



The Honorific

From the Desk of the Director

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Thanks to some great recruiting, the Honors class of 2021 proved to be both large and formidable. Forty new students met at the Honors House for Orientation on that last Saturday in August—and began the task of shaping the course of Alfred Honors for years to come. They were aided by a terrific bunch of Honors Leaders (advanced Honors students) and the now-usual team of Crystal and myself. The ceremonial cutting of the cake signified the beginning of the Honors year—and we were off and running!

The new class has energized the program! Death by Chocolate was a blast! We were treated to a prolonged visit by our now well-entrenched but still ‘new’ president, Mark Zupan, who greeted dozens of students, asking probing questions and displaying his usual great enthusiasm. In fact, we had the honor of the presence of both the president and the provost—along with a great number of students, a smattering of professors, and, most importantly—those chocolate delectables!

This fall, the Servitors and Action Figures have been busy. We visited the Living Acres Farm and helped promote a fundraiser for the Hornell Animal Shelter, and have also taken a hike on the Pine Hill trails. All of these events have been well attended. Our annual trip to the theatre was a rousing success, as a busload of us headed off to see the Tony Award-winning Fun Home at the Rochester Auditorium Theatre, which was preceded by a delicious meal at the King and I (Thai) restaurant in Henrietta.

Of course, the cornerstone of our program is still the Honors Seminars. It’s exciting that we have two brand new seminars being offered this spring: Cut-Bend-Fold-Bind (Myles Calvert), The Science of Baking (David Marsh), along with the return of some classics: A Dark and Stormy Night (Allen Grove), Alfred E. Nigmas (Garrett McGowan & Andrew Eklund), Personal Financial Planning (Mark Lewis), and Two Faced—Alter Egos and Other Selves (Katarina Riesing).

It would be remiss of me to not mention, here, that this will, indeed, be my final year as the Honors Director at Alfred University. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve in this position for 10 years but it is time for me to step aside and allow new leadership to have the opportunity to direct the progress of this program. I am deeply thankful to all the faculty who have worked with me, taught Honors Seminars in the program, and provided support and guidance on a consistent basis. Most importantly, though, I have had the wonderful good fortune to interact with the fantastic Honors students here at Alfred for the past 10 years; I can’t thank you enough!

The great news is that Dr. Juliana Gray will be taking over as the Director of the Alfred University Honors Program, starting in June of 2018. Dr. Gray is a loved and respected member of the English Department here—and has taught several courses in Honors as well as served as interim director during my 2011 sabbatical. She is very excited about this new opportunity and there is no doubt that she will serve the program well. The program has much to be excited about as we move forward!

Also, as you may or may not know--the AU Honors Program has a Facebook page! In addition to this, Siggie the Walrus is now on twitter, keeping everyone updated on what's happening in the Honors calendar. Be sure to like and follow both pages to keep on track!

Here is the information you need to get connected!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Alfred-University-Honors-Program-1502958470027588/timeline/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SiggieTheWalrus>

Use the hashtag #AlfredHonors when tweeting about us!

Gordon Atlas

(AKA, The Walrus, over and out)

Death By Chocolate

Nicole Osinoff

There are few better ways to welcome new students to the next four years of their life than with an ungodly amount of sugar. This is a sentiment shared by the Alfred University Honors Program, who kicked off yet another school year with the annual Death by Chocolate event. Held in the Honors House every August, Death by Chocolate invites new honors students to acquaint themselves with the Honors faculty while helping themselves to a smorgasbord of chocolaty treats, from cakes and cookies to cupcakes and brownies. Crowd favorites included peanut-butter cup pie and Oreo cupcakes.

But this event isn't just about stuffing your face: this was also the first opportunity for students to sit down and talk with their Honors "siblings."

Incoming students were "adopted" by these upperclassman shortly after their acceptance to the Honors Program. These "siblings" were available to answer any and all questions the rising first-year students may have had via phone or e-mail. Death by Chocolate, however, was the first opportunity the first-year had to meet their "siblings" face to face. Having a surrogate older sibling by one's side helps to ease the often stressful transition from high school to college, and it is something I am particularly thankful for.

Overall, it seems that Death by Chocolate 2017 proved to be a rousing success, one that will remain in our memories long after our stomach aches subside.



The delicious spread provided by the Alfred University Honors Program

Fall 2017 Seminars

Culture, Cuisine, Food & Film by Kyle McGlynn

This class on food around the world is an engaging, fun, and unorthodox class. To start, the class is not held in a standard classroom, but in the comfort of the living room of the Honors house. The students all sit around in a circle with the teacher intermingled with them, instead of in the middle or at the end of a room singled out. This class is about open discussions based on what we have seen from various films about foods across the world, and Dr. Prophet's style of running the class calls for insightful comments and critical analysis. Cuisine, Culture, Film and Food makes you think of all of the cultural influences on the foods we see and eat every day, as well as how they are made differently and signify greater meanings in their original countries or backgrounds.

Not only is this class watching movies and talking, but every so often students will break into groups and make different cultural foods, then come together to share with the rest of the class for one big feast. The class will also get together for a couple field trips off-campus to local farms and mills. They're a good way to stretch your legs out and get off campus for a little while to see how local foods are grown and distributed. Film and Food is an overall interesting class for people who enjoy the study of other cultures and love to see and eat good food.

Fashion and Print: What Are They Wearing? by Lauren "Ting" Germain

As students walked into the print studio, the smell of ink immediately hit them. With big grins on their faces they curiously looked at these new tools, eager to try them out. For many, this was the start of what was going to be a new experience. The first week consisted of introductions and demonstrations. It all seemed confusing as tons of information was thrown at the students. Given their own screens and a tote bag to practice on, they were expected to print their first shirt within a week.

The class began by learning how to design and manipulate images through Adobe Photoshop. These images were used for silk screening. The process included getting sprayed with ink and water, frantically using a hairdryer, and freaking out about perfecting the prints. Later on, there was also a woodblock carving demonstration to make stamps. Both methods of printing were very similar in that there were many expectations.

Along with these projects, the class included weekly discussions and research about fashion trends and styles. This research was the inspiration for many of the prints and what type of clothing to use. Because people could print on any item, there were many opportunities to be creative! There were very few limits as socks, shirts, pants and other various clothes were brought into the studios to be jazzed up.

Even though it was a lot of work, the end result was satisfying. Arrays of serious to humorous t-shirts were made and the project was an overall success. With a class as unique as this, people can not only improve or learn a skill, but they can also learn to express themselves through their clothing.

Jobs and the Environment by Brendan Rudd

In this current age in politics, it can be difficult to find places where civil discourse and debate can occur. This is the focal point of the Honor's class Jobs in the Environment with Professor Joe Rosiczkowski. Jobs and the Environment is a student taught debate class about American politics with a focus on environmental issues and how they affect industry. Each class is a civil discussion about balancing costs and benefits with various forms of energy, feasible ways of reducing environmental damage, and the latest political news on these issues. Topics discussed include electric vehicles, hydrofracking for shale gas, peak oil, and the pros and cons of renewable energy. Each week there is a new topic and students are given the opportunity to bring their own sources and perspectives to the group.

The most effective part of the class is how it is structured as a discussion class run by students. The professor offers the prompt of the discussion and will occasionally ask open-ended questions, but does not actually lecture. This allows for a wide diversity of ideas and thoughts to be explored and shared, covering all bases on the political spectrum and allowing for a more in-depth debate. Even the readings assigned for homework include two opposing viewpoints on an issue. While many classes with the intent of exploring these issues would become echo chambers, this class allows each student to bring their unique perspective to the issue and to argue their points and try to refute others. These discussions usually end with some form of agreement between students and an understanding of opposing points of view. This class is a great way to learn how others decide which factors of an issue are most pressing and how to find common ground, even between opinions that seem drastically different initially. In a time when there is growing political divide, this type of discussion is essential for future citizens and voters.

Fall 2017 Seminars Continued

Monsters, From Folklore to Reality by Kayleah Aldrich

As the start of autumn and the new school year began, so did the season of spookiness, candy, and monsters galore! The Honors seminar “Monsters from Folklore to Reality” taught by Dr. Eklund dives into the history of America and how monsters have been evident and dynamic throughout different times in our society. Most of the time class is under the students’ order as they present about the topic of the week based on their research. The class looks at some serious topics like discrimination, environmental issues, religion, and the psychology of fear— all of which have monsters in many forms that infiltrate society. The students have the freedom for how they present their chosen topics to the class and what review activity they initiate. Students are also encouraged to use their creativity in design with their journal entries and a final “Design Your Own Monster” project.

Many field trips and activities are planned throughout the course to add some fun, hands-on experiences. The class took a trip to the Rolling Hills Asylum for an eight-hour tour through the abandoned and haunted facility. Although it is safe to report no possessions or terrifying events took place, many of the students had conversations with those who passed on through objects moving and the use of lights which flickered on and off. On Halloween the class hosted a pot-luck and pumpkin carving party. Overall the seminar is a great way to study American history in a different light to understand the historical perspective on monsters and their effects on science, religions, and cultures. The class is a very in-the-spirit, spooky, historically-based, relevant, engaging class that the students enjoy going to every Monday night.

The Science and History of Alcohol by Abby Williams

Dr. McGowan’s “The Science and History of Alcohol” course is a fascinating Honors seminar for those interested in the rich past and scientific properties of alcohol. From the start of recorded history, alcohol has been used for medicine, religion, celebration, worship, nutrition, and social lubrication. Alcohol is also very interesting from a scientific perspective, with a variety of methods and materials that can be used in its creation. Guest lecturer Chris Romanchock visited the class often to deliver informative and exciting lectures on the history of alcohol throughout the ages. Dr. McGowan, a chemistry professor and expert, did an excellent job teaching about the science behind alcohol and the various processes—fermenting, brewing, distilling, etc.—used to make and refine it.

In addition to wonderful lectures, this class is jam-packed full of exciting hands-on activities and field trips. Students home-brewed beer in the Susan Howell Hall kitchen, learned to make mead and hard cider, and distilled spirits using equipment in the chemistry laboratories. Tours of local breweries and wineries and tastings of their products were also part of the course. As an added bonus, students gained a diverse collection of drink coasters throughout the course—they got to design, create, and share informational coasters about specific types of wine, beer, and spirits. This course is a fabulous seminar to take—it is a fascinating, fun, and informative way to learn about an important part of human history!

T'ai Chi: A Way of Life by Christopher Johnson

T'ai Chi is a style of martial arts focused on meditation and it is composed of sixty-four movements, which are done in a calm and slow manner. T'ai Chi is based on the principles of Taoism, which says that a force called Chi flows throughout a person’s body and connects individual organs. The idea of Chi is the fundamental basis of Chinese medicine. When Chi flows strongly then you are healthy but if the Chi is weak then you fall ill. Practitioners of T'ai Chi aim to better control their Chi through balance. By working on their Chi, a practitioner of the form experiences a revitalization of body and soul.

The first part of this course is the practice of the form itself. By the end of the semester one will have learned half of the movements. Practicing the form requires practice of the T'ai Chi walk, which is a way of motion in which each leg is properly balanced. This means that the weight bearing leg is bent, while the weight free leg is straight. The default posture is with both legs slightly bent at the knee to show that the legs are balanced. Mastering the T'ai Chi walk is important because progression through the movements will be quick.

The second part of the course involves reading. Understanding the principles behind T'ai Chi is just as important as practicing the form itself. This understanding is enhanced through readings and discussions. The discussions are interesting as they can go anywhere based on each individual’s interpretation of the readings.

Overall the class is very enjoyable. The subject matter often stands in stark opposition to western views. The whole idea that Chi connects everything and that if one organ is bad the problem may lie elsewhere is the complete opposite of the western approach. The affected area is often either medicated or removed. Chi is also seen as most vital to life rather than blood. This class provided a different perspective on many things that would normally be explained with science.

Fall 2017 Seminars Continued

The Pharmaceutical Industry *course description*

How are drugs discovered? How are their safeties determined? How much does it cost? Who pays for it? Why do medicines cost so much? Have you ever asked yourself any of these questions? Perhaps only rivaled by the political system, the pharmaceutical industry is one of the most critically considered industries and enterprises in society today. But is that image deserved? All these questions and more will be answered as we discuss the pharmaceutical industry and drug development. The good, the bad, and the ugly of this necessary industry are covered. No prior experience in a science class is necessary. Student work includes participation in class discussions and a term paper and presentation on a pharmaceutical compound of the student's choosing.

Honors Students Out and About

By Ava Hameister On October 8th, the Culture and Cuisine, Film and Food class took a field trip out to Lain's Cider Mill and the FitzPatrick Farm Market and Deli in the Hornell area. At the Cider Mill, the first thing of interest was, of course, the dog. After a few attempts to pet it, we headed inside to see the cider press. They were just taking the previous batch of apples off as we arrived, sending the remains away through a shoot. Later we got to see them load and press some apples. First the apples were shredded and dropped into a bucket, then spread out on a cloth and wrapped up, with the next pallet and cloth placed on top. When they began to press the apples, everyone was quite surprised to find that rather than the block coming down into the cart with the pallets, the cart was lifted into the block. The other thing we had not expected was the extent to which the apple juice could squirt out of the cloth! On our way out, many people bought apple cider or the apple cider donuts, both of which were very good. We also learned that the dog absolutely adores anyone who had the donuts with them.

After we left the cider mill, we headed over to the FitzPatrick Farm Market and Deli. The Farm Market had a large sign outside that said "Eat," which was rather self explanatory. We wandered around the market area, which had many lovely vegetables, gourds, and candies. They even had a box where you could submit potential names for some goats. While there, we also saw some cider and donuts from Lain's!

It was interesting to see some of the businesses that provide local food, and learn how apple cider is pressed.



Honors students preparing for a hike along the Pine Hill Trail organized by our Honors Ambassadors.



Students enjoying Honors Farm Day, an event organized by our Honors Servitors.

By Christine Raposas During this first part of the 2017 fall semester, I had two different foundations classes. On Mondays and Tuesdays, I had Observational Drawing with Kathy Vajda and Heidi Hahn. This class was very fast paced and technical. Over the course of six weeks, we improved our drawing skills by learning perspective. We practiced perspective drawing on the exterior and interior of buildings, as well as piles of boxes. It was difficult and time consuming, but by the end of the course I noticed positive changes in my work. On Thursdays and Fridays I had Studio Research with Sara Ferguson and Karen Donnellan. In this class, we explored art by using our senses. We collected sounds and made art involving the sounds we had found. We participated in a Gastronomic Performative Experience. In this experience, we all ate together but had to do strange things like stand up every five bites. Then, with the remains of our food and plates, we made tiny sculptures that we eventually made into glass forms. My first two classes in foundations were completely different than each other, but both taught me important things about art.

Spring 2018 Seminars

A Dark and Stormy Night

Become a published writer! In this seminar, we'll survey 180 years of haunting tales. We'll read stories about haunted houses, haunted objects, and haunted minds. Each student will then write an original ghost story, and the seminar will culminate with the design, editing, and publication of an anthology of those stories.

Alfred E. Nigmas

Throughout history, societies have used puzzles for relaxation and encrypting information. More recently, it has been shown that puzzles are an excellent means to flex your brain, to build cognitive ability and maintain mental health as we age. In this course, we'll study, develop, and solve puzzles of many forms - numerical, alphabetical (words), and mechanical. In addition to focusing on the history and importance of cryptography, ciphers ranging from simple substitution to technologically advanced systems will be discussed.

Cut - Bend - Fold – Bind

Exploring paper, fabrics, and pigments, this course will dive into different techniques of making hand and machine-bound books. A wide variety of stitches will be explored, as well as some advances in technology with the use of the digital glue binder and fabric printer. Assignments involve physical book creation / design, discussion / critique, and cumulate in a pop-up exhibition. Exploration and discussion of artists' and rare books in the Scholes Library will be used as inspiration.

Personal Financial Planning

The purpose of this course is to introduce honors students to the fundamentals of personal financial management in a more creative, interactive and dynamic manner that is used in the regular class. The class will include subject area experts sharing knowledge with the class, a stock investing competition with a \$50 cash prize for the winner, and hands-on exercises. We will focus on wealth accumulation, paying off student loans, investment planning, insurance planning, retirement planning and estate planning. At the conclusion of the course, each student will develop their individual financial plan personalized for their unique circumstances.

The Science of Baking

We will look at how bread, cake, and pastry are so different despite being made of the same basic ingredients. In the same way that chemicals are made of different combinations of elements, we can create an endless number of delicious treats with just a few things in different ratios and mixed in different ways. Class time will be entirely devoted to baking different things, so you can get hands-on experience. There will be some short papers reflecting on each topic and a final project where you invent a recipe and bake it for the class.

Two Faced: Alter Egos and Other Selves

There has been a growing interest in alter egos and the other selves we inhabit. From Jekyll and Hyde to Beyonce and Sasha Fierce, Superman to Second Life - we have a fascination with being another. This course will ask the question - why? We will look at the photography of Cindy Sherman and Nikki S. Lee, watch films from Bergman and Aronofsky, read sociological accounts and explore shifting identities in current events. These sources will investigate fractured identities of others and jump-start us thinking about our own. Students will do a series of projects exploring our own relationships with our many selves.

First Thoughts on Alfred University



First-Year students gathered outside of the Honors House to receive their first Honors tee shirt. With several colors to pick from, students had quite the decision to make.

By Kearyn Sczudlo The word university often connotes a place that is stuffy and prestigious. But, the small community of Alfred is anything but. The people here are wonderful; doors get held open, strangers smile and say “hi”, and professors genuinely care for your success and well-being.

As a small liberal arts school, you can expect a somewhat progressive environment, but this university goes above and beyond. Since my short time of being a student, I’ve already seen student talks orchestrated, student run galleries, and, in fact, you can see students working almost all over campus. Perhaps the most amazing part of this university, however, is its Honors Program. Before classes had even started, the first meeting for the program was already happening.

First impressions of this event were; one, the sheer amount of people participating in Honors was amazing — I couldn’t fathom that so many people from such a small community could join together like this. My second realization was of how relaxed this program was. I came half expecting a stuffy meeting, but was pleasantly surprised when I encountered a house setting (with plenty of food involved). It felt like a gathering of friends, rather than an academic setting.

Something equally as amazing, or perhaps even more incredible about this program, however, are the seminars available. Who would’ve thought that I could be taking T’ai Chi as a course? Some of my friends are taking classes about film, food, print-making, and so many more amazing things that aren’t really offered at other schools. The diversity among the class options and the sheer complexity of each class is sure to appeal to any type of person — whether you’re analytical, whimsical, or somewhere in between, you’re sure to find your perfect fit.

Both Alfred University and the Honors Program are such diverse, open communities and choosing to be a part of something so fantastic is one of the best decisions I could have ever made.

By Jenna Howland The first few days at Alfred University were a complete whirlwind for me. The process of meeting new people and starting over at an entirely new learning environment was taxing, especially since I had come from a very small school district and knew the same people for 12 years in a tiny town in southern New Hampshire. I had never moved or been to a different school district before I came to college, so needless to say I was a little nervous.

Nonetheless, it was exciting and interesting to be able to create a new identity for myself and meet new likeminded people. The Honors reception was an interesting way to meet people that weren’t solely in foundations, because I found that the bulk of my friends came from classes. But at the Honors reception I could meet all different sorts of people and have conversations I never thought I would be having.

Fall Honors Highlights



Be it representing Honors at admissions events, creating monsters, dining at the King and I before seeing Fun Home, or taking a hike along the Pine Trail, the Alfred University Honors students are everywhere!



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