semester. We will confirm all requests via email. All reservations are taken on a first-come, first-served basis. **If you are willing to drive the IWU van for any of the off-campus events, please let us know in the comments box of the reservation form. Drivers will be given priority for reserving events. If a driver**

cannot be found for a certain event, it will be cancelled, and students will be responsible for finding other elective credits.

**First Date to Reserve Events:** Reservations for elective events will not be accepted prior to Saturday, January 30, at 1:00 pm. Any reservations made before that time will not be accepted.

**Confirmations:** In order to receive credit for any elective that you have attended, you must confirm your attendance online. On the left hand side of [jwhc.indwes.edu](http://jwhc.indwes.edu), select “JWHC Academics,” then “Honors Forum,” then “Confirmation Form.” Click on that link, and enter the number for the event that you attended. **All confirmations must be made within one week after the date of the event. If you fail to confirm within one week of the event, you will be required to write a two-page reflection paper before receiving credit for the event.**

**Attending a “Full” Event:** If you would like to attend an event that is already full, you may still attend and receive credit, but must pay your own transportation and event costs.

**New this Semester:** We will be using Blackboard to track your Forum elective credits. You may visit Blackboard to find out which events you have confirmed and how many electives you have completed. Please allow about two weeks after submitting your confirmation before you expect to see it posted on Blackboard.

## Additional Information

**Questions and Concerns:** Please send all Forum-related emails to Natalie Davis, Beth Freije, and/or Annie Brooker at [honors.forum@indwes.edu](mailto:honors.forum@indwes.edu). Natalie, Beth, and Annie will check this account regularly, but not daily. In case of an emergency, you may also contact Sara Scheunemann, JWHC Program Coordinator, at ext. 1799, or at [sara.scheunemann@indwes.edu](mailto:sara.scheunemann@indwes.edu).

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism:** Any form of academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism is deemed to be a serious violation of the fabric of our character as a community. As a result, any confirmed case of academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. The student is then referred to the John Wesley Honors College Committee in order that his or her further standing in that community can be reviewed. Confirmed cases of academic dishonesty/plagiarism are also submitted to the Academic Affairs Office of the College of Arts and Sciences and are thus subject to further review.

**Students with Disabilities:** In an effort to meet the aspiration of its mission to develop world changers and to respect federal law, Indiana Wesleyan University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students need to self-identify in order to be eligible for such accommodations. In partnership with faculty members and administrators, staff members in the Aldersgate Center coordinate this process. Please contact Mr. Nathan Herring (Student Center 220, ext. 2257) for further assistance.

## Spring 2010 Forum Elective Opportunities

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Students are required to select *at least one* event from each of the categories **except** Literature. Due to the need for everyone in Forum to attend at least one Performing Arts elective, it is not likely that students will be able to attend more than two events in this category. The costs of the events are listed. This information is for students who have signed up for the event after the maximum number of students for the event had been reached, but still wish to attend on their own. **If you are signed up for an event with Honors Forum, you will NOT need to pay.**

### Performing Arts

#### 1. Medea

Friday, February 5, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

IWU, PPAC, Black Box Theater

Includes mandatory discussion in the Black Box following the performance.

Maximum Students: 15

Credits: 2

Cost: \$6

#### 2. Hippolytus

Saturday, February 13, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

Taylor University

Maximum Students: 12

Credits: 2

Cost: \$6

\*\*Driver Needed

#### 3. Going Solo: Pretty Fire

Saturday, February 20, 2010, 1:00 p.m.

Indiana Repertory Theatre

After the performance, students will go out to eat with Intercultural Student Services. The meal will be at the student's cost.

Maximum Students

Credits: 2

Cost: \$12

\*\*Driver Needed

#### 4. The Cherry Orchard

Wednesday, February 24, 2010, 8:00 p.m.

Lily Hall Studio Theater, Butler University

Maximum Students: 12

Credits: 2

Cost: \$5

\*\*Driver Needed

#### 5. Where Fortune Lies

Saturday, March 20, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

IWU, PPAC

Includes mandatory discussion in the Black Box following the performance.

Maximum Students: 15

Credits: 2

Cost: \$6

#### 6. World Literature (ENG 180) Trilogy Performances

Wednesday, April 14, 2010, Time TBA

IWU, PPAC, Black Box Theater

Maximum Students: Unlimited  
Credits: 1  
Cost: Free

## Visual Arts

### **7. Honors Preview Forum Event: Documentary and Discussion**

*Thursday, February 18, 2010, 7:30 p.m.*

IWU, Goodman B-1 (Basement classroom)

Maximum Students: None

Credits: 1

### **8. William Potter: Constructed Paintings**

*Tuesday, February 16, 2010, 4:00-6:00 p.m.*

Beard Arts Center

Mandatory conversation with the artist in Beard 150 at 4:00

Maximum Students: Unlimited

Credits: 2

Cost: 15

### **9. 1920s Gallery: Performing Wallpaper Opening**

*Monday, March 8, 2010, Time TBA*

Student Center, IWU

Maximum Students: Unlimited

Credits: 1

Cost: Free

### **10. Indianapolis Museum of Art**

*Saturday, March 13, 2010 12:20-6:30 p.m.*

The trip is led by Dr. Kent Stiles. It is not available to students who attended it last semester.

Maximum Students: 11

Credits: 2

Cost: Free

### **11. Ron Mazellan: Sabbatical Show**

*Monday, March 22, 2010, 4:00-6:00 p.m.*

Beard Arts Center, IWU

Mandatory conversation with the artist in Beard 150 at 4:00.

Maximum Students: 15

Credits: 2

Cost: Free

### **12. Ardelia Williams Juried Student Exhibition**

*Monday, April 19, 2010, 4:00-6:00 p.m.*

Beard Arts Center, IWU

Maximum Students: Unlimited

Credits: 1

Cost: Free

## Musical Arts

### **13. Opera Theatre: The Bartered Bride**

*Saturday, February 6, 2010, 8:00 p.m.*

Taylor University

Maximum Students: 12

Credits: 2

Cost: \$10  
\*\*Driver Needed

**14. Muncie Symphony Orchestra: People's Choice Concert**

*Saturday, March 20, 2010, 7:30 p.m.*

Ball State University  
Maximum Students: 12  
Credits: 2  
Cost: \$5  
\*\*Driver Needed

**15. IWU Orchestra Concert**

*Friday, April 9, 2010, 7:30 p.m.*

PPAC Auditorium, IWU  
Maximum Students: Unlimited  
Credits: 1  
Cost: Free

**16. University Singers**

*Wednesday, April 14, 2010, 7:30 (tentatively)*

PPAC Auditorium, IWU  
Maximum Students: Unlimited  
Credits: 1  
Cost: Free

**17. IWU Jazz Ensemble Concert**

*Thursday, April 15, 2010, 7:30*

PPAC Auditorium, IWU  
Maximum Students: Unlimited  
Credits: 1  
Cost: Free

**18. IWU Wind Ensemble**

*Thursday, April 22, 2010, 7:30*

PPAC Auditorium, IWU  
Maximum Students: Unlimited  
Credits: 1  
Cost: Free

## Literature

**19. Athens & Aldersgate**

Time & Location TBA (After students sign up for the event, we will coordinate a meeting time and location.)

Maximum Students: Unlimited  
Credits: 1  
\*\*Book will be provided.

## Final Reflection Paper

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**Due date:** Friday, April 16, 2010, at 4:00 p.m. Papers must be turned in on Blackboard.

**Length:** 6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font

### Topics

#### For those who did **NOT** take Forum in the fall of 2009...

This semester, you have participated in a variety of aesthetic experiences as part of Honors Forum, from the performing to the visual to the musical arts. Pick one or two experiences that held the deepest meaning for you, and respond to the following prompts. Throughout your responses, be sure to refer to and draw from the works of art (performance, visual, musical, etc.) that you experienced. They are your primary sources for this course.

- 1- Describe your one or two most meaningful aesthetic experiences in Forum, using the questions below to shape your response. It may be helpful to narrate your experience as you would if you were recording the event in a journal, including your self-reflections as they arise within the context of the story.
  - a. How did you enter into the experience? What did you expect?
  - b. Describe the work of art, the play, the musical composition, etc. What message(s) did you hear or see? What do you think the artist/playwright/composer was trying to communicate?
  - c. How did the experience (of the performance, the painting, the music, etc.) affect you intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, perhaps even physically?
  - d. Were you surprised in any way by your response? If so, how?
  - e. How did your Christian faith shape the way that you responded to the performance, music, painting, etc., and its message(s)?
- 2- What role did community have in helping you to understand your aesthetic experience more fully? For example, you may want to reflect on discussions that you participated in as a part of your Forum experiences or perhaps those that you had informally with others.
- 3- What insights did you gain through these experiences and conversations about:
  - a. The potential for the arts, broadly defined, to impact you?
  - b. The power of the arts to teach you about yourself, human relationships, the nature of God, or any other truths that may have been communicated to you through your aesthetic experiences?
  - c. How your participation in the Christian theological narrative provides the context that shapes how you understand and appreciate these aesthetic creations?

## **For those who DID take Forum in the fall of 2009...**

Our required readings and the Forum Plenary touched on the role of the arts in how we experience and relate to God and on their role in creating sacred spaces. Drawing on these readings and your Forum experiences this semester, write an essay that integrates your responses to the following prompts.

- 1- Choose and briefly describe one or two Forum experiences that were particularly meaningful to you this semester. What about these events caused them to have an impact on you? How did your Christian faith shape the way that you understood and appreciated these experiences?
- 2- Consider a recent church or chapel service in light of what you are learning about theological aesthetics. What role did the arts (visual, musical, performing, architectural, etc.) play in communicating the Christian theological narrative? How did the arts affect your responses to the service?
- 3- Compare and contrast these two experiences (Forum and church/chapel). What similarities, if any, do they share? How are they different? Consider artistic forms used, messages communicated, your and others' responses, etc.
- 4- What role do you think the arts should have in the church?