

Garrett Leonard  
Honors Portfolio  
Graduate - May 2018

Honors American Government - Matthew Evans  
Honors Comp II - Ashley Davis  
Honors World Civ II - Sevin Gallo  
Honors World Literature I - Sabrina Chesne  
Honors World Literature II - Meagan Looney



**1. Reflect upon your semesters spent in the program, and discuss how the Program helped “demonstrate engagement,” “cultivate curiosity,” and “explore perspectives” (community, curiosity, and diversity). How have you “grown”?**

I am a non-traditional student. By the time I found my way to NWACC I had already survived a 10-year long career as a paramedic in Little Rock. I worked my way up from a probationary EMT to field captain. I was well versed in caring for patients from every imaginable background and was equally adept at coordinating rescue operations between several different emergency agencies. When I applied to the NWACC Honors Program I didn't think the “community, curiosity, diversity” core values applied to me; I had already served a diverse community, and I thought I was plenty curious. I was only hoping to push myself academically. I can honestly say that I didn't expect to grow. But with the benefit of time and perspective I can see that I was challenged in ways I did not anticipate; I am so thankful that I was wrong. The level at which I was expected to perform to be successful in my honors classes was a welcome challenge that helped me to grow academically and socially in a way that I did not know I needed to grow.

As an extreme example of an introvert, I hate group work. However much you think you are opposed to group work, increase it infinitely - that is me. The layout of the honors program classroom and the small class sizes naturally turn every conversation into group work. The Honors Program instructors foster such an open and safe environment to freely express ideas that any hesitation you have about speaking up in class is erased. I've always been too shy to speak up anywhere but my own living room (and sometimes not even then). Professor Chesne once told me that she thought I was 'weirdly quiet' when she first met me. What makes that moment so remarkable is that she told me this while I was with a small group attending the Great Plains Honors

Council Conference, where I was presenting on a group project to other honors students from around the great plains region.

In my Honors Comp II class, where we focused on linguistics, I had the opportunity to complete an original research project. We were learning about the nuances of 'loaded' language at the same time that I happen to read a few articles online about toxic masculinity. This lead to my project that examined whether or not the perception of masculinity was changing from generation to generation and how that impacted society's opinions of traditional masculinity. This topic fascinated me enough that I am still collecting resources in case I am able to find other chances to further my research and examine new perspectives.

I just so happened to take Honors American Government at the most contentious time in recent American political history. Professor Evans refused to let the class become an echo chamber for our preconceived ideas. He constantly pushed us to think about the whys and hows and what it might be to consider things from other viewpoints. He created an environment to safely and freely exchange our ideas, but he constantly challenged us to explain where our ideas came from and why we had them.

## **2. What was the best part of your experience?**

I am a poor writer. I have never struggled to retain or analyze information, but sitting in front of a blank page causes my IQ to plummet. So, my favorite overall experience was the ability to complete non-traditional projects to demonstrate an understanding of the material and original thought.

The trip to Beaumont Texas originated from a traditional essay about women's roles in various assigned texts in Honors World Literature. A few of my classmates completed similar papers that were all submitted (and accepted) to the 2017 Great Plains Honors Council Conference. Professor Chesne facilitated our ability to present that information via a panel discussion. This was the ideal scenario for me because it meant that I was not the sole focus of an audience's attention and it meant that I was able to discuss my ideas without having to present them in an expected way. *Appendix 1*

Another project from Honors World Lit I came from a reading of Dante's *Inferno*. First and foremost, I learned that I LOVE Dante; that was unexpected. Professor Chesne had us teach our classmates specific sections of the epic in whatever format we thought most appropriate. I chose to present my information through the drawing of a comic (it's worth mentioning that I am not artistic, and I would say I am much more doodler than drawer). I could not pass up the opportunity to do something so unique in

a World Literature class. I think if I had written a traditional essay I would have learned everything I was supposed to learn, but by having to synthesize the information and present it in a teachable format I'll forever have a closer connection with this amazing piece of literature . *Appendix 2*

In Honors World Literature II we were asked to come up with a creative project based on any of the works we had read that semester. I chose Robert Browning's *Porphyria's Lover*. I decided to delve into the mind of the speaker's point of view and created a handwritten journal that spanned from his first encounter with Porphyria and ended several days after the events of the poem. I was excited about this project from the beginning; I assumed it would be straightforward and simple... but then I got carried away. I distressed a handcrafted leather journal and aged the pages with coffee stains, tears, and a small kitchen fire. I included a scrap of ribbon used to 'tie back her hair,' fake blood, several drawings, and even changed the handwriting to match the mania of the entries. I rarely brag about myself, it's not in my nature, but I can confidently say that I did a great job. I included lines of text from Browning's other works and found a newspaper clipping from 1835 that supported my narrative. Much like my *Inferno* comic, this project brought *Porphyria's Lover* to life (pun intended) for me. *Appendix 3*

### **3. How did this program prepare you for a university (or for a workplace, if you aren't transferring at this point)? What hard or soft skills will you take with you?**

The Honors Program gave me two years where I was made to feel incredibly comfortable speaking out in class and joining in group discussions. I have learned and practiced navigating various viewpoints and perspectives in a way that showed respect and understanding regardless of how far away from my own opinions topics might stray. That has been extremely important in my classes at the University of Arkansas, where the classes are much larger and are not necessarily encouraging of much discussion. It is more daunting to begin a conversation in this new environment, but it is something I am able to do because of my experiences with the NWACC Honors Program.

I have always loved to read. World Literature I and II taught me how to compare texts and examine them as part of a larger narrative culturally, historically or socially. Reading for pleasure is a great hobby, but it is not the same skill as analytical reading. The close readings and the conversations that followed in World Literature I and II gave me the skill set necessary to participate in higher level literary analysis; without that I would not be able to complete my studies at the U of A. Similarly, In my linguistic

studies in Comp II class I learned to examine word choice and the deeper meaning and nuance of words and language. This information has been invaluable in interpreting everything from poetry to philosophy.

**4. Considering all you have written for the above, what advice do you have for new members? This answer should be “short and sweet.”**

Be open. I am the least open to new experiences individual in the world. My hesitation comes from a place of introversion, not laziness. But pushing through my natural inclination to stand alone in a corner has resulted in one of the most meaningful experiences of my life and is one of the things I am most proud to have been a part of.

Appendix 1.

Leonard 1

Garrett Leonard

Professor Sabrina Chesne

English 2213

16 December 2016

#LadyBusiness

*"Feminism encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians."*

Pat Robertson

I was raised by a feminist mother and two strong older sisters. My dad was around, but mom was in charge of the household. I continued the tradition and married a woman a hundred times smarter and more capable than me. Because of my upbringing, I'm often lulled into a false sense of security that I'm doing a good job as a modern, progressive man. I'm a white knight fighting social injustice - sexism is for other, less mannered men. It's exactly around the time that I get comfortable that my accomplished wife, or outspoken mother, will remind me how far-off I am. Usually they do so by reminding me that the absence of sexism isn't something to necessarily be proud of by itself. Also that, unfortunately, I'm not totally void of sexism, even if it's accidental. I'm a middle class, hetero, white male born in

in maintaining roles, such as the speed of volume.

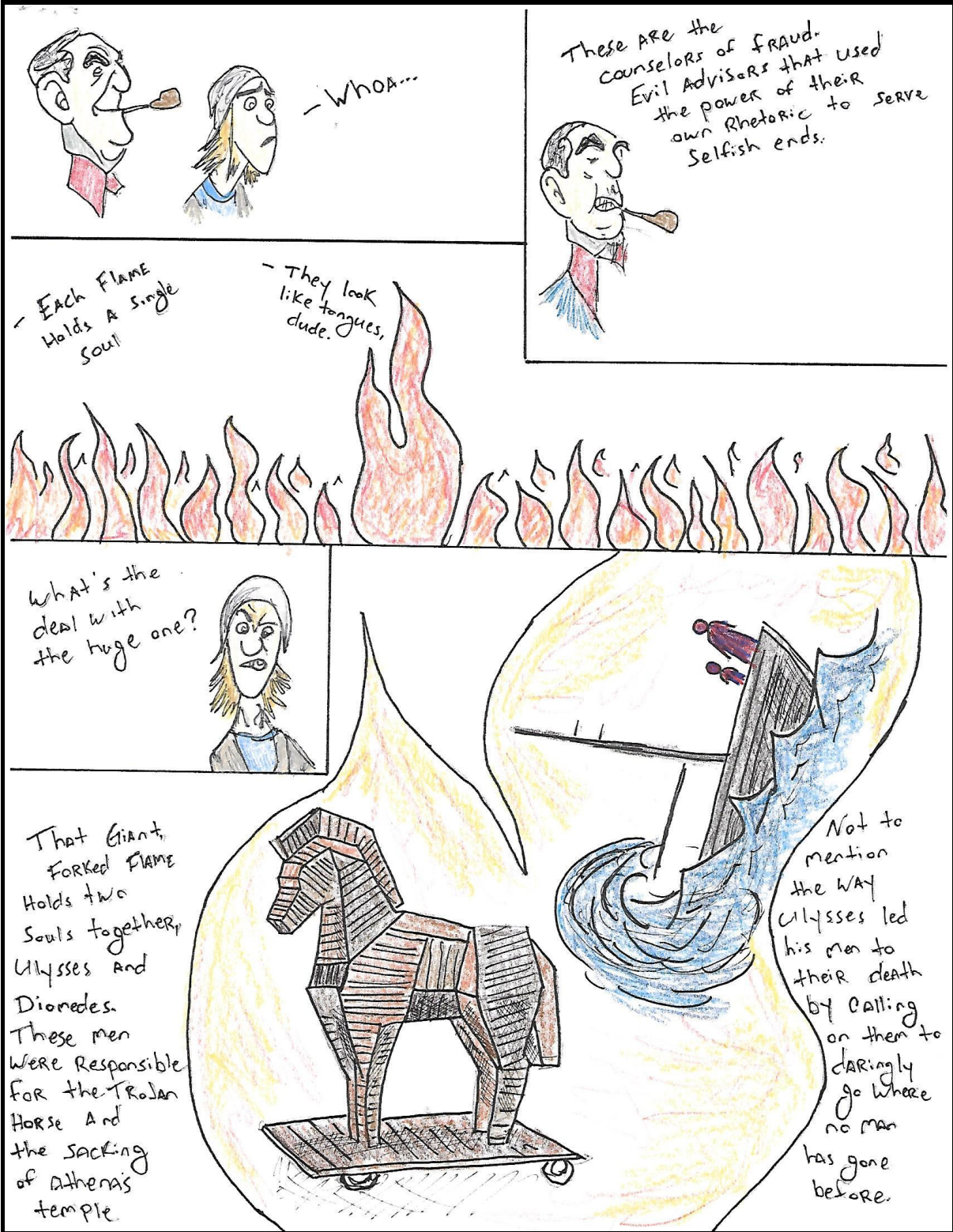
I - F 9:00 - 10:00 AM

**LEONARD, GARRETT** | NorthWest Arkansas Community College

### **The Roles Women Fill in Early World Literature**

In this presentation I will examine the female characters from Gilgamesh, Dante's Inferno, The Iliad, and Don Quixote to see how limited the roles women could fill in early works are from around the world, and how at the same time our heroes would be lost without them.

Appendix 2.




Appendix 3.

... While I AM I,  
And you ARE you,  
So long As the World Contains us both,  
Me the loving And you the loth  
While the one eludes, must the other  
PERSUE...

AND then I smell  
her hair on my clothes  
and I'm a weakened  
man again.

Porphyria Porphyria Porphyria  
Porphyria Porphyria Porphyria  
Porphyria Porphyria Porphyria  
Porphyria Porphyria Porphyria  
Porphyria Porphyria  
Porphyria  
Porphyria  
Porphyria



What if  
the VICAR  
HAD Blonde  
HAIR? Would  
I have CHASED  
Him instead?

