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*Seniors in the Honors Program are encouraged to tackle complex problems using methods and knowledge from related disciplines. Honors Program faculty and research mentors offer critical feedback and guidance along the way. The main objective is for students to explore, gather and analyze information effectively and to reflect on the implications of what they have discovered. Group discussions help to promote thoughtful questions. The goal is to communicate knowledge, judgments and original perspective derived from careful inquiry, exploration and analysis. Seniors will discuss their results at the Senior Honors Conference Monday, May 22, 2006 from 1:30-6:30pm, in the John Rogers Faculty Development Center.*

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### ***A Publication of the University Honors Program***

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*Front Cover: “**Cézanne’s Half Dome**”  
View from Stoneman Bridge  
Yosemite National Park*

*Back Cover: “**Liquid Impression**”  
Merced River from Stoneman Bridge  
Yosemite National Park*

# *Margins*

## *A Journal of Exploratory Research and Analysis*

Perspectives dominate our everyday perceptions, directing our attention toward or away from facets of reality which, when taken together, comprise the complex makeup of our surrounding world. In the process of acquiring perspective in life, we become sensitized or desensitized to issues, concerns, opportunities and challenges.

To see the world in a new light is to become responsive in a new way. The capacity to respond to issues and concerns otherwise masked from view demands a special openness and attention to what we find strange and challenging. We cannot see the world in a new light without curiosity and the willingness to explore unexpected or marginalized phenomena; nor without paying attention to hidden facets of our filtered social constructions.

The call to see the world in a new light -- to “open the universe a little more,” as Salman Rushdie has urged in *Imaginary Homelands* -- calls for critical voices, exploratory minds and the empowerment of creative forms of expression carefully interwoven with sensitive analysis and personal concern. It calls for attending to complexities in life that are all-too-often eclipsed from view by more dominant ways of thinking, feeling and speaking. Above all, it calls for an attentive ear, the first condition for generating an attentive response.

The articles brought together in this journal solicit our ear and seek to direct our attention to the *margins of normalization*, where the questions posed reveal unthinkable difference in the midst of the unthinkable same. Questions posed in this manner challenge us to think in the *margins of difference*. The goal is to expand our perspective by revealing silent facets of our surrounding world.

Exploratory research and analysis is the key to opening the universe a little more. The contributions to follow offer opportunities for reflective thought and further lines of study regarding phenomena that speak to us from the margins of our human, social, political and institutional involvements.

The first papers explore the impact of recent political rhetoric on public opinion regarding the war in Iraq. A second group of papers calls attention to personal challenges in search of compensating strategies. A third group of papers explores questions about the normalizing practices operating in certain forms of social “tracking.” A fourth group of papers draws our attention to marginalizing influences resulting from technological-institutional forms of social mediation, and attempts to “tune in” the ear of resistance operating from the margins.

These articles present the scope and focus of Capstone research projects nearing completion by seniors in the CSU Stanislaus Honors Program. Most of these students will discuss the results of their research at our annual Honors Research Conference in May. We invite you to join us at this conference! It will take place in the John Rogers Faculty Development Center at CSU Stanislaus on the afternoon of May 22, 2006.

We hope you will enjoy these exploratory excursions into unfamiliar regions of our experience. If they catch your ear and you are in the neighborhood on the afternoon of May 22<sup>nd</sup>, drop by the John Rogers Faculty Development Center and continue the explorations with us! Above all, please accept our invitation to direct some attention to the issues and observations set forth in these pages. In the process, it may become apparent that more is at stake than we are ordinarily inclined to recognize.

## **HONORS PROGRAM COMMUNITY STATEMENT**

The Honors Program at CSU Stanislaus is a community of scholars bound together by vital principles of academic openness, integrity, and respect. Through focused study and practice involving exploration and discovery across a variety of disciplines, the Honors Program upholds these principles of scholarly engagement and provides students with the necessary foundations for further research and inquiry.

Our interdisciplinary curriculum is integral to this work, and is intended to facilitate creative understanding of the irreducible complexities of contemporary life and knowledge. Personal and intellectual honesty and curiosity are essential to this process. So, too, is critical openness to difficult topics and respect for different perspectives, values and disciplines. The Honors Program aims to uphold these virtues in practice, in principle, and in community with one another.

*Honors Program Advisory Committee*

*May 14, 2004*