

In the Company of Friends

The Honors Program Newsletter

January 2017

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Office Hours

North Residential Village
House 7, Room 150
Monday – Friday
8:30am - 4:30pm
Extended Hours
7 days a week
7:00am– Midnight

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Welcome Back Breakfast

The Honors Program hosted a Welcome Back Breakfast on January 24th in order to welcome in the Honors Program new Director, Dr. Ellen McWhorter. She has taught in the English Department since 2009, and has also taught a variety of Honors courses over the years. The students were able to meet Director McWhorter, and they also were able to see their friends. Honors Program student Michael Santoro, Junior, spoke about the event, saying, "It was a very nice breakfast because I was able to meet with the new Honors Director, some faculty and see my friends for the first time since finals!" It was a great turnout, especially because there was bad weather the day of the event. Vice Provost Kerry Johnson also stopped by.



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North View– Welcome

Dear Honors Students,

If there's one thing I love, it's being surrounded by brilliant, creative conversation. Add in a spark of passion and I'm over the moon. So, needless to say, I consider it an incredible honor to be the new Director of the Honors Program here at Merrimack and look so forward to getting to know each of you. Thanks so the fantastic momentum that you, Dr. Kerry Johnson, and Lisa Cavallaro have stirred up, the Honors Program has never been stronger. I can't wait to contribute and hope you'll swing by my office early and often to share ideas, recommendations, and stories.

I've been an English professor at Merrimack since 2009, and I've been involved with the Honors Program for almost as long, first as a member of the HPC, then later as an instructor for Honors sections of "Introduction to College Writing" and "Introduction to Literary Studies," and most recently of the Capstone courses. My specialization in the English Department is 20th century American poetry – think of Modernists like T.S. Eliot, Mina Loy, Langston Hughes, and Edna St. Vincent Millay – but I enjoy teaching pretty much any text that's experimental or pushes language as far possible without devolving into total nonsense. My academic interests include the limitations of language, stream-of-consciousness writing, coded erotics, psychoanalytic theory, and horror as a genre. Please consider yourself cordially and enthusiastically invited to come and talk to me about absolutely anything related to literature.

When I'm not trying to lure people into deep conversations, I enjoy hanging out with my lovely wife, Joan, who you'll no doubt meet sometime, and our cats, who I fuss over like they're children. As I look forward to the coming semesters, I can't help but also think back fondly to my own time as an undergraduate Honors student. It was in my first-semester class entitled "Introduction to the Humanities" that my mind started running at full throttle for the first time. We were reading Plato's Republic and suddenly – I'm not exaggerating here – the world seemed to take on a new vibrancy, the background details of ordinary life coming into sharper focus. Colors were brighter. Human beings became fascinating. By the time we finished discussing Shakespeare's King Lear, I knew that I wanted to spend as much of my life as possible talking about books with people who love learning as much as I do.

In the coming months and years, I plan to do everything in my power to make sure that the Honors Program continues to move in positive directions. I'll be taking a good, hard look at our curriculum and making sure that you have every opportunity to encounter Merrimack's most inspiring teachers inside and outside of the classroom. Soon we'll be unveiling events designed to bring academic programming directly into the LLCs, for instance through our upcoming Fireside Chats. I'll work to redesign our Capstone class so that with a little elbow grease, by the time you graduate from the Honors Program, you have winning answers to job interview questions at the ready. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. I'll end for now with a special thank you to Dr. Johnson and the HPC for putting their faith in me. I can't wait to see what the future holds and hope you'll all lean into the ride.

All the best to you,
Prof. McWhorter



Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference

Joe Fisher'17, Molly Malinowski'17, Savannah Shairs'17 and Mary Levine'18 all had their proposals accepted for the 2017 Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC) Conference. The conference will occur in Pittsburgh in April. Please note their presentations below:

Savannah Shairs will be presenting on her Senior Capstone Project titled "Life or Death? How Race, Sex, and the Death Penalty Collide."

Molly Malinowski will be presenting on her Senior Capstone Project focuses on gun violence in elementary schools.

Mary Levine will be presenting a poster with the topic "Bridging the Divide: Police and the African American Community."

Joe Fisher will be presenting on his Senior Capstone Project titled "Student Leader Burnout."

Congratulations and good luck to all of the presenters!


First Lecture

Honors Program student David Bailot '17 will be giving the First Lecture on February 28th. The First Lecture is an annual event where one student is chosen to give his or her first lecture ever. Bailot is an Athletic Training Major, and is heavily involved in both the Merrimack College community and the Honors Program. In terms of the overall Merrimack community, he is a First Year Experience Mentor, the Service Committee Chair for the Health Science Club, an Alternative Spring Break Participant, and a member of the Honors Student Council. He has also served as a Eucharistic Minister and Lector at Mass. Make sure to check out his lecture in the Roger's Center on February 28th at 7pm.

The 8th Annual
First Lecture
 February 28th, 2017
 Rogers Center, 7:00pm
 Student Speaker:
Dave Bailot

Modeld on the popular Last Lecture, the First Lecture is unique to Merrimack College and provides the community with an opportunity to hear a student share his or her deepest passions, beliefs, hopes and dreams.

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Upcoming Events



January 24
 January 29
 February 4
 February 12-18
 February 22
 February 28
 March 2
 March 2
 March 5
 March 8
 March 22

HSC Welcome Breakfast with Dr. McWhorter
 Honors Faculty Fireside Chat
 Accepted Students Day
 RAK Week
 Honors Shadow Day
 First Lecture feat. David Bailot
 Fulbright Workshop
 LinkedIn Event
 Honors Fireside Chat
 Pancakes with the Provost
 Wheel of Fortune



Student Spotlight: Jessica De Almeida '17

Sam Salem '18

When taking a look at the Class of 2017, the Honors Program has many stand out students who are thriving in the classroom, leaving a legacy through their involvements on campus, and actively working towards their careers. One student in particular would be Jessica De Almeida, a senior who is double majoring in Psychology and Spanish as well as two minors in Women's and Gender's Studies and Social Justice. De Almeida has personal connections with her fields of study as it was her own personal struggles with mental health that led her to declare her Psychology major as well as serve as the current president of the Merrimack Chapter of Active Minds. Being a psychology major who is graduating this spring, De Almeida is currently employed as a Residential Counselor for Lahey Behavioral Services, which is helping her work toward her ultimate career goals of becoming a Licensed Mental Health Counselor.



Travel Awards

Congrats to the following students who received travel awards this semester! Check out where some of the Honors Program students are traveling this semester below.

Student #	Student	YOG	Program	Destination/Research	Program Dates
378530	Carrozzo, Courtney	2018	WRT3701-A; Writing through War and Peace	Belfast, Ireland	May 24-June 3
355825	Angela, David	2017	Sr Capstone	Strata/SE Software	Research on interest rates for Capstone
376379	Dewyngaert, Emilia	2018	CAPA London	London, England	Spring Semester
356086	Killough, Gavin	2017	Sr. Capstone	Google Play Software	Research in Facial Recognition
355991	Fisher, Joe	2017	2017 NASPA Mental Health Conference (Part of Sr Capstone)	Austin, Texas	Jan 19-January 21
379108	Odea, Kelly	2018	WRT3701-A; Writing through War and Peace	Belfast, Ireland	May 24-June 3
383331	McCarthy, Kerri	2018	Pellegrinnaggio	Italy	3/9-3/18/2016
378371	Sheppard, Megan	2017 -Dec	Pellegrinnaggio	Italy	3/9-3/18/2016
392579	Sewall, Morgan	2019	CAPA Florence	Florence, Italy	Spring Semester
377885	Thistle, Tori	2018	Pellegrinnaggio	Italy	3/9-3/18/2016

Honors Fireside Chats

The Honors Program hosted an Honors Fireside Chat with Dr. Gavril Bilev, Assistant Professor of Political Science. The chat was titled “Electing President Trump: How did it happen and what does it mean?.” This was the first of the series of faculty-hosted discussions. The Fireside Chats serve to engage conversation in current, interesting worldly events and promote student participation in our living learning community. Dr. Bilev’s talk revolved around the recent election of Donald Trump to the US Presidency, and how it relates to political science. Honors Program Student Kelsey Walton ‘17 said that the event was a “Very informative and insightful chat” and that “Gav’s knowledge of the topic kept us all engaged.” Make sure to sign up for other fireside chats!



JOIN US FOR

Honors FireSide Chats

Jan 29
Electing President Trump
with Dr. Gavril Bilev, Asst. Prof of Political Science

March 5
One Millennial to Another
with Dr. Katelyn Kurkul, Asst. Prof. Education

April 2
Surprising Nutrition Controversies and Myths
with Dr. Juliana Coen, Asst. Prof. of Health Science

All events take place from 7-8pm in the Sanctuary Café
These events count as 1 Expected Attendance Event
Food and refreshments will be provided.
Sign up is mandatory please visit: www.merrimack.edu/firesidechat