

# Roadside America

## Honors First Year Seminar

*It's big... and weirder than you know*



College has a lot in common with a road trip along the lesser-known highways of America's past. It's familiar and foreign at the same time; you're embarking on a grand adventure into the unknown. This class takes a semester-long tour of the USA through history, literature, popular culture and kitsch, while introducing you to the joys and rigors of university life and the honors program through inquiry,

writing and seminar-style discussion. We'll explore history and scholarship about the US interstate highway system and America's collective love affair with cars and consider tourism, pilgrimage, memory, truckers, diners and being "on the road." From the redwood forest to the gulf stream waters... this land is your land, so embrace it! 🚗

### Your Keys to the Course

#### WHERE & WHEN

TR 11:30 - 12:15 Room S-318

#### COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Instructor: Dr. Tona Hangen  
(History Department)

Office: Sullivan 327D

Phone: x8688

Email:  
thangen@worchester.edu

Office hours: T, W, F and by appt; hours are posted on my door & on the course website under "Prof Info"

**CREDITS (3\*)** - Meets your FYS requirement in LASC; also counts as one of your 7 Honors courses. \*See course website or the course catalog for the official University definition of a credit hour.



### A WORD ABOUT THE HONORS PROGRAM

This course, along with the other four honors first-year learning communities, is a key component of the Commonwealth Honors Program at Worcester State University. You have been invited to be part of one of the state's premier programs for high-achieving students who show great academic promise.

The Honors Center is located in LRC 218 on



the main floor of the library; phone x8467. Stay up to date with honors news and events by subscribing to the Google calendar (see [worchester.edu/honors](http://worchester.edu/honors)), liking the Honors Facebook page, subscribing to the blog ([wsuhonors.wordpress.com](http://wsuhonors.wordpress.com)) or following its Twitter feed, @HonorsWSU. The Director is Dr. Karen Woods Weierman (English) [kweierman@worchester.edu](mailto:kweierman@worchester.edu) and the Assistant Director is Dr. Jennifer Hood-DeGrenier (Biology).

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course involves reading, writing, research and group discussion. It is set up as a seminar, not a lecture course. It is intended to be a challenging course for Honors students. You will be expected to read 50-100 pages a week (sometimes more), and to write approximately 30 pages over the course of the semester. You will need to put in consistent effort during the whole term, including with your attendance. You'll enhance your research and writing skills through targeted history labs. You'll need to speak up in class and demonstrate active learning, not passive absorption. **Learning is not a spectator sport**; seminar-style learning is successful when discussion involves everyone in passionate, informed conversation. To take advantage of multiple learning styles and to help create a community of learning in this classroom, this course will assess your progress in several different ways. See page 3 for the specifics on how your grade is calculated.

READING LIST

**Required Books:**

- Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (Penguin)  
ISBN 978-0140283297
- Susan Sessions Rugh, *Family Vacation* (Gibbs Smith)  
ISBN 978-1423601180
- John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley* (Penguin)  
ISBN 978-0142000700
- Hunter S. Thompson, *Hells Angels* (Modern Library)  
ISBN 978-0679603313

**Recommended:** Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, 7e (Bedford/St Martins 2010) ISBN 0312601433



STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES



All first year seminars must fulfill these three student learning outcomes for the LASC program; under each one is how I've "translated" it into terms meaningful for this course.

**1) Students will demonstrate effective oral and written communication**

For us that means... through consistent and substantive contribution to class discussion over the semester, students will come to understand elements of

American culture and history. Students demonstrate effective written communication in history lab assignments, and effective oral communication in class and at the FYE Poster Event through the podcast project.

Students will demonstrate active engagement in seminar-style learning, which includes: creating an inclusive environment for all students, taking intellectual risks without fear of failing or ridicule, cooperating with others in groups and discussions and being part of a learning community.

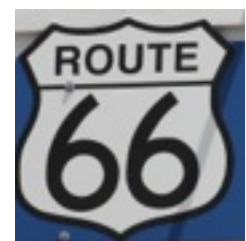
**2) Students will apply skills in critical thinking**

For us that means... students will analyze course texts along multiple dimensions of culture and meaning (i.e. on a deeper level

than just their content), forming and synthesizing their own original evidence-based interpretations.

**3) Students will apply skills in information literacy**

For us that means... students will learn to navigate electronic databases, find references to books and articles on a topic, physically locate books and periodicals, evaluate resources for reliability, authority, accuracy and usability, and demonstrate use of standard methods of reference and citation.



## GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Attendance and Participation in class (25%)

I will take attendance each day. You should be on time and ready for lively, respectful and substantive discussion, having done the assigned reading. Bring the reading with you to class so you can refer to it during discussion. Participation also includes interactions with our peer tutor, and/or coming to office hours outside of class.



### History “Labs” (40%)

There will be 5 of these, each giving you experience analyzing a different kind of historical source: a Wikipedia article, a photograph, a scholarly article, a novel, and a film.

They are front-loaded towards the first half of the semester, and give you opportunities to demonstrate increasing complexity of thought and prose as the term progresses.

### Triptik Podcast (25%)

This project involves research into an imagined road trip, and then writing, producing and performing a radio podcast series taking your listeners on that virtual trip. The finished podcast will be published online.

### Poster Presentation (5%)

As a class, we’ll participate in the First Year Experience poster session on Dec 9th. You’ll present your episode of the triptik podcast at the

event, as a culminating experience tying together your learning in the course.

**Course Reflection (5%)** An end-of-term reflection counts for 5% of your course grade.

**Extra Opportunities** These are NOT required, but we will have a few of these, such as a weekend field trip to a local diner or possible evening film screenings. Also keep in mind that attending some university events is part of your participation in the honors program and is highly encouraged as part of the overall First Year Experience.

## BREAKDOWN OF COURSE GRADE

Attendance/ Participation	25%	In class, silent attendance <b>will not</b> receive full credit; seminar-style discussion is a big part of your successful experience in this course. Includes any peer tutor sessions and at least one office hours visit (required by Sept 29).
History Labs 1 - 2 @ 5 each	10%	Due dates: 9/22 and 10/6
History Labs 3 - 5 @ 10 each	30%	Due dates: 10/15, 11/10, and 11/24
Podcast Project	25%	15% for script & reflection 10% for the actual podcast final product
Poster Presentation	5%	Due on Reading Day: Dec 9th. Location & Time TBA
Course Reflection	5%	Due on 12/8
	100%	

## CLASS COMMUNICATION AND COURSE POLICIES



*The American Automobile Association (AAA) has been printing USA road maps since 1905*

### Course Blackboard and Website:

All of the course information and material is available online in TWO places: on Blackboard and on a (public) website/blog. That way, if Blackboard is down, our work goes on. Your class gradebook is only found on Blackboard, however. You should bookmark the course website: [wsu.tonahangen.com/fysroadside](http://wsu.tonahangen.com/fysroadside) and check it frequently for updates and course news.

### My Standard Fine Print

- In-class technology: we will be busy in every class session and we don't need technological distractions. Silence your cell phones in class & refrain from texting and social media use. If you use a laptop (some days they will be needed), do so only for taking notes or accessing course materials.
- I will review proper citation with you; we will use MLA (which is

thoroughly described in Hacker, *Writer's Reference*). Please demonstrate exemplary academic integrity in all your writing for this course; plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in failing the class.

- If you have a documented disability (learning or otherwise), consult with me immediately at the outset of the course so we can design a solution to help you be successful in this class.

**Email:** Your worcester.edu email account is your official university email for course and college-related correspondence; please use it rather than a private email address for any course-related communication.

Email is the best way to reach me; I check it several times a day, although I am more likely to answer it during business hours.  
[thangen@worcester.edu](mailto:thangen@worcester.edu)

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Contact the **Honors Program** with questions about honors courses and events, and for academic advising related to honors. Library 218, x8467

**Disability Services** Office is located in Admin A131, x8733, or at [worcester.edu/DSO](http://worcester.edu/DSO)

**Counseling Services** can provide confidential assistance in crisis or ongoing support for any student's emotional/mental health. Staff are also trained responders for sexual assault. Office: Sullivan Temp Trailer, x8072

**Career Services:** yes, even first-year students should get to know this office for help with resume, career exploration, jobs, internships, and more. Office: 3rd floor of Student Ctr, x8041

**Your Academic Advisor** in your department is a very important resource! Meet with your advisor early and often!



The **Academic Success Center** is the go-to location for first-year and undeclared advising and for tutoring services (all free of charge). Location: Admin A130, x8139.

The **Writing Center** provides free assistance to all students in areas of research & writing. Location: Sullivan 306, x8112. Email: [writingcenter@worcester.edu](mailto:writingcenter@worcester.edu). For hours, info, and online writing lab, visit the website: [worcester.edu/writing](http://worcester.edu/writing), or like its Facebook page.

**Worcester State Library:** in addition to its book, journal and reference collection, the library has access to many articles through online databases, and to nearly anything in print through interlibrary loan (ILL). If you hit a paywall in your research, **do not pay:** work with the reference staff to find the appropriate way to access materials you need. In all likelihood you can get them either online or via ILL for free.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	What's Due
1	Thurs 9/3	Course Intro	Moon, "Blue Highways" PDF	
2	Tues 9/8	Technology Playdate	Website, by assignment	bring laptops
	Thurs 9/10	Destination Library	Bain, "Deep Learning," see online link	Meeting place TBA
3	Tues 9/15	WS: How to Read Wikipedia	Raitz, "American Roads" PDF	bring laptops
	Thurs 9/17	Road Food	Online links, see website for details	
	9/18 or 19	Field Trip: Worcester Diner	details TBA	
4	Tues 9/22	Lewis & Clark	Excerpts, by assignment (bring laptops)	<b>H-Lab #1 Wikipedia</b>
	Thurs 9/24	Hamilton's Itinerarium	"Hamilton's 1744 Itinerarium" PDF	
5	Tues 9/29	Route 66	Brown, "Route 66" PDF	visit office hrs by this date
	Thurs 10/1	Okies / WPA	Online links, see website for details	
6	Tues 10/6	Library 2	no reading; bring laptops; meeting place TBA	<b>H-Lab #2 Photograph</b>
	Thurs 10/8	WS: How to Read Scholarly Article	Bring your article to class	
7	Tues 10/13	<i>Two Lane Blacktop</i>	Ford, "Film Review" PDF	
	Thurs 10/15	Golden Age of Family Vacations	Rugh, <i>Family Vacation</i> , Part 1	<b>H-Lab #3 Article</b>
8	Tues 10/20	Golden Age of Family Vacations	Rugh, <i>Family Vacation</i> , Part 2	
	Thurs 10/22	Road Bad Boy I: Kerouac	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i>	
9	Tues 10/27	WS: How To Read a Novel	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i>	
	Thurs 10/29	On and Off the Road	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i>	
10	Tues 11/3	Road Bad Boy II: Bikers	Laderman, "What a Trip: Road Film" PDF	bring laptops
	Thurs 11/5	Hells Angels	Thompson, <i>Hell's Angels</i> , assigned chapters	
11	Tues 11/10	Tech Day: Podcasting	no reading; bring laptops	<b>H-Lab #4 Novel</b>
	Thurs 11/12	The Buddy Film	Eraso, "Thelma & Louise" PDF	
12	Tues 11/17	Creative Work Day	bring laptops	
	Thurs 11/19	Steinbeck's America, 1960	Steinbeck, <i>Travels with Charley</i> , Part 1	
13	Tues 11/24	Coming Home	Steinbeck, <i>Travels with Charley</i> , Part 2	<b>H-Lab #5 Film</b>
	<i>Thanksgiving Break 11/25 - 11/29</i>			
14	Tues 12/1	Truckers / Big Rigs	McPhee, "Land of the Diesel Bear" PDF + Iowa Truck Stop (online link to audio)	
	Thurs 12/3	Freedom Riders	Online links, see website for details	
15	Tues 12/8	Course Wrap-Up / <b>Project DUE.</b>		<b>Wed 12/9 Poster Day</b>