

# Roadside America

## Honors First Year Seminar

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



Starting 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, public 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

MWF 10:30 am Sullivan 104

#### COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Instructor: Dr. Tona Hangen  
(History Department)

Office: Sullivan 327D

Phone: x8688 (on campus)

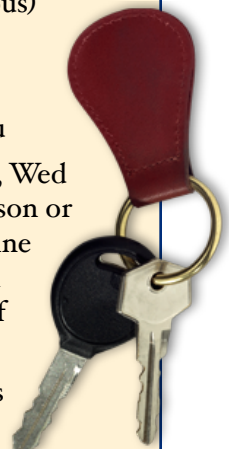
617-506-9440 (text)

Email:

thangen@worcester.edu

Office hours: Tues 8-10, Wed 4-5 and by appt. In-person or via Zoom. Link for online scheduling is posted on Blackboard 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 two 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 with their weekly email newsletter and follow Honors on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.

The Director is Dr. Cleve Wiese (English) [hwiese@worcester.edu](mailto:hwiese@worcester.edu) and the Assistant Director is Dr. Nicole Rosa (Psychology) [nrosa@worcester.edu](mailto:nrosa@worcester.edu).

## COURSE OVERVIEW

This course involves weekly reading, writing, research and group learning. It is set up as a seminar, not a lecture course. It is intended to be both a fun and 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 and attendance during the whole term. You'll enhance your academic and problem-solving skills. 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



*Where is this?*



## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES



WSU first year seminars fulfill these student learning outcomes.

- 1) Students will **explore** and **engage** in university opportunities that support transition, academic growth, and cultivate a sense of belonging.
- 2) Students will **formulate solutions** to solve problems and **negotiate** within the institution and the world around them.

- 3) Students will **formulate solutions** to problems involving time management, organizational planning, conflict resolution, deliberation.
- 4) Students will **formulate solutions** to problems involving academic skills including critical thinking, technological and information literacy, and effective written and oral communication.
- 5) Students will **explore** faculty-driven topics chosen to specifically engage first-year students.

In other words ... This course is designed just for you. Through seminar discussion and active learning, you'll come to

understand important (and also hopefully interesting and relevant) elements of American culture and history. You'll write a lot, and learn to write better. You'll help create an inclusive environment for all students, take intellectual risks, and be an integral part of a collaborative and welcoming learning community. You'll learn to analyze many kinds of cultural texts and represent your findings in fresh ways. You'll be able to navigate library resources, evaluate what you find there and online, and cite your sources using standard academic methods. You'll figure out college and how you fit in. You'll explore, set goals, and reach some of your goals this term. Most importantly, you'll discover and solve problems. Lots of them.



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## GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Strong Start (10%)

Kick off the first week of class by introducing yourself to your colleagues (Video Intro, 5 points) and by writing three thoughtful discussion questions for our first seminar discussion day (Wed Sept 8, 5 points).

### Participation (20%)

Your 20-point participation grade includes consistent attendance (factoring in any appropriate makeups if you have to miss class for medical reasons). It includes your lively, respectful, and substantive discussion that shows evidence of having done the assigned reading. *Silent presence will not receive full credit.* Participation may include hands-on activities (mapping, workshops, library days), visiting office hours, and taking part in any assigned university experiences happening during our class time.

The participation grade will be recorded at the end of the semester, but if you need feedback on your participation at any time during the term, I'm happy to provide it, and I might reach out individually if I have concerns about your participation level.



### Short Papers (30%)

Three short papers give you experience analyzing different kinds of sources: Wikipedia entry, photograph, and scholarly article. Each one is 10 points.

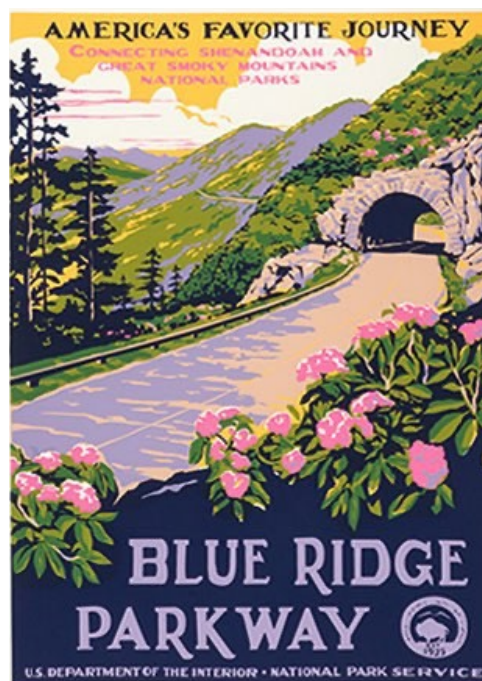
They are front-loaded towards the first half of the semester, and give you opportunities to demonstrate increasing complexity of thought and prose as the term progresses.

### Triptik (20%)

In this project, inspired by midcentury AAA road planners, you'll articulate your academic goals, plan your college journey, and reflect on your first semester's lessons learned. 20 points.

### Final Paper (20%)

You'll identify a scholarly problem (i.e. an answerable question worth asking), apply critical thinking and analytical skills, and employ strong written communication in a final, well-researched paper that draws on one or more of our course readings. This paper will go through several stages of proposal and revision along the way, which are part of the overall grade. 20 points, plus opportunity to present at Honors Showcase.



## CLASS COMMUNICATION AND COURSE POLICIES

### 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. Readings, grades, and forums are located within Blackboard. You should bookmark the course website: [wsu.tonahangen.com/fysroadside](http://wsu.tonahangen.com/fysroadside) and check it frequently for updates and course news. See also "Syllabus Additional Information" posted on Blackboard.

### Important Course Policies

- If you feel sick, are in quarantine, or have tested positive for a communicable disease, please stay home and follow the guidance of your health care provider. We can work out a makeup strategy if needed.
- 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. Use electronic devices in class only for taking notes, accessing course materials and course-related tasks.
- Use MLA when citing sources (which is thoroughly described in any standard writing 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.

- WSU is committed to providing equitable access and appropriate reasonable accommodations within courses and programs for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please visit the Student Accessibility Services website [worchester.edu/Student-Accessibility-Services/](http://worchester.edu/Student-Accessibility-Services/) or contact their office at [SAS@worchester.edu](mailto:SAS@worchester.edu), call 508-929-8733, or stop by the office, Suite 131 in the Administration Building. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

### Email

Your worchester.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 a good way to reach me; I check it several times a day, and I am more likely to answer it during business hours; please be patient on weekends. [thangen@worchester.edu](mailto:thangen@worchester.edu)

Or text me at 617-506-9440.

My office hours and location are listed on page 1.

## 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. LRC 218, x8467

**Student Accessibility Services** Office is located in Admin A131, x8733

**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: Student Center 325, x8072

*If you've read this entire syllabus, please email me an image of a cool vintage car*



**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, x8941

**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@worchester.edu](mailto:writingcenter@worchester.edu). For hours, info, and online writing lab, visit the website: [wooforwriting.wordpress.com](http://wooforwriting.wordpress.com) 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 payroll 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. Reference librarians are geniuses.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	What's Due
1	Fri 9/3	Course Intro	Carol's Road Trip Memories (in class)	Pro tip: always bring laptop
	Mon 9/6	<i>Labor Day, No Class</i>		<b>Video Intro by Tues 9/7</b>
2	Wed 9/8	Getting On the Road	Raitz, "American Roads" PDF	<b>3 Discussion Questions</b>
	<i>After class: Head over to Club Kickoff (outside Student Center) and Honors Welcome Pizza Party @ 11:30 in Sheehan MP Room. Campus Unity Walk tomorrow Sept 9 at 11:30 am</i>			
3	Fri 9/10	Destination Library	Meeting place TBA	
4	Mon 9/13	WS: How to Read Wikipedia	Malone-Kircher, "Your Middle School ..."	
5	Wed 9/15	Road Food	Jake and Sculle, "Fast Food" + OL links	
	<i>Today: Enjoy Student Center Open House, 10 am - 3 pm</i>			
6	Fri 9/17	Field Trip: Worcester Diner	details TBA	<b>Wikipedia Paper</b>
7	Mon 9/20	Lewis & Clark: The First Road Trip?	Excerpts, by assignment (bring laptops)	
8	Wed 9/22	(The Other) Hamilton's Itinerarium	"Hamilton's 1744 Itinerarium" PDF	
	Thurs 9/23	<i>Reminder to attend Speak About It - required FYS event, 7:30 pm in Sullivan Auditorium</i>		
9	Fri 9/24	The Mother Road	Brown, "Route 66" PDF	<b>TripTik: Fall '21 Map</b>
10	Mon 9/27	Okies / WPA	Online links, see website for details	
11	Wed 9/29	WS: How to Read a Photograph	Online links, see website for details	
12	Fri 10/1	Library Day 2: Meeting Place TBA	LibGuide: Article Types, see website	<b>Photograph Paper</b>
13	Mon 10/4	WS: How to Read Scholarly Article	Bring your article to class	
14	Wed 10/6	Honors Lecture: Martin Ford	Read Rugh, <i>Family Vacation</i> , Part 1	Meet in May St Auditorium
15	Fri 10/8	Golden Age of Family Vacations	Rugh, <i>Family Vacation</i> , Part 2	
	Mon 10/11	<i>Indigenous Peoples Day, No Class</i>		
16	Wed 10/13	Green Book	Seiler, "So That We as a Race..."	
17	Fri 10/15	Resilience	Guest presenter = Counseling Services	<b>Article Analysis</b>
18	Mon 10/18	The American Road Novel	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i> , Part 1	
19	Wed 10/20	WS: How To Read a Novel	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i> , Part 2	
20	Fri 10/22	On the Road, continued	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i> , Part 3	

*Note: the syllabus is subject to change; always check the course website for any updates!*



## COURSE SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Topic	Reading	What's Due
21	Mon 10/25	Road's End	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i> , Part 4	
22	Wed 10/27	Fresh Check Day	Meeting place TBA	
23	Fri 10/29	Many Ways to Map Kerouac	Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i>	
25	Mon 11/1	Transgression and Aggression	Laderman, "What a Trip: Road Film"	
26	Wed 11/3	Iconic Road Films	Eraso, "Thelma and Louise"	
27	Fri 11/5	Hell on Wheels	Thompson, <i>Hell's Angels</i> , assigned chapter(s)	
28	Mon 11/8	Freedom Riders, Part I	McWhorter, "The Enduring Courage..."	
29	Wed 11/10	Freedom Riders, Part II	CORE-lator, May 1961	
30	Fri 11/12	Advising Week: Get Ready	No reading; start on Steinbeck	<b>TripTik Roadmap</b>
31	Mon 11/15	Steinbeck's America, 1960	Steinbeck, <i>Travels with Charley</i> , Parts 1 & 2	
32	Wed 11/17	Coming Home	Steinbeck, <i>Travels with Charley</i> , Part 3 & 4	
33	Fri 11/19	Draft O Rama	McGrath, "A Reality Check for ..."	<b>Paper Proposal</b>
34	Mon 11/22	Writing Conferences	Bring your draft to class	<b>Rough Draft 1 - in class</b>
<i>Thanksgiving Break 11/24 - 11/28</i>				
35	Mon 11/29	Truckers / Big Rigs	McPhee, "Land of the Diesel Bear"	
36	Wed 12/1	Writing Workshop Day	<i>Honors Showcase in the afternoon</i>	<b>Rough Draft 2 - in class</b>
37	Fri 12/3	TripTik Day		<b>Completed TripTik</b>
38	Mon 12/6	TBA		
39	Wed 12/8	Last Call at the Diner		<b>Final Paper</b>

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