



**Liam Johnson**

**Graduating: May 9, 2026**

**Honors Courses Taken:**

**-Intro to Acting**

**-Environmental Science**

**-American National Government**

**-Gender Studies**

I started my honors journey in my third semester here at NWACC, and I still don't feel like I've done enough to deserve it. I enjoy learning and expanding my knowledge but I am always worried that I am not doing enough. So you can imagine as I write this I am worried that I am going to do something wrong. Am I working hard enough? Am I putting in enough effort? Is this essay good enough? I don't know. I don't think anyone knows what is enough. Those who do or at least assume that they do know what is enough still can be consumed by this nagging fear of being enough. I have spent two years of my life here at NWACC, and to be frank they have been good ones. I've made friends and I've learned so much. Sadly though I didn't take advantage of the opportunities that I had been given, because I was worried that I didn't do enough to deserve it.



Last semester I was able to get started on my honors journey with two courses, but the one that got me the most involvement was my Intro to Theatre course under Ms. Freeman. I was able to work with Ms. Freeman and go to some auditions for the *Nightmare of Edgar Allen Poe*

performance. After auditions I was able to get the role as the Madman. The Madman was the main character of the *Telltale Heart* scene. I met so many wonderful people, and was able to make so many good connections with these people. I had never done a serious role before, and it was an amazing experience. As a history major, I wanted to focus on the Dramaturgy of the world that I was put into, and discuss how the historical circumstances may affect my characters actions and beliefs. I was also in a separate scene in Poe for *Red Death*, which was originally set during the Bubonic Plague, but due to the costumes that we had I went out of my way to research what the Plague itself could be during the late seventeenth century. Personally I believed that the story was a metaphor for the French Revolution and the ensuing wars of Coalition. Based on the fact some of the characters referenced enlightenment era thinkers, and importantly how they used those quotes. It was a lot of work, researching, memorizing, performing, and finding the time to do this alongside my other classes. It was worth it. Every single second, maybe not my car but still, it was worth it. Without joining the Honors program I wouldn't have gotten that

opportunity, and throughout the production I learned about myself and the people around me. I was able to make myself more “Enough.”

I have written a lot in my time here at NWACC. I have written a lot for my honors courses in particular. Writing is my favorite creative passion, and it means so much to me. I spend hours upon hours of my life researching and developing entire worlds based on what I have learned in my time at college. It has gotten to the point that I enjoy looking at what I could write about on a more academic level. I want to write about the history of Labor and of Race. I want to write about the minute and



detailed artistic choices made by creatives and understand each stroke of a pen to its most crucial detail. The Honors program has encouraged me down that path of an academic, and I am most grateful for that. The Honors program has also given me the chance to work with some amazing individuals. Due to my time in the Honors program I have also been able to work with people on our new YDA (Young Democrats of Arkansas) chapter, and getting to be a founding member of an organization that can make NWA a better place for the disenfranchised is something that I will carry with me forever. I wouldn't be involved with that If it weren't for the honors program. It's hard for me to quantify “skills” rather I see what I have done as experiences that have built a character around the frame that is my soul. I was already capable of what I am now many moons ago, but I didn't have the clay in which to build it, and with the Honors program I have been given that clay and now I can build upon the frame to make something new, something beautiful, something of that is mine. I will be able to take myself forward with this new form and make myself a better life.

I wanted to make myself do more, but time is a patient but cruel beast. I have yet to tame this beast, and you could have gleaned that by how close I turned this in to the deadline. I always feel that I am not doing enough and that I am always rushed. This is always of my own doing, with multiple causes that are both in and out of my control. We are all slaves to time, and yet it is treated as a commodity we all have to spend and waste. I would spend upwards of sixteen hours a day on campus, six thirty in the morning to ten at night. It was exhausting, and more times than not I wouldn't eat the entire day. I would say that if you are starting the Honors program, you will come to the understanding that you will always be fighting time. Most people on campus have jobs, and to simply survive you have to do so. If you are starting your Honors journey, remember that you are human. As a human being you must come to terms with your own limits and give yourself a chance to breathe. Pushing yourself is important, as if you don't you will never get yourself anywhere in life, and no matter how much I'd like to change it, that's how our world works. It is important to reconcile with the fact that you should prioritize your life over your career. Why should you burn yourself out and drag yourself along the ground, to

continue to be crushed by time, if you don't get to enjoy the life you are building for yourself? Do what makes you happy, do what makes you struggle, do what makes the world a kinder place. Don't lose yourself to the "Grind" because you deserve to simply be happy. I think that every single person on this planet deserves to be happy. When you ask yourself, Am I doing enough, remember that you are the only person on this planet that should give yourself that answer. You should not determine your life by a number on a screen, no matter what that number is. You are more than a statistic, you are more than that number. You are doing enough. You deserve to breathe, and killing yourself so you may live is to embrace madness. So my advice is simple: choose to be happy, choose to breathe, and to be a human being. Because you are worthy of being loved.