Fall 2008

Honors @ Georgia Southern

University Honors Program Students and Staff, Georgia Southern University

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The University Honors Program at Georgia Southern University has many success stories. Our graduates have pursued a variety of meaningful careers and our current students continue to develop interesting research and service projects. Of course, all of the hard work of these impressive honors students has been made possible by the mentorship of dedicated honors professors. This magazine, Honors @ Georgia Southern, is designed to tell these stories. In so doing, we will keep the entire honors family—our alumni, our students, our professors, and our supporters—abreast of the events and accomplishments in our community of scholars.

I have been fortunate to be the Director of the University Honors Program for the past three years and I am keenly aware that I stand on the shoulders of a distinguished group of predecessors, Dr. Hew Joiner, Dr. Fred Richter and Dr. Martha Abell. They built a culture and a structure to support liberal education at Georgia Southern University.

Each issue of Honors @ Georgia Southern will include stories about our current students as well as items about our distinguished alumni. Because we can only tell these stories if we are made aware of them, I invite you to contact us to let us know what you are doing so that we can pass the news along to the broader honors community.

I hope you enjoy this first issue of Honors @ Georgia Southern. As you read it, please keep in mind that our students were responsible for creating it. This is yet another case, as I am reminded daily, that the strength of our Honors Program and our university rests on the quality of our students.

Sincerely yours,

Steven Engel
“Once in Madrid, I discovered that the Spanish live the precise lifestyle I would choose for myself if I could and embody many of the characteristics I have always noted about myself. Having the opportunity, then, to study for five weeks in that environment was the opportunity to experience a culture, people, language, and lifestyle very different from my own but one which I feel connected to and which I may never have that opportunity to live again.”

—Katie Brookins  Madrid, Spain
Katie Brookins
Barcelona Spain
The world is not flat nor is it getting smaller. The need to learn about other cultures and to expand our horizons has always been a hallmark of a liberal education. In an age of a globalized economy and a globalized communications network, it becomes all the more obvious that it is crucial to foster a global perspective among students. In the following pieces, you will learn of a sampling of the efforts of University Honors Program students to move beyond their comfort zone. Especially noteworthy is the Program’s recent record of support for Georgia Southern students competing for nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships to study and do research overseas. Also, more honors students this past year participated in study abroad programs than at any time in history.

Service has been a feature of the University Honors Program since its inception. This past fall, ten students extended their service projects to the world stage during the Honors Alternative Spring Break trip to Honduras. While many students seek relaxation or the revelry of beaches over spring break, these students paid nearly $1000 each and spent their week working with children in an orphanage and participating in a cultural immersion experience.
Jake Taylor was awarded the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship for Spring 2008. Taylor is an honors junior majoring in History and Geology. The award provided funding for Taylor’s study abroad semester at the University of Oulu in Finland where he was enrolled in courses such as Scandinavian history and culture as well as environmental and biological issues.

“My exchange period in Finland was an intense, life-changing moment that will forever have a deep impact on my life. I made numerous friends across the world and [was able] to glimpse many different cultures and lifestyles,” said Taylor.

Taylor was equally involved in the Finnish community and became involved in sauna and ice swimming, as well as sports such as Saliband (floorball) and Pesapallo (Finnish Baseball). Also, Taylor was given an opportunity to visit different areas of Finland and Norway as well as St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Riga, and Tallin.

Since the fall of 2005 when the support for applicants was centralized with the administration of the University Honors Program, we have been able to support more and more excellent students for these prestigious awards. The following is a partial list of the major scholarship opportunities available to all Georgia Southern University students who meet their requirements:

- Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship
- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
- Freeman ASIA Award
- Fulbright U.S. Student Grant
- Gates Cambridge Scholarship
- George C. Marshall Scholarship
- George J. Mitchell Scholarship
- Harry S. Truman Scholarship
- Jacob K. Javits Fellowship
- Morris Udall Scholarship
- National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship
- Rhodes Scholarship
- Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship

Nicole Harper, now a doctoral graduate from Georgia Southern University in the Department of Curriculum, Foundation and Reading in the College of Education, was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Grant to Slovenia for 2007-2008.

Harper’s research project, ‘Cultural Arts, Intercultural Immersion and Learning Perception,’ explored the role of art in the intercultural immersion process and involved case studies of expatriate educators during their immersion into Slovenian culture, the Slovene experience in the arts and cultural sectors, as well as her own experiential commentary on cultural immersion during her nine month stay in Slovenia.

The Fulbright grant permitted Harper the means to complete her dissertation research as well as contribute to the local educational community of Slovenia. “The Fulbright grant allowed me to grow both personally and professionally while conducting research abroad and widening my cultural knowledge base,” said Harper.

Prior to attending Georgia Southern, Harper served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana and taught art at the International School in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.
The University Honors Program serves as the campus clearinghouse for nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships and is committed to helping prepare all Georgia Southern University students for these awards.

In the past two years, four Georgia Southern students - Nicole Harper, Jeff Palis, Jake Taylor and Zack Anderson - have been awarded scholarships or grants through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Zack Anderson, a recent graduate of the University Honors Program, was awarded the U.S. Department of State Critical Language Program Scholarship for Summer 2008. With this award, Anderson studied Arabic in Cairo, Egypt.

Anderson holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Justice Studies and has previously studied Arabic with Professor Waleed Ali, a visiting Fulbright professor from Egypt. During his time at Georgia Southern University, Anderson participated in research with Dr. Krista Wiegand in which he looked at the likelihood of fatalities during terrorist attacks dependent on the terrorists’ goal.

Anderson is a graduate of the inaugural class of 1906 Scholars in the University Honors Program. After concluding his study abroad in Egypt, Anderson plans to attend law school and work in federal law enforcement in the future.

Jeff Palis, a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University in the Department of Curriculum, Foundation and Reading in the College of Education, was recently awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Grant to Latvia. He is also the Study Abroad and Exchange Coordinator in the Center for International Studies at Georgia Southern University.

Palis’s research project, ‘Cultivating Global Citizenship,’ will explore how global citizenship can be fostered on university campuses and in local communities. Palis will work in collaboration with the Department of University Relations at the University of Latvia, Riga.

He holds a Master of Arts degree in International Studies from East Carolina University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He has served as the chair of the Ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee of the European Council of the University System of Georgia as well program coordinator for the University System of Georgia’s summer studies programs in London and Paris, Czech Republic and Poland.
Fostering a Global Perspective

IN THE SUMMER OF 2008, thirty Honors Program students participated in university-sponsored study abroad programs. International travel, not simply as a tourist, but as an eager learner, plays a critical role in the development of a global perspective. Included here are a select group of those who decided to step outside their comfort zone to participate this past summer.

“My experience studying abroad in Montepulciano, Italy was one of the most incredible and influential experiences of my college career, if not my entire life. The chance to interact with members of another culture is priceless. This study abroad experience expanded my global perspective and provided memories that I will cherish and share with those around me.”

—Elizabeth Debban Montepulciano, Italy

“While in Italy, I was enrolled in Art Appreciation and Watercolor Painting. Art has always been a large part of my life, and to be able to learn about the works in a stimulating classroom environment and then the following day visit the actual original piece was very overwhelming. It is very hard to put into words the emotions that took place when I would walk into a room in a museum and be placed before a work of art that I had spent a large sum of time studying and admiring.”

—Brittany Porter Montepulciano, Italy
abroad

University Honors sponsored study abroad tourist, but as an eager of global perspective. decided to step outside summer.

“As a Biology major specializing in avian behavior, the biodiversity and different biomes located in Costa Rica makes it an ideal location for me to study. The University Honors Program made it possible for me to catalogue 300 of Costa Rica’s 850+ species of birds.”
—Kenny Metasavage Costa Rica

“Studying abroad in Costa Rica was a very memorable experience for a biology major like me. Seeing treasures such as the Resplendent Quetzal Bird and the Red Eyed Tree Frog made it all worthwhile.”
—Kenny Metasavage Costa Rica

“I feel that studying abroad over the summer in Ireland, England and Germany greatly enriched my college experience. As a music minor at Georgia Southern, I found singing in Canterbury Cathedral to be very rewarding.”
—Ava Conger England, Ireland and Germany

“It is an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Your perspective is permanently changed.”
—David Robeck England, Ireland and Germany

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“It is an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Your perspective is permanently changed.”
—David Robeck England, Ireland and Germany
“Studying abroad in Spain allowed me numerous opportunities to explore various cities and countries immersing myself in their cultures and lifestyles. I saw the United States from another country’s perspective and was able to develop a better sense of how the world works from the interaction of our economies to my own personal life.”
—Ann Hedges Segovia, Spain

“Studying abroad in Ireland, England and Germany impacted my life in ways I never would have imagined. Not only was it incredibly exciting to experience other cultures outside of the United States for the first time, but studying abroad helped me to understand why having a global perspective is a foundation of the University Honors Program: we live in a global society.”
—Cayla Rowell England, Ireland and Germany

“Participating in the study abroad trip to Ireland and England was not only a fun way to spend part of my summer, it was also an immensely valuable experience that has greatly added to my education at Georgia Southern. Not only did I learn about cultures, I also learned about how people in other parts of the world view the same issues we face. I felt like a global citizen when I came home.”
—Brittany Thurston England & Ireland
“The study abroad program allowed me to see new places, explore new cultures, investigate global problems, and learn many things about myself and others. All in all, it was one of the best experiences of my life.”
—Chris Booth Chile

“It was a time of growth—growth of person, growth of knowledge, growth of friends and growth of spirit…. Sadly, it was not until leaving Montepulciano that I realized the profound impact of the city on all of us…. Its art taught me the price we are willing to pay to remember the past and what we are willing to sacrifice in the present. Most importantly, its people taught us that no matter how different we may be, we all have something in common. Italy was the greatest experience of my college career.”
—Steven Roberson Montepulciano Italy

“It wasn’t just a trip that showed us history—Italy is history. It was like a walk through the past, living in it, breathing it, dining with the Caesars themselves.”
—John Di Pietro Montepulciano Italy
This spring, ten Georgia Southern University students participated in the Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras, an opportunity that intertwined a cultural immersion experience with service to a local community.

The philosophy of the University Honors Program rests on four foundations, one of which challenges students to develop a global perspective. In this spirit, the Honduras experience was created through a partnership between the University Honors Program and the Office of Admissions to prepare students to become global citizens, foster international understanding and increase the number of Central American students studying at Georgia Southern University.

“The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras enabled me to go on my first venture outside of the United States. The unforgettable children of Copprome and the outstanding hospitality of the Honduran families have helped me to set a new standard for myself — one that makes use of the impact I can have on the world,” said Maricel Williams, a sophomore honors Pre-Nursing major.

During their week abroad, honors students coordinated a series of projects at Copprome, an orphanage located in the town of El Progreso. The orphanage houses seventy Honduran children who have been abandoned, sexually or emotionally abused, or have lost their parents to the AIDS virus.

In the months leading up to their departure, the students meticulously planned activities to meet the needs of the children at Copprome. Recalling a lecture from Dr. Darin Van Tassell’s Introduction to International Studies course, David Robeck, a sophomore honors International Studies major, encouraged the group to focus their projects on universal facets of every culture – art, music, sport and food.

Examples of the resulting activities included a lesson on playing the recorder, an exercise which allowed the children to paint their aspirations and dreams on canvases, and organized games of ultimate frisbee and soccer.
Since the trip coincided with Semana Santa, the week leading up to Easter, students introduced the children to the Easter Bunny and the American tradition of the Easter Egg Hunt using items donated by the University Store, Department of University Housing, Office of Admissions and Center for Student Leadership and Civic Engagement.

In addition to giving their time to the children, the students made a group donation of durable goods such as cookware, plates and utensils to Copprome’s spartan kitchen.

“Working with the children of Copprome opened my eyes to a whole new world. Although I felt that I was able to impact the lives of the youth we worked with, I believe that the biggest impact made was by the children on myself. They taught me so much about life — I could not have asked for a more rewarding experience,” said Heather Jo Harralson, a junior honors Exercise Science major.

At the orphanage, the honors students were joined by local high school students who assisted with the projects and served as translators. Many of the Honduran students expressed significant interest in attending Georgia Southern University, one of whom was Gustavo Rodriguez who was presented with an official invitation to join the University Honors Program along with a corresponding scholarship. Rodriguez had interviewed for the award by phone several weeks prior to the trip.

In preparation for the experience, the honors students met regularly with international Georgia Southern students from Honduras to learn about Central American history, economics, culture and politics. One Honduran student, freshman Pre-Business major Fares Lagos, was selected to participate in the trip as a cultural liaison. “I was honored to have the privilege of introducing the American students to my home country,” said Lagos. Lagos, along with his parents Javier and Susie, was key in helping the group make local arrangements and navigate the Honduran countryside.

One evening, the Lagos family arranged a dinner featuring local cuisine hosted by prominent Honduran attorney Jorge Garcia Martinez, son of a member of the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice. At the event, Garcia expressed his gratitude for the contributions the Georgia Southern students had made to the children of his country.

As a result of the Lagos’s efforts and additional Honduran relationships cultivated by Ron Jones, international recruitment manager in the Office of Admissions, the honors students were able to delve beneath the surface and experience true Honduran culture during their stay. Jones worked with several Georgia Southern Honduran connections to arrange a series of cultural events over the course of the week.
Lidia and Billy Coplan, parents of freshman Art major Stephanie Coplan, provided a tour of a local banana plantation. Public Administration graduate student Jennifer Tarrab’s parents, Ana and Victor, traveled from their home in the capital of Tegucigalpa to host a barbeque.

Lastly, Georgia Southern Business Administration alumna Cecilia Midence welcomed the students to Telamar, a resort located in the beach community of Tela where she currently is employed.

“I have traveled to many different places over the years, but the Honors Alternative Spring Break was a completely different experience. Instead of seeing the glossed over ‘touristic’ view of a country, I was given the opportunity to immerse myself in the culture and societal problems of Honduras,” said George Barnhill, a sophomore honors History and Anthropology major.

One of the many cultural highlights was an excursion to Copán Ruinas, the jewel of the Mayan kingdom in Honduras. The ruins, which date back to 1000BC, were declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1980.

In the fall, the honors students will host a photography exhibition intended to capture the people, places and landscape of Honduras as a way to share their experience with the entire university community. At the event, the students will sell the fruits of one of their projects at the orphanage — greeting cards adorned with artwork created by Copprome’s children.

Proceeds will help fund desperately needed mattresses, blankets and pillows. The fall semester will coincide with honors Biology sophomore Jessica Sparrow’s efforts to launch a chapter of Students Helping Honduras on the Georgia Southern campus.

“The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras was a motivating, inspiring and humbling experience. Not only did I gain a new perspective on the social and cultural aspects of the Honduran people, but I was humbled to realize what I had taken for granted as a United States citizen. This experience through the University Honors Program has broadened my mind and furthered my sense of civic responsibility to the interconnected global community,” said Angela Williams, a junior honors Biology and Spanish major.

The Honduras trip was made possible, in part, through generous donations by Statesboro resident Evelyn Mabry, who worked with Linda Griffin, a director of major gifts in University Advancement, and from Dr. Fred Richter, founding director of the University Honors Program.

The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras was the second trip offered by the University Honors Program in a series designed to allow students to develop a global perspective and foster an ethic of civic responsibility. The 2007 program took place in Miami, where honors students worked with two nonprofit organizations which provide services to Cuban and Haitian refugees — the International Rescue Committee and Church World Service.

Additional thoughts shared by honors students as they reflected on their Honduran experience:

“Fostering a Global Perspective

Being part of the University Honors Program has provided me with many opportunities for growth. While participating in the Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras, I feel I was able to make a difference in the lives of these children at Copprome and get a new perspective on life, which would not have been possible without my participation in the program.”

— Jessica Sparrow, a junior honors Biology major

“The Honors Alternative Spring Break to Honduras provided me with an excellent opportunity for service, experiential learning and fun. The combination of these three things made the trip an extraordinary experience in which I was challenged and grew. We gave the children we worked with at the orphanage the affection they needed and returned with a greater understanding of the world.”

— David Robeck a junior International Studies major
HOLLY LARSEN, a 2007 graduate of the University Honors Program stands out among others as an alumna to remember. After graduating with a B.S. in Sports Management with a minor in Business, Larsen became a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in the small West African nation of Mali. There she began work as a Small Enterprise Development Advisor. Working for a microfinance lending organization, Holly helps to provide loans to poor and low income clients who cannot afford to work with a bank.

The job ahead of her was promising, even exciting, but her initial arrival was not without a sense of unease. Just ten days after her arrival, Holly had a definitive conversation with a neighbor who spoke broken English. She recalls, “He said to me, ‘You can walk in Africa.’ I knew then that I could do this and that Peace Corps was the right thing to do...”

The language of Mali is French and Larsen was required to pass several language proficiency tests before leaving her initial host home to arrive at her permanent site. Once there, she had to overcome her apprehension at being referred to as the “white girl.” She works mostly with the women of Mali and is generally ignored by the men. These are the established gender roles in this country.

She has worked with the women of Mali to develop the production of Shea Butter. She has looked over a “new and modern” way of collecting, cleaning and storing Shea nuts in order to extract the Shea oil and eventually produce Shea Butter. This would be a great industry for the women of Mali and they are equally excited about the prospect.

Larsen is also interested in working with high school students to create an HIV/AIDS awareness group. She currently has plans to meet with the director of the school systems and to interview those who are living with HIV/AIDS in Bamako, where she is stationed. This will, however, not be easy due to a stigma in Africa surrounding the subject of HIV/AIDS.

The University Honors Program is proud to claim Holly Larsen as an alumna. Larsen’s blog refers to her as a Peace Corps Volunteer who will “hopefully save a few lives and change the world.” It is apparent that she has already gone a long way toward achieving those goals. Larsen’s stint in the Peace Corps is scheduled to last a total of twenty-seven months.

The text in this article was gathered from Larsen and from her blog on her experiences and does not reflect the opinion of the United States Peace Corps. To learn more about Holly Larsen, please visit http://hollymlarsen.blogspot.com.
Riley featured in Wired Magazine

Christopher Riley, a chemistry student at Georgia Southern, had some of his work recognized as one of Wired Magazine’s “Top 5 Amazing Chemistry Projects of the Year” in April.

Riley and Chemistry professor Shannon Davis, Ph.D., travelled to the American Chemistry Society (ACS) National Meeting and Exposition in New Orleans. The University Honors program donated funds to assist with equipment and travel costs.

“The atmosphere of the meeting was one of scholarly research and the latest advancements in chemistry,” Riley said. “Over 15,000 chemists from all over the world attended the conference and presented their research covering all fields of chemistry.”

According to Wired Magazine’s blog, Riley’s experiment involved creating an environmentally friendly adipic acid that is used in the production of nylon. Their “Green Chemistry” project involved finding a better way to produce nylon.

“This was a big deal for me because not all college students have the chance to attend a meeting of this magnitude,” Riley said. “Experiences like this have really prepared me and given me the confidence to move on to medical school.”

Innovative research: Tubbeh on bikers

When many people think of bikers and motorcycle gangs, the first thing that comes to mind is violence. Recent graduate Leila Tubbeh used her honors capstone project to change that misconception.

Her research began after she had explored the concept of participatory journalism in Steve Stepanek’s course on creative and investigative journalism. Tubbeh then decided to take a closer look at what she calls a misunderstood subculture, bikers.

“Bikers are portrayed in the media as hooligans, rabble-rousers and troublemakers,” Tubbeh said. “I sought to find out the truth about motorcyclists and the world in which they live.”

Tubbeh first researched the historical origins of biking and worked her way through the sociological and psychological aspects in terms of the media’s impact on the culture and its participants.

She used movies such as “The Wild One” and “Wild Hogs” as well as Hunter S. Thompson’s book “Hell’s Angels” in her research. She also examined motorcycle manufacturers such as Harley-Davidson and Indian to see their marketing strategy toward bikers.

Tubbeh familiarized herself with the local culture by interviewing owners of local bike shops, asking questions about demographics of bikers, as well as their habits, likes and dislikes.

Finally, she completely immersed herself by going on a motorcycle ride as part of Statesboro’s annual “Santa’s Ride” where bikers deliver Santa Claus to the Statesboro Mall.

“My research and interviewing proved the behemoth role of the media in affecting perceptions and ideas,” Tubbeh said. “The vast majority of motorcyclists are average people with absolutely no connection to outlaw groups like Hell’s Angels.”

Tubbeh is currently enrolled in the graduate program in Higher Education Administration at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg Virginia.
The medium is the message

How often do you watch television and criticize the messages present in the text (all aspects of the show)? Geyerman said, “If there is an interest in it, I would do it again in a heartbeat.”

A small group of Georgia Southern students did quite a bit of criticizing and analyzing in Spring 2008 when they enrolled in an Honors Enrichment Seminar entitled “Implicated Messages in Mass Media” with Communication Arts associate professor Chris Geyerman, Ph.D.

“Regardless of major, many students are interested in television,” Geyerman said. “Students would discuss class readings every week before watching clips from a news program or sitcom. Following that, Geyerman and the students would discuss the messages encoded in the script, actions of the people on screen, as well as the setting and pick them apart.

Geyerman said that through the seminar he got to know the students much better than in a larger class and that students had a greater level of responsibility in completing their work each week. The course can easily be compared to the junior-level Rhetorical Criticism course that is part of the Communication Studies major. To adjust the class to meet the needs of all majors, Geyerman added introductory readings to acquaint the students with real techniques of criticism.

“Students are able to see things through analysis in their own way. They are able to see things through analysis in the medium that is coming into your home? Perhaps, not of-

The course was a true seminar with only eight students who participated in intense discussions about the messages that are present in all forms of mass media, including fictional television series, movies and print magazines.

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Anzjon participates in Research experience

Sarah Anzjon, a junior Nursing major who was recently accepted into the Georgia Southern University School of Nursing, participated in a National Science Foundation sponsored Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at the University of South Carolina this past summer.

The REU was a nine-week program where Anzjon received free housing and a $4,000 stipend while completing her research. Along with 14 other students, she studied bacteria isolated from marine snow particles. Her project was entitled “Molecular Aquatic Microbial Ecology.”

Anzjon had to collect her own data, including the process for the sequencing of DNA. Through this analysis of DNA, Anzjon examined the community structure of the bacteria.

Anzjon said that she was able to identify all of the isolates and, after that, she created a phylogenetic tree that showed how closely related the isolates were. If carried out further by other labs, the results could possibly be used in medicines for humans.

Anzjon said, “If able to classify the pathogens, antibiotics could be used in pharmaceuticals.” She has been invited back to participate in research next year as well. In the future, Anzjon hopes to work in the field of public health epidemiology.
Waddell completes tortoise research

Joe Waddell, a recent UHP graduate, completed research on gopher tortoises for his Honors Capstone project.

Waddell, who is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Conservation Biology at the University of Central Florida, conducted his capstone research with GSU Biology professor Lance McBrayer.

According to Waddell, his interest in tortoises stemmed from the University Honors Program when he contracted a course on Animal Behavior. It was there that he began to work with McBrayer for a small project on box turtles.

According to Waddell, the two looked at the tortoises’ carapace, which is the top part of the shell, and its pattern of change over time. Waddell and McBrayer looked at over 170 gopher tortoises, documenting each of them with two photographs: one from the side of the turtle as well as one from the top.

Comparisons were made between juvenile and adult tortoises to see how the carapace changes shape as the tortoise ages.

Waddell said, “I’ve always been interested in herps (herptiles) and worked at the Raptor Center for most of my undergraduate coursework, so I’ve always been working with animals like that.”

Team-taught Honors Enrichment Seminar on the Holocaust

Lisa Costello, an Assistant Professor in the Writing and Linguistics Department, and Carolyn Bryan, an Associate Professor in the Department of Music, are using the arts to teach students about one of the cruelest times in human history.

The Honors Enrichment Seminar entitled “Bearing Witness to Genocide: Discourses of the Holocaust” uses memoir, music, literature and art to memorialize and give a historical account of the Holocaust during World War II, where over six million Jewish people lost their lives.

According to Costello, both her and Bryan study the events of the Holocaust. She said that they are both committed to teaching about this topic and wanted to bring the course into a full semester setting so students could experience learning and writing about the Holocaust for a full 16 weeks.

The course focuses particularly on the Holocaust during World War II but also entails contemporary genocides such as those in Rwanda and Darfur.

During the course of the semester, students do several book presentations and conduct a major memorialization project at the end of the course that combines research, reflection and creative work into an appropriate piece for a Holocaust Remembrance Day event that will take place in Spring 2009.

“A seminar is a much better learning environment than a large class for the simple reason that it has flexibility,” said Nicholas Hoad, a sophomore History major who is a student in the seminar. “I have personally seen entire class periods sacrificed so that students could have a lively debate and have their questions answered.”

Costello said that she would like to teach the course again on the Georgia Southern campus. She has also taught other courses on the Holocaust in study abroad programs in Austria.

“I always like to reiterate that it remains important to teach about the Holocaust, though it is an event that is long past,” Costello said. “It is an event that marks a negative turning point for human civilization in many respects, and learning about it must remain an ongoing endeavor.”

Without territory, people have no sovereignty, and, therefore, no power over their own lives.

In the fall of 2007, Dr. Krista Wiegand of the Department of Political Science taught an Honors Enrichment Seminar which challenged students to analyze the roots of conflicts across the globe. To understand war, one must first comprehend the role of territory, and Wiegand’s students spent the semester analyzing the importance of land to individuals and nations and the disputes that arise over territory.

“Dr. Wiegand’s class opened my eyes to the complexities of international disputes and has caused me to look at current events in a whole new way,” said sophomore 1906 Scholar Christine Dalton.

Wiegand is an expert in international territorial disputes. Her research examines why it is so difficult to settle territorial disputes, what causes countries to use militarized force in territorial disputes and how leaders use territorial disputes to mobilize domestic support. She holds a Ph.D. from Duke University where her studies focused on International Relations and Security Studies.

Kayla Whaley, a sophomore 1906 Scholar stated, “I learned more in Dr. Wiegand’s class than in any of my other classes this semester because it truly allowed for a discussion-oriented, intellectually stimulating atmosphere that also fostered fun and friendship.”

“I spent time living in Lebanon, doing research, teaching Political Science courses at a university there, and studying Arabic. I’ve also spent time traveling in the Middle East in Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Turkey and Morocco. I met with leaders of Hezbollah to interview them about their “resistance movement” in the south of Lebanon against Israel. It was a rare opportunity for me to interview them about their views and gain insight into the minds of a group like Hezbollah,” said Wiegand, on her fascinating and remarkable background.

Of her scholarship on territorial disputes, Wiegand stated, “I became interested in studying the Middle East when a good friend who was from Lebanon lost her family in the civil war there. I was curious about how people were so willing to kill other people in the name of religion, nationalism and for territory. As a result, my specialization is now in terrorism, causes of war, and territorial disputes.”

The University Honors Program serves as a pivotal link between undergraduate scholars and world-class faculty, creating a framework for educating the next generation of globally competent leaders.
Starting this fall, Georgia Southern University has developed a new approach to the orientation course for first term freshmen. The new First Year Seminar course will allow students to choose from a variety of courses centered on themes chosen by professors with a genuine passion for a specific topic not normally covered in the curriculum. The University Honors Program was instrumental in piloting this approach in the Fall 2007 semester. This fall, the honors options for freshmen First Year Seminars are:

- Calculus and Beyond in Everyday Life: The Great Theorems in Mathematics
- Surviving the Technology Revolution
- Robotics
- Science and Ethics: Medicine
- Literacy
- American Fiction and Change
- Developing a Global Perspective
- Ethical Leadership
- Finding Happiness in a Consumption Oriented World

Enhancing Honors in the Major

In Fall 2007, the University Honors Program launched new College/Departmental Honors sequences to provide mentorship as students prepare honors theses or honors capstone projects. The pilot programs for 2007-2008 in the Department of History, Department of Political Science, and the College of Education established seminars for juniors and seniors to prepare innovative research projects.

According to D. Brett Curry, assistant professor of Political Science and co-coordinator of the Political Science departmental Honors sequence, “These departmental honors sequences have clearly enhanced the student-centered focus of the honors program. By enabling students to research topics of their own choosing in depth, students have the ability to work closely with faculty members, share research experiences and develop close friendships with others in their cohort.”

New Honors sequences are being added this Fall in Biology, Construction Management, Civil Engineering Technology, International Studies, and Health and Kinesiology as part of a long-term plan to enhance honors in the major through colleges.

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Enhancing the First Year Experience

1210 course replaced with First Year Seminars

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Following upon the success of the Bell Honors Program, first established in 1982, the University Honors Program at Georgia Southern began in 1998 with only twenty-three students. Together, the two programs enrolled the academic elite of Georgia Southern University. Since then, the Bell Honors Program has been phased out and replaced by the 1906 Scholars who represent Georgia Southern University’s most academically accomplished students.

At the beginning of the Fall 2008 semester, the University Honors Program consists of 343 students, the largest number of honors students at anytime in the history of Georgia Southern University. These students make up not only a community of scholars, but a dedicated group who provide service and leadership throughout the campus and community.

This Fall the University Honors Program welcomes the largest number of new students in history: 161. These students, faculty, staff and administrators celebrated the new academic year at the Honors Welcome Banquet.
The United Student Honors Association (USHA), started the new semester with a cookout at the RAC. USHA plans social and community building events dedicated to supporting honors students.
Honors in action

Honors in the ARTS

Celebrating the work of honors artists

Clockwise, from top:

“Untitled” Paper Mosaic
Jennifer Dukes, Junior Art Major

“Frayed Friendship” Oil
Elizabeth Debban, Junior Art Major

“Tabula Rasa” Watercolor
Steven Roberson, Sophomore Art Major
You are (here)

This section will be reserved in every issue for updates on honors alumni.

We welcome responses from Bell Honors Program and University Honors Program graduates. Send us your information, send us photos, or drop a line to say hello.

Send alumni items to sengel@georgiasouthern.edu

Stay in touch.
Honors Students traveled to Coprome orphanage in El Progresso, Honduras in March 2008 for the Honors Alternative Spring Break. Here, children at the orphanage demonstrate their membership in the Eagle Nation. To learn more about the trip, see page 12.

Photo by Bob Frigo