Every year, Honors eagerly accepts and welcomes a new group, or cohort, of students into Westminster's nationally recognized program. Students accepted into Honors have always achieved high levels of success in high school, and the 2014 Honors cohort is no exception.

This year's entering class totals 42 members, who have an average GPA of 3.85 in high school and an average ACT composite score of 29 upon entrance. On top of those impressive numbers, six of these students were the valedictorians of their high schools. Beyond exceptional ACT and GPA averages, the entering group comes from a variety of places—all told, they represent twelve different countries and states with over 44% of the group coming from outside of Utah.

Because of these students' successes and hard work in high school, all entering members of the program received academic scholarships to Westminster. While each student's achievements in high school helped him or her gain admittance into the program, the entire cohort started its college experience the same way—attending Honors orientation. Over the summer, incoming students prepared for orientation by reading Susan Cain's *Quiet* in order to cultivate a better understanding of introversion and extroversion inside (and outside) of the classroom setting. Peer mentor Hannah Zweifel believes that “the common read was an interesting and excellent choice for a group usually comprised primarily of introverts.” The study, she said, “allowed for the often quiet members of the group to feel proud about their introversion.” Each student's reading comprehension and critical thinking skills were put to the test in small discussion groups at orientation, giving them their first hands-on experience in a seminar style classroom.

After finishing the common read discussion about *Quiet*, freshmen delved even deeper into the rigors of college by participating in a model Honors class led by Dave Goldsmith, Assistant Director of the Honors program. During the model class, new students are usually nervous and tend to stick with safe, low-risk answers; this group, however, broke out of this pattern right away. They pushed against Dr. Goldsmith's answers, laughed at his jokes, asked difficult questions, and explored best practices in a seminar style classroom, gracefully accepting the rigors of the program and quickly beginning to form a community within Honors.

Humanities, the two-semester class sequence that all Honors freshmen take, has already proven to be rigorous and demanding for the Class of 2018. However, the strong sense of Honors community and camaraderie that developed at orientation allows students to eagerly accept the future challenges of both Humanities and college life. Freshman Carissa Uresk commented on her experience at orientation, saying, “When I first got to college I didn’t know my roommates, classmates, or anybody really. I felt like there was nobody around me, but Honors orientation helped me get to know people, feel closer to my peers, and prepare myself for the scary and exciting adventure of college.”

Already, this new batch of students has demonstrated on both the group and individual level that they can think deeply, ask questions that matter, and exercise their arete. So welcome to Honors, cohort of 2018—there are great times ahead of you.

*By James Steur*
Ray Bradford (’07) released a new telemedicine app, Spruce, with $2M in seed funding from Kleiner Perkins and other investors.

Chert Griffith (’09) is the Media Dept. Second Leader at Nelson Laboratories in Salt Lake City.

Mike Manning (’09) began working as a pilot with SkyWest Airlines this summer.

Ben Rackham (’09) and Ashley Pedersen (’09) were married at Westminster on August 9. Among the many guests in attendance were Honors alumni Amanda Ruiz (’10), Cassidy Jones (’11), Andrew (’08) and Jen (’09) Waterhouse, and Mike Manning (’09), as well as Richard Badenhausen.

Jillian Hill (’10) has started working on a Masters in Social Work at Utah State University.

In between his outdoor adventures around the world, Robin Hill (’10) continues his work as a program manager at Big Sky Youth Empowerment, which offers creative programs that serve at-risk high school youth.

Demetri Coombs (’11) was one of only six students in Drexel University’s first-year Medical School class to be recognized for “Exemplary Professionalism” in the Program for Integrated Learning.

Jessica Hawks (’11) graduated this past spring from the University of Utah with Masters degrees in Public Health and Social Work and has started a joint doctoral program in Public Health at San Diego State University and the University of California, San Diego.

After graduating from Univ. of Penn. Law School, Camber Stoddard (’11) has started working as an attorney in Los Angeles at the international law firm White and Case.

Danny Barber (’12) is now a Center for Law and Biomedical Science Research Fellow at the University of Utah.

Marya Smith (’12) worked one year in Sweden and now teaches English to high school students in France.

Jackie Wilson (’12) has started the Masters of Christian Education program at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Nicole Bedera (’14) was the recipient of the Trustees’ Character Award at Westminster’s 2014 Commencement ceremony and took a break from her Ph.D. studies this fall at University of Maryland to give the keynote talk at Westminster’s “Not Alone” conference on preventing sexual violence.

Pratik Raghu (’15) won the 2014-15 Alpha Chi Region VII Scholarship.

Pratik Raghu’s (’15) essay “Paving the Road Not (Yet) Taken: A Critical Analysis of Two Roadmaps for Kashmiri Democracy” was recently published in Student Pulse: The International Student Journal.

Sabina Schill (’15) was named a student finalist for the 2014 Utah Women in Tech Awards.

Sabina Schill (’15) presented her research on nuclear astrophysics at the 4th Joint Meeting of the American Physical Society Division of Nuclear Physics and the Physical Society of Japan Waikoloa, Hawaii.

James Steur (’16) worked as the Assistant Campaign Manager for Patrice Arent’s 2014 Utah State House Campaign.

Jacob Winter (’15) was the first author on a paper, recently published in Cytotherapy, entitled: “Long-term effects of cryopreservation on clinically prepared hematopoietic progenitor cell products.”

Hannah Frazier (’19) is in Tokyo, Japan on a mission.

Did you do something notable? We want to know! Email your news and notes to Richard at rjb@westminstercollege.edu.

Save the Date!

Don’t miss these events in the spring:

February 12—Adamson Lecture: Adam Segal on Cyberwar with China
Gore Concert Hall
April 30—Annual Honors Banquet
Westminster on the Draw
May 1—Annual Honors Softball Game
Dumke Field
May 30—Commencement
The Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy (UCCD) is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting worldwide understanding and respect between those who live in Utah and people in other countries. Coincidentally, UCCD happens to have its offices on the campus of Westminster College due, in part, to the college’s commitment to international education. This year, UCCD hosted Utah’s first-ever WorldQuest trivia competition as a fundraiser to support their organization. With over 30 teams of eight competing against one another in six different categories, it is safe to say that Utah’s “brainiest” groups most assuredly attended this event.

It should come as no surprise then that Westminster’s Honors program prepared for and participated in the event.

This year I had the pleasure of captaining Westminster’s Honors team in the WorldQuest trivia competition. Our group of eight came highly prepared for the trivia tournament, after weeks of studying, organizing, and meticulously planning the best strategies for competing. The students involved in the competition formed a formidable coalition of nerds who chose to meet on their Friday nights and spend their time discussing, debating, and learning about global issues alongside their friends and peers.

Contrary to popular belief, these students did not live and breathe Honors readings during those Friday night sessions; they did, however, use them as a foundation for their discussions to learn. While the meetings themselves revealed the diverse interests and passions of the group as a whole, all students shared a genuine interest in global issues. It is this common interest that allowed each team member to work collaboratively and contribute knowledge for the benefit of the group. Is was this sense of community that allowed the many study sessions to feel less like studying and more like a game—complete with fierce competition between players!

At the WorldQuest Trivia competition, the group’s hard work (and love of learning) paid off when “Nerds Without Borders” took third place. Dave Goldsmith, an Honors professor and fellow teammate, commented afterwards, “our students are awesome,” and I have to agree. I want to thank all of those who participated and supported us—you all made it possible for us to impress the “brainiest” groups in Utah!

By Adia Thornton

The Honors program would like to extend a special thanks to Liz Winter, mother of senior Honors student Jake Winter, for giving a wonderful talk in August to our new Honors families at the orientation lunch with President Brian Levin-Stankevich. Liz is an attorney and chief of staff to Dr. Vivian Lee, VP for Health Sciences at the University of Utah.

“Nerds Without Borders” brought home the third-place prize.
This summer, senior Pratik Raghu travelled to the Mexican state of Oaxaca through an independent research grant from the Honors program. With him were his faculty advisor and professor of political studies, Leonardo Figueroa-Helland (more commonly known as Leo) as well as a few other Honors students. As a starting point for the research, Leo suggested that Pratik begin at the Universidad de la Tierra, or the University of the Earth. This university is unique because it allows students to take control of their studies—a perfect fit for Pratik, who has designed his own customized major at Westminster. According to Pratik, “the university strives to let people reclaim ways of life that are in accordance with the natural rhythms of the earth and that adequately respond to needs that arise in their own communities.”

Pratik spent the previous year researching with Leo in order to establish similarities and connections between Latin American and South Asian communities. He wanted to study the beliefs of the adivasis, a group of one hundred indigenous communities in India; however, to avoid generalizing about the adivasis and their diverse beliefs, he focused on the four largest adivasi communities, which Pratik believes reflect both the successes and challenges of the indigenous people across the country. This previous research informed Pratik’s trip to Oaxaca and motivated his primary purpose of connection: “I went to Oaxaca with the intention to carry out a cross-cultural analysis of how UniTierra as a revolutionary institution could aid the cause of India’s indigenous peoples,” he says.

At UniTierra, Pratik and his fellow travelers discussed issues related to the state of Oaxaca and its neighboring areas. The group also learned about the experiences of local people to understand how social and political movements affected them on a personal level. One movement the group learned about was the Zapatista movement in the neighboring state of Chiapas (which actually inspired the foundation of UniTierra). For his independent research, Pratik sought to apply the insights from these discussions to the United States and areas of India.

After meeting many local women of Oaxaca who were highly involved in Oaxacan social movements, Pratik developed a connection between UniTierra in Oaxaca and adivasi communities in India. He says, “I became very inspired by the active role women were playing in developing autonomy and fighting against the status quo.” With this in mind, Pratik then developed his final research question:

How can UniTierra’s contributions to Oaxacan popular struggles help Indian indigenous women claim, reclaim, and/or build upon agency, autonomy, and empowerment in their communities?

Pratik is still working on researching and writing his project, which he says is the “culmination of [his] Honors experience as a whole,” but he gave about 40 members of the Westminster community a vibrant preview of his work at an October lecture in Nunemaker. He is using an interdisciplinary approach to his project and critically analyzing counterarguments, which are skills he learned in the Honors program. After graduating from Westminster with his customized major of Post-Colonial Ethics, he plans to go to graduate school and hopes to one day generate more work related to this project and the issues it encompasses.

By Claire Prasad
Internships Show how Lessons from Honors Function in the “Real World”

From Salt Lake City to Washington, D.C., and from mathematics to public health, Honors students participate in a range of internship opportunities in varying fields. However, one thing appears to hold true across the board: these students’ experiences in the Honors program have contributed to success in their internships.

Senior Honors students Jasmine Carlson, Lizzy Donnelly, Shibl Gill, Megan Peters, and Greg Yerkes each did an internship during the last year. As a group, they identified reading, writing, communication, and critical and integrative thinking as the skills—learned primarily in the Honors program—that were most beneficial during their internships.

Jasmine, a political science major, did a summer internship with U.S. Senator John Tester of Montana in his office at Washington D.C. Her duties as an intern involved issues in two different fields—judiciary and banking—in which she had no prior experience but was still expected to read lengthy summaries and report her findings to the senator.

Jasmine said her ability to communicate her findings, in both verbal and written forms, was shaped by the skills she gained in the Honors program, and particularly in the fast-paced discussions in Honors seminars. She felt she was adequately prepared to handle the constant demand for quick, accurate communication better than any of the other student interns.

“I probably wrote twenty to thirty memos for him over the course of my internship that he took home and read,” she said. “Being able to translate, clearly and succinctly, all of what I was reading and hearing, and the different perspectives I was taking into account, into a memo that summarized everything relevant and important for him to know in a page was both challenging and something that I excelled at compared to the other interns.”

Lizzy, a public health major, did a three-month summer internship in Washington, D.C., as well, for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. During her time there, she gathered signatures on petitions and met with Utah Congressmen Chris Stewart and Jim Matheson, and Senator Hatch’s health legislative assistant to lobby for support on bills.

For Lizzy, the most valuable and transferrable skill she learned from the Honors program was the ability to listen well to others’ ideas. As an intern, she interacted frequently with many politicians, and needed to shrewdly pick out the information she wanted to use for her arguments when meeting with representatives. Because she was often competing with lobbyists from tobacco companies, she had to
carefully refute the arguments she knew they were making—all of which required attentive listening, active synthesis of multiple competing ideas, and clear communication.

Lizzy also said that the reading she did on American Cancer Society policies was easier for her because she had been challenged by the readings in Humanities and other Honors courses. Her writing abilities also stood out to the people she worked with: “I was complimented by my boss on my excellent writing skills.” She added, “That’s all Honors.”

Shibl, a mathematics major, was an intern at the state capitol in the Utah Division of Risk Management during spring semester last year. Shibl was the first intern the office had ever had, an opportunity brought to his attention by the Public Service Internship Program run by Roger Livingston. In his internship, Shibl applied his mathematical knowledge to streamline the office’s data systems, build models for data representation, and create a performance evaluation formula for the department.

Like Jasmine and Lizzy, Shibl said the communication skills he learned in Honors classes were important to his success as an intern. “The most important thing that I learned from Honors was the ability to effectively, respectfully, and in a meaningful way communicate my ideas to other people,” he said. “Especially in internships of this nature, where I was working in a government office, you have to be very forthright and you have to be very clear in your ideas.”

He credits his Humanities classes in particular for teaching him these skills.

Shibl also said the interdisciplinary approach of Honors courses benefitted him as an intern, which he found surprising. He said it gave him “the ability to think of issues in a multi-faceted approach,” combining mathematical concepts with aspects of psychology and sociology for his major project of creating a performance evaluation formula for the department.

Megan, a marketing major, did an internship for Freestyle Marketing Group in downtown Salt Lake City during the summer. Like Jasmine and Lizzy, she emphasized that the writing skills she learned in Honors classes were particularly valuable for her internship.

“Pretty much everything I’ve done is writing,” she said. One of her jobs was to create a brand standard for one of the clients, which was “all words.”

Megan’s writing skills also helped her complete work faster. “Things usually have to go through the copy writer at our agency,” she said, “but whenever I’m working on something, I can just pass it on without having to go through the copy writer.”

Megan said that at Freestyle, there is usually a distinction between the “creatives” who generate the ideas and the account team that develops them, but she can do both. “Because I can write, I can do it a lot faster,” she said.

Megan said the skills she used in her internship go all the way back to Humanities, particularly the ability to be open to criticism.

Greg, an international business major, did a summer internship in the International Trade Resource Center in New Hampshire as part of the requirement for completing his degree. He said the critical thinking skills he learned in the Honors program were the most important part of his success. “I am better because of Honors at forming my own original thoughts and not having to rely on others’ analysis, and you can put that to good use as an
“Intern,” he said. He explained that the combination of Professor Watkins’ economic theory and Professor Popich’s philosophical theory helped him “understand more comprehensively why things are the way they are, and I was able to apply what I learned about economics and international relations from those two different approaches to what I had been doing as an intern, and it really helped me do better in my role.”

The benefits of internships go both ways. After their internship experiences, Jasmine, Shibl, and Greg all said they were more invested in their classes. Jasmine said being exposed to the passion and excitement of experts in the many fields that converge in D.C. was “infectious.”

“My awareness of other people’s passion and subsequent excitement about class was greatly heightened,” she said. “I’m much more likely to participate or listen with a higher degree of excitement over what the professors are saying.”

Shibl said he had more appreciation for the interdisciplinary learning goals of the Honors program and even started working on them more after his internship. “Seeing it work in real life renewed my faith in this system, and I was able to more actively endorse those goals of the Honors program,” he said.

Greg also saw his passion for classes increase as a result of understanding how his classes could apply to the world beyond college. “I definitely see that what I’m learning in classes applies to the real world,” he remarked. “That gave me a new perspective on my classes. I’m specifically looking for ways that what I’m learning in class can apply to international trade, international relations, and business in general.”

All five students highly recommend that students pursue internships. According to Greg, doing an internship is “an essential part of developing your professional career and your professional life past Westminster.”

Shibl also recommends doing an internship to find direction in a prospective career. “I think everybody should do an internship while they’re in college – absolutely, no question about it,” he said. “It gives you a direction, gives you a heading, so you know where you’re going and what exactly you want to do.”

Lizzy pointed out that being in the Honors program often allows students to be more selective about the internship experiences they want to have, and she encourages Honors students to exercise that ability to choose internships and what they want from them. To this end, she said, “I would encourage people when choosing an internship to look for an opportunity that’s going to be educational as opposed to sitting at a desk and doing secretarial work. While that can be valuable for networking, I got the networking and I got to learn so much about health policy while I was in D.C.”

Finally, Jasmine and Greg both recommended pursuing as many internships as possible.

“Do as many as you can in anything that might interest you,” Jasmine said. “The worst case scenario is that you find out that you don’t want to spend your life in that career field, and that’s fine. The best case scenario is you find your heart’s calling.”

By Jorie Page
Most students probably know senior Honors student and philosophy major Christian Swenson from their classes as a quiet and kind individual who makes brilliant comments.

Christian is a natural-born thinker. At three years old, while pondering the implications of infinity, he came to a conclusion and told his mom matter-of-factly that “it wouldn't hurt if you fell into a bottomless pit.” For his entire life, his unique and complex way of thinking has guided him in directions others may never even have considered possible.

At an early age, Christian was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome. Although many people might treat this diagnosis as negative or limiting, Christian did not. Instead, he has learned to embrace and explore his unique and complex way of representing the world through symbolism. While some may argue that this idea of symbols is unscientific by today’s standards, Christian responds that, “A huge part of the human experience is spent in things that aren’t literal.”

Since the end of high school, Christian had been writing a play entitled, The Box. The play follows the conversations of two men trapped inside of a white box, who possess no memory of ever existing outside the box. The existential conflict of the world arises from the tension between one character, who wants to leave, and the other, who wishes to stay.

In his spare time, Christian reads extensively—mainly books on philosophy, psychology, and theology. He is particularly fond of Jungian psychology, because of Jung’s unique way of representing the world through symbolism. While some may argue that this idea of symbols is unscientific by today’s standards, Christian responds that, “A huge part of the human experience is spent in things that aren’t literal.”

For the first time.

Whether he’s reading philosophy, developing his own theories, writing plays, or attending classes, you can be sure that Christian will go about all of his activities in his characteristically insightful, meticulous, and considerate manner. No matter what the future holds for Christian, he will undoubtedly leave a mark on the world with his knowledge and wisdom, just as he has in the Honors program and at Westminster.

By Doug Getty

**Professor Profile: Dr. Kara Barnette**

Professor Profile: Dr. Kara Barnette

in philosophy at the University of Oregon, where she took up teaching (instead of her original idea to pursue a career in law, whose community atmosphere she found too divided and competitive).

About her discipline, Dr. Barnette boldly asserts her belief that “philosophy is objectively the best discipline in the universe.” This, she says, is because philosophy by its nature is always interdisciplinary. It asks the underlying questions about anything and everything—from history to literature to politics—making it the perfect medium for engaging with perspectives from many different fields. She promotes the spread of philosophical education as a method for fundamentally improving the world, because people will begin questioning their own assumptions and start thinking on a more critical level. Analytical thought, she posits, would lead to greater human compassion and empathy for one another.

Although Dr. Barnette has a busy schedule, she still makes time to conduct her own research. She currently has been working on an article that addresses the possibility of communities working to atone for their ancestors’ past atrocities, which should be completed in the near future. She is also researching community and judicial responses to sexual assault. This project on sexual assault examines the different methods used in various court systems and how these approaches relate to feminist philosophy.

When Dr. Barnette is not engulfed in academic research or teaching, she loves to cook masterpieces in her kitchen while appreciating the majestic Utah mountains (from the comfort of her living room window, of course). While at home, she enjoys the company of her feline companion, James (named after William James, the philosopher), who has only been known to cause trouble when the world isn’t living up to his expectations.

Her advice to Honors students is simple: make sure to always read something for yourself, on your own time, that is not required for a class—it makes you a more interesting person. The Honors community looks forward to many more years of Dr. Barnette’s teaching, research, and wisdom—we are incredibly fortunate to have her with us.

By Mariah McCoy
Describe a moment or exchange in an Honors classroom that changed your outlook on a particular topic or question.

Where do ideas come from? It may take years for my mind to ripen to some learning moments—a fact that is, at turns, encouraging and depressing. Having taught History and Philosophy of Science (HiPhiSci) awhile with our own Dark Riddler, Dr. Michael Popich, these learning moments have been arriving steadily, beads threaded on a chain of primary sources, class conversations, essays, and directly from Popich between draws on his e-cig.

One Popich-ism in particular—neo-pythagorean-platonism (accent on the “gore”)—took a few years to sink in. It was rubbing shoulders with Galileo that finally did the trick, and I am not referring to Galileo’s theory of tickling (from The Assayer: “for example, should it be touched on the sole of the foot or the kneecap, or under the armpit, it will feel, in addition to simple contact, a further affection to which we have given a special name: we call it ‘tickling.’”) but rather Galileo’s assertion the book of nature is written in the language of mathematics. Galileo peered through a telescope (primarily of his own inventions) and saw the mountains on the moon. Examining Jupiter, he discovered the moons revolving around it—a miniature Copernican system before his very eyes. Galileo looked for himself, rather than accept received Aristotelian wisdom.

As Galileo studied the motion of falling objects, being steeped in the thought of the ancient Greeks, he would know, as the Pythagoreans discovered, that the sum of consecutive odd integers is always a perfect square. For example, \(1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9 = 25\). In examining the distance traveled in consecutive seconds by a falling object (possibly from the Tower of Pisa) Galileo saw the same pattern—the object falling one unit in the first second, three in the second, and five in the third—and thus knew that the total distance traveled must be proportional to the time squared.

Question: Where do ideas come from? Answer: From Pythagoras. Also, from reading other primary sources and, like Galileo, bringing the ideas to bear on contemporary issues. It was in examining the pre-Socratic philosophers all the way to Galileo and beyond that I was able to understand Galileo’s insight. Connecting the dots could happen in physics or math class, but for me it happened in an Honors class, maybe because we were trying to understand a broader narrative of where ideas come from and how they string together like beads on a necklace. Or, as I call that, neo-pythagorean-platonic-popich-ism.

I was not a big fan of philosophy before coming to the Honors program. I found the idea of reading Plato’s Republic appealing, but the actual book sat gathering dust on my bookshelf—until I had to read it for Humanities. Never before and not since (so far) have I read a more dense and confusing text. I took at least six pages of notes, and—though I could see glimpses of something important here and there—the vast majority was, quite literally, Greek to me.

I hoped to come away from class the next day with a better understanding of the text, but I never expected to come away with a new understanding of an idea important to me, let alone the idea of happiness. We were about halfway through a discussion about justice, complete with drawings on the board, when it all clicked. So that’s what justice was: the harmony of the virtues of mind, spirit, and desires. Everything knowing its place and not trying to rise up against anything else. On an intellectual level, this idea was incredibly appealing to me. Before this discussion, I had always visualized happiness as, if not an object, then as an end. Happiness was something to be attained, not something to be maintained. I had previously considered the word a noun instead of as a verb. (The appeal was only intellectual though—sure, independence and self-determination are human rights, but apply that to your cells and you get cancer.)

Plato’s ideas changed mine. Instead of living life in pursuit of happiness the noun, why not try living happiness the verb using Plato’s idea of justice?

Plato’s ideas changed mine. Instead of living life in pursuit of happiness the noun, why not try living happiness the verb using Plato’s idea of justice? To me, having perfect internal harmony would mean having a mind free of doubt, anxiety, and stress, which sounded pretty good. In fact, it sounded a lot like happiness. It also sounded incredibly difficult, but I still tried. When a stab of self-doubt hit, when a wave of stress rose, I tried to trace the emotion to its roots, to find out which virtue was out of sync with the others. It sounds crazy, I know, but it worked. That state of mental harmony is happiness for me, or rather, the maintenance of that state is. I’m human, of course, so maintaining that state is quite difficult. Papers pile up, computers crash, food burns, and my happiness is disrupted. I always return to Plato, though, when it requires restoration. Is my will allying with my laziness in avoiding the homework that my mind tells me I need to do? Is a fear of failure keeping me from joining a sports team? These are the kinds of questions that quell stress and restore happiness for me, and I’m quite glad I had the opportunity to discover these questions through Plato.
During my senior year of high school I discovered the wonders of the greatest Romantics of the 19th century. The novel that first made me realize how much I appreciated the era was most definitely Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. I quickly grew attached to the characters. The tortured souls of Frankenstein and his misunderstood monster had more depth for me than any other characters I had encountered in previous novels. While the plot of *Frankenstein* was riveting in itself, the characters were what kept me reading.

The way the Romantics were able to capture the raw power of the human condition with words is undoubtedly the most impressive art form I have ever encountered. I began to appreciate the Romantics much more after reading *Frankenstein*, and for the rest of the year I decided to dedicate all of my free reading time to the 19th century. I have since then fallen in love with Hugo’s hunchback, Brontë’s star-crossed lovers, Hardy’s innocent farm girl, Hawthorne’s sinful pastor, and many, many more characters.

By Elaine Sheehan

In third grade, I became obsessed with *The Great Brain* series of books, which starred ten-year old Tom Fitzgerald, a plucky member of a Catholic family living in Southern Utah in the 1890s. Although I lived in New Jersey then, I had developed a fascination with the West and I loved how Tom would seek out all sorts of wild adventures and defy authority—he was an easy character for a young boy to identify with.

As Christmas approached that year, I asked for only one thing: a complete set of *The Great Brain* books. I awoke early Christmas morning, ran downstairs to check under the tree, and saw heaps of wrapped presents for myself and my siblings. But no *Great Brain* series. I ran back upstairs crying. Looking back, it was at that point that I realized just how important books were to me. It makes sense that I ended up working with books for a living. Coda: On my fortieth birthday—celebrated in Utah, scene of the Tom Fitzgerald’s adventures—my wife presented me with a full set of *Great Brain* books. They are still a good read.

By Richard Badenhausen

In this summer, before leaving for my summer job, I packed Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* into my suitcase, not knowing what to expect from this book that, from the reviews, seemed to defy genre categorization and summary. As soon as I started reading, though, I was captivated. Loosely autobiographical, the story follows a father and son—neither of whom seem to understand the other—on their motorcycle trip across the United States. During the long hours of the drive, the father allows his mind to wander, and the stream-of-consciousness narrative drifts through his confusing relationship with his wife and son, the intriguing possibilities presented by non-Western philosophies, the turbulent but thrilling years he spent as a professor, the problems presented by a subject-object metaphysics, and, eventually, his descent into what everyone around him called “madness.”

On a human level, the story is gripping, honest, and fresh. The prose flows quickly and naturally, and soon enough, Pirsig’s words begin to feel like your own thoughts echoed back.

For me, though, this book is most important because it paved the way for a new and powerful interest in metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy in general. Until reading this book, I never had the confidence to read in any of those genres on my own—too many philosophers whose names I didn’t know, whose accomplishments I didn’t understand, and whose writings involved entirely too much Latin for my taste. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, though by no means the most advanced work in the field, helped me to understand the relevance of these important metaphysical questions to everyday life. It gave me a basic vocabulary for philosophy, a better understanding of how foundational thinkers (like Aristotle and Plato) fit together historically and ideologically, and a meaningful and relatable story, but most importantly, it opened the door to a whole new field of thought.

By Jessica Bowen
Student Honors Council

What’s the most important lesson you learned in your first year of college?

Aamina Khaleel
Vice-President

During my first year of college, I quickly learned the importance of time management. Unlike high school, where I could complete most assignments the night before their due date, I realized a successful college career begins with knowing how to prioritize. Getting an early start on papers (or making time for myself) helped me manage a hectic schedule. Time management wasn’t a skill I learned right away—just like every other learning experience, it took time! Eventually, though, I was able to effectively prioritize and succeed.

Amanda Howa
Treasurer

The most important lesson that I learned my first year in college was simple: don’t procrastinate. My first semester was full of late nights, rushed assignments, and stress. I decided to get a planner because it would help me plan and prioritize my schedule. The planner helped me visualize when assignments were due and plan times when I needed to start my homework. I have ultimately trained myself to start working on assignments and readings further in advance, rather than waiting until the last minute to complete my work, and I have been better off for planning ahead.

Madisyn Klein
Secretary

Finding a balance between school, extracurricular activities, my social life, and a job was a struggle my first year. I quickly learned that if I didn’t set aside some “me” time, I became very unhappy. The best piece of advice I could have given to myself when stressed was to find something that helped me relax and unwind from the pressures of college. However, you make time for yourself, whether it is reading a great novel in the grass, binge watching Netflix, or going out with friends, you should both take care of yourself and your happiness!

Jake Winter
President

As a native of Salt Lake City, I was tempted to only spend time with my friends from high school or stay at my parents’ house my first year of college. (My desire to visit their house was to see my dogs rather than my parents—don’t tell them that.) However, I learned that by trying new things and meeting new people, more social opportunities arose. The Honors program introduced an ideal environment for me to meet like-minded people and build meaningful relationships, and I ultimately ventured outside of my comfort zone.

Richard Badenhausen has exactly 1,351 books in his office.

Dave Goldsmith has won two SHC Texas hold’em tournaments, been runner-up in two, and lost only one.

HONORS by the numbers

After 6 years team-teaching Human Culture and Behavior, Lesa Ellis and Kristjane Nordmeyer have entertained countless queries about whether assigning numbers to sexual identities and behaviors is the ideal method for understanding sexuality. Perhaps numbers can’t answer all questions...

In 7 semesters, Russ Costa has co-taught Honors seminars with 9 different partners.

Michael Vought has directed over 40 productions in his 19 years as head of Westminster’s Theatre program.
We will be nationally recognized as an exemplary community of learners, distinguished by our distinctive educational programs, our record of preparing graduates for success in a rapidly changing world, and our commitment to continuous improvement, effectiveness, and value.

Getting to know your Honorable Mention Editors

Arts in Performance challenged my expectations for how learning can take place in a classroom on a daily basis, but two days in particular helped me with a personal realization. Two dance instructors came to our class to explore different aspects of dancing. We spent most of one afternoon choreographing a dance routine in small groups with some guidance from the instructor. On another day, a ballroom dance teacher introduced us to the basics of different ballroom dancing styles. On one level, those lessons taught us about one type of art (and were a lot of fun), but on a personal level, they helped me realize how crucial being active and expressive are to my physical and mental happiness. By Chris Cunningham

History and Philosophy of Science with Richard Wellman and Dave Goldsmith was one of the most surprising and memorable classes I’ve taken in Honors—in all of college, in fact. Every class involved fascinating discussions, stretched my thinking, and produced plenty of hilarious (and highly context-dependent) quotes. One day in particular, though, Dave was trying to explain a philosophical and mathematical problem and asked us, by way of analogy, to imagine a “ball of elephants larger than the solar system, expanding at the speed of light.” I can’t say that I remember the conclusion this was supposed to lead us toward, but that image still sticks with me. By Jessica Bowen

When I applied to the Honors program four years ago, I didn’t know what to expect from my classes. I’ve had surprising experiences in all of my Honors seminars, but one non-traditional classroom stands out the most. I traveled to Ireland on an Honors May Term Study Experience in May 2014, where I studied film, history, literature and theatre. I never imagined that a class could take me to the breathtaking views of the Cliffs of Moher, the ancient and history-steeped Christchurch of Dublin, or the warm and instantly familiar setting of a traditional Irish pub. My Honors classroom was a foreign country for two weeks—that’s definitely the most unexpected experience I’ve had at Westminster. By Shianne Gray

By Hannah Williams

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