**Professor helps Honors students make connections**

As a professor in Sacramento State’s Honors Program, Vanessa Arnaud’s objective is to help students make the connection between the philosophical concepts they are discussing in the classroom and specific problems in the community. To achieve that, she challenges their assumptions and encourages them to expand their educational horizons.

Arnaud’s Honors I students recently took a field trip to the Crocker Art Museum as part of First-Year Experience Programs Co-Curricular Activities. Docents helped 70-plus students make a connection with their readings of Confucius, Plato, Montaigne, Descartes, Thoreau and Booker T. Washington.

They also viewed Kara Walker’s special exhibition, “Emancipating the Past: Kara Walker’s Tales of Slavery and Power,” powerful visual narratives exploring the intersection of race, gender and sexuality. “Her thought-provoking approach to these issues was explored by our students, who will then document their 'integrative learning' in electronic portfolios (such as this one made last year by student Danielle Saunders: [http://daniellesaunders.myefolio.com/reading](http://daniellesaunders.myefolio.com/reading)) to share with the campus community,” Arnaud says.

The students’ first-year seminar introduces them to writings from around the world and examines works on education, autobiographical accounts and short stories. Arnaud wants her students to build across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new complex situations within and beyond the campus.

It’s a shining example of Arnaud’s ability that was obvious when, as a graduate student at UCLA, she was selected as the best among 2,300 teaching assistants. Little wonder she has been a stalwart in Sacramento State’s Honors Program since its inception in 2006.

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