

The Honoric

Fall 2010



From the Director's Desk...

Where do I start? I guess the most obvious thing I can say is 'business is booming' in the AU Honors Program. We greeted a class of 40 (after the two previous years had 21 and 24 incoming students) incoming Honors students this fall! Why did we have this many? The most direct cause that I can point to is: there were a LOT of excellent applications. In fact, if anything, the admissions standards applied were even higher this year.

The theme for this year has been building community within the program. To facilitate more Honors Program involvement, new students were assigned to one of four groups: (1) The Action Figures, whose responsibility is planning activities and events, (2) The Journalists, who have been responsible for creating this newsletter, (3) The Ambassadors, who are redesigning our Honors webpages and meeting with prospective students at open houses, and (4) The Advisors, who make suggestions about changes to the program. Two advanced students serve as leaders for each group—and the Advisors (leaders) also sit on the Honors Advisory Board. After a pizza dinner, the groups met during our Honors Orientation and began laying the groundwork for their plans for this year. We then cut a ceremonial cake to mark the beginning of the new year for the Honors Program.

Some things never change—and never will, as long as this chocoholic is the director—so, of course we had a fabulous Death by Chocolate, once again! Big Brothers/Big Sisters met with their new mentees and a good time was had by all. But lots of new events have already taken place and others planned. We had a 'theoretical physics night' where we viewed an interview with Stephen Hawking and carried on a lively discussion, headed by Dr. David De Graff of the Physics/Astronomy division. I'm not sure we all left with a complete understanding of the creation, nature, and direction of the universe (or universes?) but it was very enlightening, nonetheless.

This November, we had our annual 'field trip' to see the Comedy/Musical production of Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein, at the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester. We laughed, we cried, we wondered how much the really good seats cost, and we had some excellent Thai food; it was quite a good time. We also held a Service Event for the Alleghany County Office of the Aging, painting and weed-wacking and other odd jobs for some elderly community members. Board Games Nights have been well-attended and movie nights are also in the works. The Ambassadors have begun to revise our website, giving it a fresh look, with lots of pictures and a more realistic portrayal of the program.

Fall seminars were brimming with students, given the larger enrollment in the program. We offered: The Sopranos—Psychopathology of Everyday Violence (Rob Reginio), Yoga and Meditation (Robin Howard and Ben Howard), Notes and Numbers—A Duet (Joe Petrillo), Happiness (Emrys Westacott), and The Janus Substance (Steve Pilgrim). This represents some new entries, mixed with some old favorites. The proposals for spring seminars were plentiful (11) and yielded a strong group of courses, which include: Urban Experience in Film (Brian Arnold), Comedy and Humor (yours truly), Culture, Cuisine, Film, and Food (Becky Prophet), Marriage and Romantic Partnerships (Cote and Byrne), The Music of NYC (Rob Reginio), and A Recipe for Murderer (Michele Lowry). This represents a nice mix of old favorites and new offerings.

Finally—in case you haven't discovered this, already: We're now on Facebook! There is an AU Honors Program 'group' and we're collecting emails and updates —so send those to the facebook group or to me by email at Atlas@Alfred.Edu.

-Honors Program Director Gordon Atlas

Fall 2010 Seminars

Notes and Numbers: A Duet

Walking into Meyers Hall the first Wednesday night here at Alfred University I didn't know quite what to expect. I knew I had an appreciation for all sorts of music (as most people do), enjoyed math (as strange as that is), and from the first three Calc I classes I had attended that Dr. Petrillo seemed like a good professor.

Since I can't actually read music some of the discussions went over my head. However, Dr. Petrillo and some of my more musically inclined classmates, including my honors big brother, helped me through the material and I learned some new things about music (such as modes) along with some things I already knew (such as time signature) that I never would have thought related to math as much as they do.

Throughout the course we attended various music events on campus, two in particular were, "Dez Cordas" featuring Craig Butterfield on the double bass and Matthew Slotkin on the guitar and the Alfred University "Festifall" featuring students and faculty of Alfred University and Alfred State.

As the year comes to a close our final project is approaching. A musical composition including concepts we've discussed throughout the year is to be written by our group and either recorded and played (I hope) or preformed (I hope not) in front of the class. Overall the class was a good start to the honors program for myself at Alfred University and I can only imagine the final weeks leaving us ending on a good note. Pun intended.

-Tim Pauszek

Movement and Stillness: Yoga and Meditation

I've been an athlete for most of my life, but I have never done anything like yoga. The slow, focused movements are the exact opposite of what I've been told all my life in basketball, or soccer, or any other sport: Move faster! I find that I am more aware of acute areas of my body, almost as if I am aiming to be able to move single muscles, instead of whole muscle groups. Each pose focuses on different muscles; sometimes ones I didn't even know I had.

-Elizabeth Price

I thought I would be horrible at meditation because of my incurable hiccups and twitchy legs, but by the end of the semester, to everyone's surprise, I was able to sit still for half an hour without moving a muscle. Ben taught us to be mindful both in yoga and meditation, and how to bring that mindfulness out of class with us and apply it to our everyday lives. Homework such as "mindfully closing doors" and "taking mindful showers" really allowed the things that we learned in class to escape into our daily tasks, and brought an entirely new meaning to meditation.

-Nora Peters

One week, for instance, Professors Howard and Howard instructed students to bring their mindfulness to the dinner table, and practice mindful silence—not saying one word throughout the course of the meal, but being cognizant of everything else—until breakfast the next morning. The results? Some of the most talkative people in the class even realized how beneficial and calming silence can be when we control our impulses to speak.

-Mallory Miller

By asking the class to be "mindful" in different ways each week, Pr. Howard invites everyone to look deeper into their everyday actions. One week it may be closing doors mindfully, while the next week it will be drinking with both hands on the glass. As strange as these assignments may seem at first, it is interesting to realize that each one has a significant effect on the world around us. This is the perfect class to take when trying to figure out just where you fit in the universe.

-Mary Peterson

The Sopranos: Psychopathology of Everyday Violence

What made the class wonderful was that not only did we get to watch the show, but that afterwards we would have an intellectual discussion about it's different facets. Having so many bright minds in one room brought many different perspectives and angles to look at it from, making class all the more interesting.

We watched The Sopranos largely through three perspectives: The psychoanalytical perspective,

the capitalist perspective, and the pop-culture mafia perspective. Being very interested in psychology, I found the psychoanalytical perspective the most interesting. The audience gets to watch the protagonist, Tony Soprano, talk to his psychiatrist and watch the inner workings of his mind unfold--something that no one else on the show can see. It is unsettling in a way, having a growing compassion for a man who's job it is to kill and steal from people on a daily basis. It is one of the most fascinating aspects of the show.

-Kelly Owen

The class requires three written essays throughout the semester that discuss the series and how it relates to certain themes such as the obvious psychoanalysis and others like capitalism, not a heavy workload and a fun way to discuss modern storytelling in television outside the lonely world of internet forums.

-Brin Sanford

The Janus Substance

Water: without it all life on earth would die, but just how much does water affect us? The honors course 'The Janus Substance' covers all aspects of water. In this course students take a hydro centric view on everything, always finding water's connection to any topic. The Janus Substance enables students to gain a different perspective on how less obvious factors, specifically water, can drastically change the outcome of events. The Janus Substance is a great course for science and history lovers or anyone interested in taking a closer look at water.

-JoAnn Poirier

Happiness

Ever thought about taking a class all about learning the true meaning of happiness? Well this would be the seminar for you. Taught by the famous Dr. Emrys Westacott, we learned what the meaning of happiness was, and how to achieve it for ourselves. This Class was full of activities that helped us better grasp the idea of happiness and how to appreciate the simpler things in life. We as a class took a journey to foster lake to simply enjoy the outdoors and solitude, something most of us were unfamiliar with. Most of our time was spent in the classroom though debating philosophical ideas based on happiness and what

we all perceived to be the keys to achieving it. Dr. Westacott did a fantastic job with intertwining present perceptions of happiness (with music!) and the ideas that have been discussed for centuries. Lastly to end off our time together we experimented with the idea that good food, good company, and good conversation brings about a sense of peace and joy. I as a sophomore learned a great deal of myself as well as others around me when it came to the theories of happiness and what we are all searching for in our lives.

-Marissa Ray

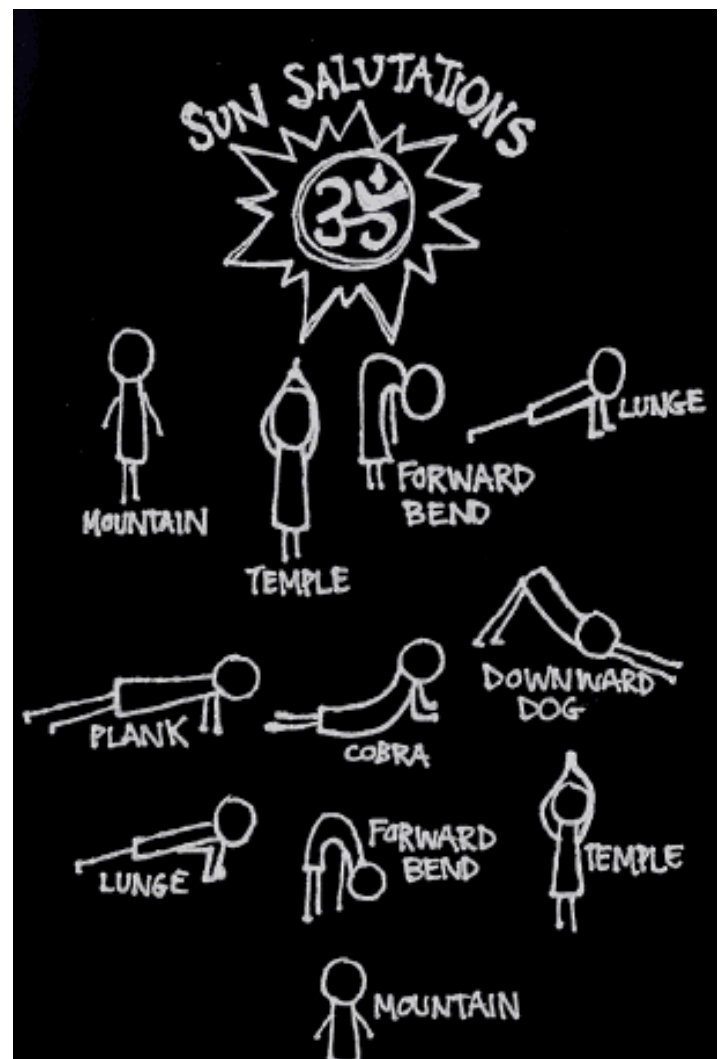


Illustration by Nora Peters

"Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves ignorance. Know well what leads you forward and what hold you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom."

-Buddha

Spring 2011 Seminars

Urban Experience in Film

Brian Arnold

Invented towards the end of the Industrial Revolution, motion pictures have often paralleled and depicted this growth and change in our societies. This class will explore the ongoing relationship between cinema and city life. The class will offer a broad cross-section, spanning the history of the medium, and looking at the development of cities and films across the globe. This course will include films by Charlie Chaplin (USA), Satyajit Ray (India), Terry Gilliam (UK), Majid Majidi (Iran), Luis Bunuel (Mexico), Ridley Scott (USA), David Cronenberg (Canada), and Wong Kar Wai (China), among others.

Comedy and Humor

Dr. Gordon Atlas

What makes a joke funny to one person but not to another? Can we understand what the 'comedic perspective' is and what role it serves in society? What is meant by a "good sense of humor"? Why is laughing considered "therapeutic"? This course will explore the meaning of humor, examining differences between slapstick, aggressive humor, wit, and irony. Students will be asked to bring in their favorite comedian (on film or CD) and/or comedy film for analysis. Readings will focus on the therapeutic benefit of laughter and taking a humorous perspective. Theoretical discussions will challenge students to explore questions about the function, meaning, and benefit of the comedic perspective.

Culture, Cuisine, Film and Food

Becky Prophet

This seminar will provide a gastronomic tour de force of recipes and experiences with food through various regions of the U.S. and some of the most honored traditions of historic and modern cultures. We will discover methods to make several signature national dishes and beverages, from mead to melba, from haggis to hollandaise sauce and from lobster bisque to lemon curd. We will discuss books and films that focus on food and provide us with respect for the taste and cultural expression that good, healthy food can be for body and soul.

Marriage & Romantic Partnerships

Stephen Byrne & Sarah Cote

This seminar will challenge and analyze the institution, questioning the publicity of its alleged privacy while considering what marriage means. A large unit of the course will be devoted to current affairs, especially in respect to gay marriage or civil unions, or queer and feminist responses to exclusionary legislation. We will also explore the psychological power of romantic love, pair bonding, and security; the social consequences or true rewards of "opting out"; the representations of married or partnered couples as shown in visual texts.

Music of New York City

Dr. Rob Reginio

This seminar explores the cultural history of New York City through its music. The course will focus on four types of music: folk music, modern jazz, punk/new wave, and hip-hop. Specifically we'll listen to a lot of music from the folk music revival of the early 1960's (e.g., Bob Dylan playing at the Gaslight Café in Greenwich Village), the formation of bebop jazz and beyond (Thelonious Monk at Minton's in Harlem in the 1940's and John Coltrane at the Village Vanguard in the early 1960's), the downtown punk rock/new wave explosion (The Ramones and Talking Heads at CBGB's in the late 1970's) and the genesis of hip-hop (Afrika Bambaataa and Boogie Down Productions in the Bronx to Eric B & Rakim, Public Enemy, and De La Soul on Long Island).

A Recipe for a Murderer

Dr. Michele Lowry

Blend together an unassuming appearance, a dash of charm, a pinch of narcissism, intelligence (optional) and make sure to leave out the remorse. Have you ever wondered what makes some people capable of murder and others not? Could your neighbor or your best friend have a dark and murderous side? In this course we will delve into the minds of some of the world's most infamous serial and mass murderers and explore what makes otherwise seemingly normal people become ruthless killers. Using popular fiction and film, we will examine the many theories of violence that have developed throughout the ages and some of the world's most heinous killers.

Events



Above: This year's Death by Chocolate Reception was a wonderful success. Big Brothers and Sisters met their new mentees, students were given a chance to relax and meet up with other Honors program students and faculty before the academic year was underway, and delicious desserts were enjoyed by all!



At left: New students and Honors Program group leaders met with Gordon Atlas for pizza and cake at the Honors House at the start of the semester for the Honors Orientation. This semester, groups such as the Action Figures, Journalists, Ambassadors, and Advisors collaborated on long-term goals to get students involved in the betterment of the Honors program. New students were matched up with their group leaders, and groups brainstormed and worked out their semester-long objectives.



AU Honors Program Service Event

AU Honors students volunteered for the Allegheny County Office for the Aging. They helped two elderly women with yard work - painting a deck for one and doing some raking and trimming for the other.



Top: Volunteering students hard at work.

Above: Students are all smiles on a short break.

Right: Fearless leader Gordon Atlas gets his hands dirty at the service event.

Field Trip: *Young Frankenstein*

For the Honors Program field trip this year, students and faculty attended a stage production of *Young Frankenstein* at the Auditorium Theatre in Rochester, NY. The comedic musical was met with

laughs and overall good reviews by students and faculty alike. Also on the trip, the group stopped at the “King and I” restaurant in Rochester for a Thai dinner (below).



Honors Holiday Cryptogram

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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Happy Holidays Everyone, "seal" you in the spring!

Answer:

Alumni News

Jasmine Lellock (2000)

I'm busy teaching for the Honors Program and for the English Department at the University of Delaware and working on my dissertation in English literature at the University of Maryland (just try to keep track of me!). I teach two courses for Honors. In the fall, I teach a course called, "Writing Home," which focuses on representations of home in art, literature, music, and film. In the spring, I teach a course on the occult in Renaissance drama, which is also my dissertation topic. As part of a dissertation seminar, I also regularly visit the Folger Shakespeare Library to consult their really cool Renaissance grimoires, spells, and magic texts. I'm also a mom; Cora is almost 16 months already! My husband, Josh Hertz (AU 99) is on the mechanical engineering faculty at UD.

Tom Nedimyer (2006)

I finished my BA in 2006 and got my MS in Numeracy (like Literacy, but for data & graphs instead of words) in 2007. Since then I worked for three years teaching earth science and biology at a rural high school east of Rochester. Now I am half way through a year teaching earth science, algebra, and pre-calculus in South Korea for high school students who are bound for English-speaking universities abroad.

My recommendation: travel sooner rather than later, because if you put it off it won't happen!

Kellie French (2007)

Hello from Binghamton, New York! I finished my Master's (English, with a certificate in teaching college composition) in May '09, graduating from Binghamton University. Now I'm an adjunct professor, teaching English part-time at Broome Community College. I've learned a lot, and I like it here.

Though Broome County's also in the Southern Tier, I never expected to've seen a growing number of Alfred and Alfred State alums (and even a former community member) move into (or, in some cases, back to) town since I arrived in '07 - that's been a really welcome surprise! Among our merry band are Joe and Andrea (Sarrge) Kovac (both AU '08) and Zack

Smith (AU '07) - we and other friends of ours hang out a lot and even play trivia at a cafe downtown. (Fellow AU Quiz Bowl alumni should note that Zack has almost-singlehandedly carried us to trivia-night victory more than once.)

If you want to know where I've seen the most honors scholars lately, though, it's been at the *four* weddings I went to over the course of just two months! All four involved at least one Alfred alum as the bride or groom, and there were a lot of honors-program participants floating around - it's probably especially worth noting that when Evelyn Chester ('04) gave the maid-of-honor's toast at Kate Sinnamon ('04) and Nathanael Lawton ('03)'s wedding, she used the cables under Miller Performing Arts Center as a metaphor for the bride and groom's relationship!

So life is busy, but I'm happy (and feel very privileged) to report that when I talk about something Alfredian, more often than not I'm standing right near someone who knows what I mean.

Chris Broderick (2007)

I'm still attending medical school in Kirksville, Missouri. I'm in between my second and third years right now, spending a year to complete a fellowship before I start my clinical rotations. In June I'll be moving to Ohio and finishing up third and fourth year out there. That means I'll only be four hours away from Alfred, so I'll finally be able to stop in for a visit. It has been far too long!

All my best to everyone.

Jodi Andersen Brown (2007)

I graduated from the Honors Program in 2007. After spending two unsatisfying years in the corporate world, I raised \$3,000 through social network avenues, quit my desk job, and moved to rural Nicaragua to work for a grassroots organization, teaching English to kindergartners and their parents.

Now, I am finishing up my Masters of Higher Education and Teaching and Leading for Diversity certification at the University at Buffalo. I am also working on a research project on the effects of study abroad on female undergraduates, and gave a presenta-

tion at AU's first annual Women's Conference on why women should work, study, and live abroad. I work as an adjunct at Medaille College, teaching first-year writing and reading. I also work with the Academic Support Center on campus as a writing at ESL tutor, and I absolutely love my job. I recently married a fabulously awesome feminist ally, Matt Brown, and our offbeat and handmade wedding was at Taughannock Falls in Trumansburg, NY. It featured a choreographed dance by AU's very own What The Shit Dance Team and a pinata. I jumped off of a 55 foot cliff on my honeymoon in Jamaica and broke my tailbone--what a fantastic way to start my nuptials!

Other than that, I spend most of my time hanging out with my three kitties, knitting hot pink fishnet stockings, and reading all the creative non-fiction books I can get my hands on.

Laura E. Reyome (2010)

I'm currently chilling in the great country of Canada, attending graduate school at the University of Waterloo, where I am working towards my Master's in Literary Studies.

Beyond that there isn't much of super excitement on my end. I've been working on illustrations for articles written by Dr. Allen Grove.

Karen Aldrich (2010)

After graduating, I spent a marvelous summer as a tour guide for prospective Alfred students and have since moved right into the heart of Ithaca, NY, where I've been enjoying wild Ithacan adventures. Okay, well, mostly I've been making and serving coffee to Cornell students. I work in an independent, on-campus cafe that emphasizes local and sustainable food and drink-- locally roasted coffee, cider and dairy products from Cornell's agricultural school, fresh baked pastries-- and tends to be incredibly busy all the time. I've also had the opportunity to check out the vibrant local music scene and hope to attend "Star Trek Live" in January, because whatever that is, it sounds awesome. Once I month I polish up my BA in English and head to the independent bookstore down the road to discuss some novels with a few Ithaca locals-- so I don't get rusty. And, of course, every time it rains I proudly carry a purple and gold umbrella through a sea of Big Red.

Honorific Humor

You know you're an Alfred University honors student when...

- You know what the real "seal of approval" looks like.
- Weeknights from 7 to 9 p.m. aren't for watching your favorite reality TV show, but for learning about Happiness or Water, The Janus substance.
- Field trips aren't just to zoo's or museums, but to Foster Lake to study how nature can affect people's happiness.

Yoga Mat

\$15.99

Zafu Cushion

\$35.95

Book Everyday Zen

\$12.99

Taking Yoga and Meditation as an honors course

Priceless

Fun Walrus Facts

- A walrus can stay under water for up to 30 minutes before coming up for air.
- Walruses have are very tough thanks to their thick skin. They can be in very cold water because of this layer of warmth.
- They eat a variety of foods from mollusks to seals.

Why did the Walrus go to the tupperware party?

He was looking for a tight seal.

How can you tell the difference between a walrus and an orange?

Squeeze it. If you don't get orange juice it's a walrus.

"I heard that in relativity theory space and time are the same thing. Einstein discovered this when he kept showing up three miles late for his meetings."

-Alex Kirlik

"What's another word for Thesaurus?"

-Stephen Wright

"A friend of mine once sent me a post card with a picture of the entire planet Earth taken from space. On the back it said, 'Wish you were here.'"

-Stephen Wright

“Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.”