Contemplations in Literature Honors RAP

This Honors RAP is located in Sycamore Hall in the Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community.

Students in this program will enjoy exploring creative poetry and fiction in this Honors RAP with others on their floor. They will enroll in an English honors course as well as a section of the Honors requirement, Ideas that Change the World. Both of these courses satisfy both honors and university requirements. Course descriptions are included below.

Students are required to be roommates with others in this program.

Related Courses:

Engl 254H: Writing and Reading Imaginative Literature

Writing and Reading Imaginative Literature -

This course combines critical analysis with creative writing to explore what happens when traumatic experience becomes narrative. It begins with the premise that naming and writing about trauma transforms it into something other than the original experience. To form the basis for our writing in multiple genres, we will read novels, poetry, memoirs, and theoretical essays about different aspects of trauma and its effects. Readings will primarily foreground contemporary multi-ethnic American writers and will address personal traumas of sexual, racial, and domestic violence, as well as communal traumas such as colonialism, war, and genocide. In creating our own narratives (both fictional and non-fictional), we will seek to expand our understanding of narrative possibilities and choices, and attempt to push the boundaries of what narrative is and what it can do. The course will take the form of a discussion-based seminar and interactive writing workshop. A final project will enable you to develop one of the shorter assignments into a longer project involving a written and oral component. By joining this class, you agree to participate actively in and foster a sensitive, encouraging, and respectful community.

Primary readings may include Louise Erdrich's The Roundhouse, Jung Yun's Shelter, Alison Bechdel's Fun Home, Ta-Nehisi Coates' Between the World and Me, Thi Diem
Thuy Le's *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*, poetry by Etel Adnan, Dionne Brand, and Ocean Vuong, and selected films (Moonlight) and artwork.

**Honors 201H - Commonwealth Honors Seminar - Ideas that Change the World**

In this interdisciplinary, discussion-based seminar, students will examine innovative thinkers, groundbreaking ideas, and the strategies that transform these ideas into effective actions.

The course explores dilemmas addressed by the sciences, the arts, and the humanities. In each of these broad areas, the course focuses on questions about human nature, the sources of our knowledge, and the application of that knowledge to the solving of perennial and contemporary problems. The semester begins with inquiries into the nature of truth, of particular relevance in our era of debates over “alternative facts.” Then the course considers ongoing problems of violence, injustice, and environmental crisis. Our inquiries will establish a dialogue between past and present as we examine historical figures such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Rachel Carson, along with present-day innovators such as Temple Grandin and the Dalai Lama.

[More details about the course](https://www.honors.umass.edu/contemplations-literature-honors-rap)

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