

# Teaching for the William O. Douglas Honors College

## Overview

Through the William O. Douglas Honors College's interdisciplinary curriculum, students from across campus work with instructors in challenging classes and engage in experiential learning via research, service, international experiences, leadership, and internships. The William O. Douglas Honors College program is structured upon four "pillars" of coordinated intellectual engagement: critical inquiry, leadership, civic engagement, and undergraduate research.

Interdisciplinarity refers to a method or mindset that merges traditional educational concepts or methods in order to arrive at a new approaches or solutions. More than just pasting together different subjects and methods, interdisciplinary work is the process of developing an integration of methods that are traditionally thought of as separate fields (like history, business, or biology).<sup>i</sup>

The DHC experience accommodates the diverse talents of our students by providing a flexible and interdisciplinary curriculum. Honors courses are designed to challenge highly motivated students to perform to their personal best. Students can participate in either Core Curriculum Honors, Upper Division Honors, Interdisciplinary Honors Minor or a combination.

If you are interested in teaching an Honors course, please see our topic proposals page.

## Why teach for the DHC?

- DHC courses appeal to faculty who enjoy working with motivated students from various disciplines in an interactive environment. Honors students come to us from every major on campus, and bring individual insights, backgrounds, and motivations, but are committed to interdisciplinary, dynamic discussion, and deep exploration of content.
- Classes are size restricted, with the goal of maintaining a 24-student limit to encourage discussion amongst faculty and students alike.
- Honors classes provide faculty a place to explore course content, design and pedagogy that can be of benefit to other departments.
- Professional development is highly valued and fostered in the DHC. Faculty are mentored by the DHC Executive Director and have access to peer review by the DHC Advisory Committee.

## What Creates an Honors Environment?

- DHC classes pursue the subject matter in greater depth using interdisciplinary approaches and with more intensity than a regular university class.
- DHC classes are writing intensive when appropriate.

- Students are expected to fully participate in the class through discussion, group work, and presentations.
- We encourage inclusion of research components and other experiential instruction.
- Experimentation with a variety of collaborative and cooperative instructional styles is encouraged.
- DHC students expect active student/instructor interaction within the classroom setting.
- We attempt to create a problem-solving environment, allowing students to experience complexity of both content and discussion.

### **Who teaches for the DHC?**

Faculty from across the university's colleges and departments teach in the DHC, providing a great range of disciplinary approaches. But they do all share certain characteristics. They are:

- Enthusiastic and eager to challenge motivated and engaged students
- Comfortable in small class settings
- Skilled in facilitating discussion
- Employing innovative teaching styles and ideas, including problem and project based learning
- Committed to interdisciplinary teaching and collaboration
- Skilled at writing and promoting writing in the classroom
- Interested in challenging students to think globally and discover international connections

### **Honors Students Profile**

- Students in all majors on campus participate in the Honors College as a way to deepen their distribution/general education requirements. We seek students who are interested in how their disciplinary interests and background can be applied to a variety of topics, and how they can benefit from colleagues with very different disciplinary inclinations.
- DHC students respond well to in-class discussion and will foster spontaneous student-to-student discussions.
- The median GPA of DHC students is 3.7.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/master-arts-interdisciplinary-studies-mais/what-interdisciplinarity>