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The Odyssey Project



Professor Debra Hawhee and Odyssey student Shawnika Lucks at the May 5, 2007 graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the first year of the Odyssey Project.

Professor Debra Hawhee and Odyssey

student Shawnika Lucks at the May 5, 2007 graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the first year of the Odyssey Project.

In fall 2006, the IPRH launched the inaugural year of the Odyssey Project, a college-level course in the humanities offered at no cost to people in the Champaign-Urbana community living below or slightly above the federal poverty level. The purpose of the course is to help students reenter the world of higher education and develop the writing and critical thinking skills they need in order to become full and active members of their communities. Funding for the course has been provided by the Illinois Humanities Council, the U of I Office of the Chancellor, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The nine-month program offers instruction in five discrete disciplines in the humanities: literature, art history, philosophy, U.S. history, and writing and critical thinking, and faculty for the course are drawn from departments at the U of I. The class enrolls 25 to 30 students, recruited from the Champaign-Urbana community and surrounding areas. Prospective students must meet the following criteria: they must live at 150% of the poverty level or lower, be 17 years of age or older, be able to read an English-language newspaper, and, in interviews with the project coordinator, demonstrate a desire to complete the course.

Teaching the Odyssey Project

2009-10

Dale Bauer, Literature
Sarah Ross, Art History
Michael Burns, Critical Thinking and Writing
James Barrett, U.S. History
Todd Kukla, Philosophy

2008-09

Michael Burns (English Department), Critical Thinking and Writing
Rebecca Ginsburg (Department of Landscape Architecture), Art History
Mark Leff (Department of History), U.S. History
John Marsh (English Department), English Literature
Cris Mayo (Educational Policy Studies and Gender and Women's Studies), Philosophy

2007-08

James Barrett (History Department), U.S. History
Timothy McDonough (Philosophy Department), Philosophy
John Marsh (English Department), Critical Thinking and Writing
Audrey Petty (English Department), English Literature
Dana Rush (Art History), Art History

2006-07

Dale Bauer (English Department), English Literature
Rebecca Ginsburg (Department of Landscape Architecture), Art History
Debra Hawhee (English Department and Department of Speech Communication), Philosophy
Mark Leff (Department of History), U.S. History
John Marsh (IPRH and English Department), Writing and Critical Thinking

Read more about the [Odyssey Project](#).