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# JNCHC

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## JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

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A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

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## HONORS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

### JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

**The National Collegiate Honors Council** is an association of faculty, students, and others interested in honors education. Executive Committee: Lydia Lyons, President, Hillsborough Community College; John Zubizarreta, President-Elect, Columbia College–South Carolina; Hallie Savage, Immediate Past-President, Clarion University of Pennsylvania; Bonnie Irwin, Vice-President, Eastern Illinois University; Bob Spurrier, Secretary, Oklahoma State University; Rolland W. Pack, Treasurer, Freed-Hardeman. Executive Director: Cynthia M. Hill, headquartered at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Board of Directors: Ginny Atkinson, Central Arizona College; Amanda Bowman, Columbia College–South Carolina; Bernice Braid, Long Island University–Brooklyn; Ellen Buckner, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Elizabeth Callahan, St. Louis University; Sarah Fann, University of North Carolina–Wilmington; Annmarie Guzy, University of South Alabama; Gregory Lanier, University of West Florida; Kathy A. Lyon, Winthrop University; Jay Mandt, Wichita State University; Roxanne Moralez, Texas State University–San Marcos; Rosalie Otero, University of New Mexico; Doug Peterson, University of South Dakota; James Ruebel, Ball State University; Anne Schnitzenbaumer, Ball State University; Richard I. Scott, University of Central Arkansas; Pratik Talati, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Nathan Torno, Texas A&M University.

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

*Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* is a refereed periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at [adalong@uab.edu](mailto:adalong@uab.edu).

## DEADLINES

March 1 (for spring/summer issue); September 1 (for fall/winter issue)

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Cover design by Dail Mullins.

# CALL FOR PAPERS

The next issue of *JNCHC* (**deadline: March 1, 2010**) invites research essays on any topic of interest to the honors community.

The issue will also include a Forum focused on the theme “Honors and Athletics.” We invite essays of roughly a thousand words that consider this theme in the context of your campus and/or a national context.

Questions to consider might include: Is *mens sano in corpore sano* a concept relevant to honors? Are intercollegiate athletics an asset or disruption to the honors community? In what way have intramural sports added to or subtracted from the honors community? Is the analogy between honors and athletics a useful tool for gaining special privileges for honors students such as priority registration? Is this analogy apt, and are these privileges ethical? Are the honors director and sports coach natural enemies or allies? Does the special attention given to athletes help justify special attention for honors students? Does the brouhaha that surrounds high-profile athletics help or interfere with recruiting and fundraising for honors? Are scholar-athletes an important benefit to honors?

Forum essays should focus on ideas, concepts, and/or opinions related to “Honors and Athletics.” Examples from one’s own campus can be and usually are relevant, but the essays should not simply be descriptions of “what we do at our institution.”

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We accept material by e-mail attachment. We do not accept material by fax or hard copy.

The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author’s primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is preferred.

There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.

Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors will have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at [adalong@uab.edu](mailto:adalong@uab.edu) or, if necessary, 850.927.3776.



# DEDICATION



## LOTHAR L. TRESP

Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Georgia, Lothar Tresp has not only studied history but participated in and—within the context of the NCHC—made it. Born in East Prussia in 1927, Dr. Tresp's high school education was interrupted by the war. In 1945, he was wounded in combat while serving in the German *Wehrmacht*. Subsequently, he finished high school and then college, later earning his Ph.D. from the University of Würzburg. Having already been a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Georgia, he immigrated to the United States in 1952 to begin his teaching career, returning to the University of Georgia in 1957 and remaining there until his retirement in 1994. After serving as Assistant and then Acting Director of the fledgling UGA Honors Program, Tresp became Director in 1967, a position he maintained for over a quarter of a century. While building his own program, he also was instrumental in the early development of the NCHC, serving on the Executive Committee and then becoming Vice President and President (1974-76). He was also the co-founder and first president of the Southern Regional Honors Council. Throughout most of the 1980s (1981-87), Tresp was Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the NCHC, and throughout his honors career he served as consultant to over thirty honors programs and gave countless presentations at national and regional conferences. His many accomplishments were acknowledged throughout his career.



by, for instance, his selection as a Ford Fellow in Academic Administration, numerous teaching and service awards in and outside of honors, and the Honoratus Award, shown in the photo above. Lothar Tresp has had an incalculable influence on the NCHC and on honors education in this country, dignifying it with his indomitable commitment to excellence in education. We proudly dedicate this issue of *JNCHC* to the historian from East Prussia who helped shape the history of honors in the United States.

# Editor's Introduction

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Two decades ago, most honors directors and deans were not yet using email, nobody was hooked up to the Internet because it did not exist, and the NCHC conducted all of its business by mail. Those of us with computers used MSDOS and said “F9” as a synonym for “delete”; our desks were buried under heavy machines attached to a mesh of cords that kept us hogtied. The telephone (I’m talking landline) was the most important communication device on our desks at home or on campus. Our waste baskets bore heavy loads of paper messages and memos. Now we have entered the world of wikis and word clouds, of Flickr and Facebook, of Wordle, Scratch, and Clickers, where CPR stands for a strategy not of resuscitation but of Calibrated Peer Review. In addition to its intrinsic interest, this particular JNCHC Forum may be a curious artifact in the not-too-distant future, when we might look back at terms like Flickr and Wordle with the same amused nostalgia we now feel for MSDOS and the Commodore 64.

My guess is that, while virtually all of us have adapted to the rapid digitalization of our scholarly, administrative, and personal lives, the classroom is another matter; it is a contested site where tradition meets innovation, happily or unhappily, with a range of attitudes from skepticism to enthusiasm. Honors programs and colleges, with their history of both innovation and one-on-one interaction between teachers and students, have a special place in the convergence of new and old pedagogies.

Thus, the time is ripe for a *JNCHC* Forum on the theme “Honors in the Digital Age.” We invited essays of roughly a thousand words that consider this theme in the context of a single campus or in a national context. George Mariz of Western Washington University provided the lead essay for the Forum in an essay titled “Honors in the Electronic Age.” Contributors to the Forum were invited to respond to his essay or take an independent approach.

Mariz begins his consideration of “Honors in the Electronic Age” by balancing the virtues and pitfalls of technology in any intellectual pursuit, especially within academia. Then, after a general comparison of how honors and non-honors students approach their education, Mariz contrasts the ways they typically make use of technology in their studies. He concludes that honors students, as they do and always have done in all their intellectual pursuits, tend to put the tools available to them—in this instance, digital technologies—to

the best uses in their research and self-education: "They now have new tools that allow them to produce work that differs from what most other students produce in about the same way as before the electronic revolution." At the same time, all students—honors and non-honors—can now perform at a higher level given the new tools available to them.

Four of the essays in the Forum respond directly or indirectly to the issues Mariz raised, considering the broad context within which digital transformations have taken place in the academic world and in honors education.

We begin the responses with "Postmodern Prometheans: Academic Libraries, Information Technologies, and the Cut-and-Paste Aesthetic" by Emily Walshe of Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus. Walshe gives us an exceptionally witty, sophisticated, and insightful analysis of the academic and cultural differences between our students and ourselves. Accustomed to the "act of viewing" rather than the "act of reading," to horizontal skimming rather than vertical understanding, and to abstracts as a replacement rather than a starting point for reading texts, students take in and produce materials in the mode of wikis, blogs, and RSS feeds. Online information providers are attuned to their needs, not to the needs of the traditional scholar. The mandate for honors teachers and administrators, Walshe writes, is not to acquiesce to the culture of their students but to "teach our millennial learners to honor the sovereignty of original thought, especially their own, by resisting the popular impulse to pare down and stuff. . . ." The particular relevance of "pare down and stuff" requires a reading of the whole essay.

Richard Badenhausen of Westminster College (Utah) makes a different kind of interesting observation about students and their teachers in "Immigrant Song: A Cautionary Note about Technology and Honors." He distinguishes between technological natives (virtually all of our students) and "digital immigrants" (almost all faculty members). A consequence of when we were born, this distinction signals a significant contrast in culture. While teachers, like all immigrants, struggle to adapt to a new, fast-paced, multi-tasking, technologically challenging culture, they would be wise also to use the honors classroom as a place where their students can experience an intellectually challenging culture, one in which they have time to rest and reflect.

In "Digital Deliberations," Stephen A. Yoder of the University of Alabama at Birmingham acknowledges some of the concerns expressed by Walshe and Badenhausen while also echoing Mariz's point that, although the digital era provides a new context, the basic issues remain the same. Yoder considers the pitfalls of any deliberative process and suggests that digital forums such as blogs and wikis magnify these dangers. Addressing Cass Sunstein's insights and terminology in *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge*, Yoder describes ways that honors faculty can provide their

students with the analytical tools necessary to successful deliberation, both on- and off-line.

Richard Ira Scott and Donna Bowman of the University of Central Arkansas have an upbeat perspective on the beneficial uses of technology in their essay “It’s the Pedagogy, Stupid.” They suggest that online technologies such as blogs and podcasts add new pedagogical opportunities for term projects such as collaborative writing where peer-to-peer learning can supplement and enhance traditional educational strategies. These new technologies can transform the educational process, empowering students to interact not just with the teacher and each other but also with a larger audience beyond the classroom. These technologies also open up opportunities for external evaluation of student work in a manner similar to juried art competitions and athletic events.

The remaining six essays all echo the arguments of Scott and Bowman as they provide examples of particular digital technologies that have improved opportunities in their honors programs or colleges.

In “Building a Better Honors Learning Community through Technology,” Melissa L. Johnson acknowledges that technology can be a distraction, but she contends that, especially given the small size and high interest level of honors classes, it can substantially strengthen the sense of community. She describes the way she used blogs, wikis, and word clouds to enhance student participation and cooperation in her freshman honors class on professional development at the University of Florida, and at the end of her essay she provides information on how to initiate these strategies.

Addressing the benefits of some of the same technologies that Melissa L. Johnson described, Frances A. Kelleher and Susan Swartzlander write about the opportunities opening up for them in their new high-tech classrooms, called “Learn Labs,” at Grand Valley State University. In “Action, Connection, Communication: The Honors Classroom in the Digital Age,” the authors explain how Wordle and Scratch and CPR (Calibrated Peer Review), for instance, have transformed their students’ learning into active, connected, and public participation in a broader historical and geographical context than ever before.

In the same vein, Philip L. Frana—in “Implementing Wikis in Honors Courses”—writes that MediaWiki has changed the way he teaches his honors course on oral history at the University of Central Arkansas. Through MediaWiki, he now involves his students in a collaborative project called “Little Rock Renaissance,” in which they build on what honors students have done in previous classes and add new experts to an impressive list of collaborators from the Little Rock community. Thus, Frana demonstrates that new digital technologies can “transform, enhance, and broaden the quality of honors education.”

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Laura A. Guertin of Penn State Brandywine and Courtney L. Young of Penn State Beaver, in their essay "Using Flickr to Connect a Multi-Campus Honors Community," demonstrate how social networks can create academic communities that had not been possible before. Honors directors at multiple campuses of Pennsylvania State University have set up a collaborative project on Flickr so that all their honors students can connect with each other. Their first photo project, launched this year, focused on the two-hundredth birthday of both Darwin and Lincoln, with students posting images, responding to them, and creating a virtual community among honors students from different parts of the state. Similar projects will take place in future years.

Deborah Gentry of Heartland Community College contributes "Clickin' in the Honors Classroom: Using Audience Response Systems to Facilitate Discussion and Decision-Making." Gentry describes her use of Audience Response Systems (ARS)—or clickers—in an honors seminar to make students more comfortable in starting to express their opinions. This technology also helps her assess her students' progress and discover where they need more work. She outlines some of the benefits and limitations of clickers in the honors classroom.

In "Making Connections: Technology and Interaction in an Honors Classroom," John J. Doherty and Kevin Ketchner of Northern Arizona University describe an idea for an icebreaker that can be implemented on Blackboard Vista and then followed up in class. They saw this strategy jumpstart connections and community among their new honors students, enlivening the classroom experience and enhancing student learning.

We conclude the challenging ideas presented in the Forum on "Honors in the Digital Age" with a lagniappe: a delightful poem by Debra K. Holman of the University of Northern Colorado called "IM Riff on the IT Overload," which can be enjoyed both vertically and horizontally by both digital natives and digital immigrants.

In addition to the Forum, this issue of *JNCHC* includes three research essays, the first of which is "Assessing Student Learning in Community College Honors Programs Using the CCCSE Course Feedback Form" by Laura O. Ross and Marcia A. Roman of Seminole Community College. Surveys developed by the Center for Community College Student Engagement were administered to a range of 829 students and to 260 honors students at SCC. Based on the survey results, Ross and Roman provide data suggesting that, in all significant areas other than career counseling, the honors students are more engaged in their honors classes than students generally are in their regular classes. According to the authors, the data demonstrate the added value of honors education.

In the second research essay, “Evolution and Human Nature: Comparing Honors and Traditional Pedagogies for the New Science of the Mind,” Scott M. James and Katherine E. Bruce describe three formats for teaching evolutionary psychology. This inherently interdisciplinary topic, they contend, benefits especially from multiple faculty perspectives in the classroom. Using evidence based on three courses in evolutionary psychology that they have taught at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, James and Bruce argue for the greater value of interdisciplinary team-teaching in comparison to single-teacher or lecture-style formats.

We conclude this issue of *JNCHC* with “Thesis as Rhizome: A New Vision for the Honors Thesis in the Twenty-First Century” by Kaitlin A. Briggs of the University of Southern Maine. Briggs draws on the work of Gilles DeLeuze and Felix Guattari—especially their metaphor of the rhizome—to recommend alternatives to the traditional honors thesis. Rhizomes, Briggs writes, “operate according to principles of connection, heterogeneity, and multiplicity” rather than moving “hierarchically in pre-established channels.” Another image that Briggs adopts from DeLeuze and Guattari is the map as a model for textual production, reminiscent of the mapping characteristic of *City as Text*<sup>TM</sup>. The thesis as the capstone experience in honors should encourage such mapping of new and unknown territories along with experimentation, “dynamic inventiveness,” and “subjective engagement.”

One stimulus toward this kind of mapping, Briggs implies, is the multiplicity of digital technologies, and so we come full circle in the exploration of “Honors in the Digital Age,” which—as Briggs suggests—entails major changes in the way we think about what and how we teach our honors students. We hope that this issue of *JNCHC* offers useful ideas to honors administrators and faculty about changes occurring in our academic culture and how to adapt to them.

# About the Authors

**Richard Badenhause**n is Professor and Kim T. Adamson Chair at Westminster College, where he has directed the honors program since 2001. A former NCHC Board member, he teaches classes in the humanities, trauma literature, and theories of place. In his non-honors life, he is the author of *T. S. Eliot and the Art of Collaboration* (Cambridge, 2004) and is completing a book entitled *T. S. Eliot's Traumatic Texts*.

**Donna Bowman** is Associate Professor and Associate Director of the University of Central Arkansas Honors College. She holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from the University of Virginia. Her work in the field of process theology can be found in *The Divine Decision: A Process Doctrine of Election* (Westminster John Knox, 2002) and *Handbook of Process Theology* (co-edited with Jay McDaniel, Chalice Press, 2006). She currently serves on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the American Academy of Religion.

**Kaitlin A. Briggs** is Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Associate Director of Honors Writing and Thesis Research at the University of Southern Maine, where she supervises the interdisciplinary undergraduate theses in the honors program as students move increasingly away from conventional thesis presentations and toward multiple modes of representation in their work. She has published in such journals as *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* and is a contributing editor of the forthcoming *Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Basic Writing*.

**Katherine E. Bruce** is Professor of Psychology at the University of North Carolina Wilmington and directs the UNCW Honors Scholars Program. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Georgia, where she studied primate social behaviour. She now studies concept learning in non-humans using interdisciplinary and evolutionary perspectives. She is a past president of the National Collegiate Honors Council and was recognized by the Carnegie Foundation and CASE as the 2008 North Carolina Professor of the Year.

**John J. Doherty** is an instructional designer with the Northern Arizona University e-Learning Center. He has also been teaching first-year honors courses at NAU since 2005. His research interests include applying technology to honors courses. He has a case-study chapter forthcoming

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

in the book *Cases on Online and Blended Learning Technologies in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices*.

**Philip L. Frana** is Assistant Professor of Science & Technology Studies and Assistant Director of the Honors College at the University of Central Arkansas. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Iowa State University and completed a post-doctoral appointment at the Charles Babbage Institute for the History of Information Technology. His current research interests include urban history and the history of business computing.

**Deborah Gentry**, Ed.D., is Co-Director of the Honors Program at Heartland Community College in Normal, Illinois, where she is also Director of the Instructional Development Center. Prior to her arrival at HCC, she was professor and associate dean at Illinois State University. During her tenure there, she was associated with the honors program in a variety of ways, including service on the honors council.

**Laura A. Guertin** is Associate Professor of Earth Science and Honors Coordinator at Penn State Brandywine. Her research interests include innovative and effective uses of emerging technologies to improve student learning in introductory-level geosciences courses. She is the chair of the Geoscience Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research.

**Debra K. Holman** is Associate Director of the Center for Honors, Scholars and Leadership at the University of Northern Colorado. A past president of the WRHC, she currently serves as co-chair of the NCHC External Relations Committee and as a member of the Partners in the Parks Committee. She is also engaged in interdisciplinary doctoral studies focused on environmental education and social justice.

**Scott M. James** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. In addition to publishing several articles on the ethics of humanitarian response and moral philosophy, he is author of the forthcoming *Evolutionary Ethics: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 2010).

**Melissa L. Johnson** is Assistant Director of the Honors Program as well as a doctoral student in the educational technology program at the University of Florida. With the honors program, she oversees a university-wide undergraduate research program and coordinates the professional development course for first-year students. Her current research focus encompasses several areas of undergraduate education, most recently involvement with science research and in leadership opportunities.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**Kevin Ketchner** is a librarian with the Northern Arizona University Cline Library. He has also been an instructor with the NAU Honors Program since 2006. He has been presenting and publishing on the role of technology in teaching and learning since the 1990s.

**George Mariz** is Director of the Honors Program at Western Washington University and Professor of History. He has been extensively involved with NCHC publications and serves on the Publications Board. His research interests are in the history of religion in Europe and in European intellectual history.

**Marcia A. Roman**, Associate Vice President of Seminole Community College (FL), has worked in student affairs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in public and private institutions in California, Pennsylvania, and Florida. She holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy/theology, one master's degree in marriage and family therapy and another in theology, and a doctorate in education.

**Laura O. Ross** is Director of The Art and Phyllis Grindle Honors Institute at Seminole Community College (FL). She holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in English and a doctorate in education. She also coordinates the international studies program and is serving as president of the Florida Collegiate Honors Council.

**Richard Ira Scott** is Professor and Director of the University of Central Arkansas Honors College. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Researching poverty and hunger, he helped devise the United States Index of Food Security. He also writes and speaks about pedagogy and curriculum development. Dr. Scott is on the NCHC Board of Directors, is Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Southern Regional Honors Council, and has been in collegiate honors education since 1985.

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**Emily Walshe**, is Reference Librarian and Associate Professor at the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University in New York, where she teaches online information retrieval (IR) in the Palmer School of Library & Information Science and in the honors program.

**Stephen A. Yoder** is Assistant Professor and Director of the Honors Program in the School of Business at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He teaches the legal environment of business, corporate governance, leadership, and strategic management. He holds an A.B. degree in political science from Duke University and a J.D. from Northwestern University. He spent nearly thirty years in the business world before beginning his teaching career.

**Courtney L. Young** is Associate Librarian, Associate Professor of Women's Studies, and Honors Coordinator at Penn State Beaver. Her research interests include the intersection of information literacy, technology, and diversity. She serves on the Executive Board of the American Library Association.