

The Honorific

Alfred University
Honors Program
Annual Student-Run Newsletter
Fall 2022-Spring 2023



The Honorific

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From the Desk of the Director

By Dr. Juliana Gray

When the Fall semester begins, we welcome our students with a lot of celebration, with events and activities filling every green space on campus. The Honors Program hosts our orientation for first-year students and the Death by Chocolate party; for two days, students and faculty spill across the Honors House lawn, eating, talking, meeting Big and Little Siblings. There's an air of excitement, of community gathering together to kick off the new year.

But in the Spring, the new semester just happens. Students return to their dorms in January, wrap themselves in heavy coats, penguin-step across icy sidewalks, and disappear into overheated buildings.

This year, we decided to change things by hosting a Winter welcome party, the equivalent of Fall's Death by Chocolate. I floated the idea past the Honors Advisory Board in August, explaining that I wanted a party with some kind of food bar where students could load up a bunch of toppings, maybe a taco bar, but I was leaning toward something cozier like pancakes – "Pancakes and pajamas!" shouted Danielle Gagne. "Yes! We can wear onesies!"

And so, on the first Sunday after students returned for the Spring semester, we hosted our first annual Honors Pancakes & Pajamas party. Since the Honors House lawn was somewhat frozen, we gathered in the Knight Club. Students in sweatshirts and flannel pajama bottoms (aka normal class attire) lined up for scrambled eggs, pork and vegan sausage, pancakes, and toppings – lots of toppings. Chocolate syrup, whipped cream, chocolate chips, white chocolate chips, strawberries, Oreo bits, M&Ms, Reese's Pieces, and gummy bears piled high on our plates.

Some people ate so much sugar their teeth must have ached. They laughed and chatted and posed for pictures in front of a multicolored lighted backdrop. New Honors students who'd been admitted during the Fall semester got their first good look at the community they'd joined. It was fun and cozy and exactly what I'd hoped for, a new tradition to welcome our students in from the cold.

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Zine Machine

By Catlin Jonas

Zine Machine is an Honors class that meets once a week to discuss zines, a popular form of publication that anyone can create. Zines are paper booklets that use poetry, collage, narrative, and drawing as a form of personal expression. In this class, students learn about zine history, and create their own zines to distribute to the rest of class. By the end of the semester, any student who takes this course will have their own zine collection, consisting of the creations of their classmates and themselves.

Zine Machine is co-taught by an artist, Sara Kramer and a librarian, Kevin Adams. They cover a variety of zine topics, including queer, goth, manifesto, and punk. When creating a zine, students have many previous authors to refer to for inspiration. There is a reserve of zines at Scholes Library, where the class is held, and many online zine catalogs exist as well.

My favorite zine that I've created in this class is a zine titled, "Flying." Our assignment was to create a manifesto, which is a rectangular booklet that expresses ideas or rules on a certain topic. Mine was a poetic twist on a manifesto that worshipped the feeling of flying while riding on a horse's back. I printed pictures, cut things from magazines, and created my own drawings to illustrate this zine. It really got my point across of a horse's stride being my addiction, and I think it was my best work in this class because it had the most meaning to me.

Zine Machine has taught me so much about the creations of past communities and cultures. I have enjoyed making something creative every week for homework, instead of turning in papers. With all the stresses of college, sometimes I do not use my artistic talent as much as I should. This class really helps me keep creating art, and unique art at that. I recommend this Honors class for anyone who wants to explore their artistic talents in different ways of expression.



Zines made by students

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Honors Trip to see Hamilton

By Amelia Gebhart

For the Honors trip this year, we had the opportunity to go see Hamilton live at the Rochester Broadway Theater League. As a freshman, I didn't know what the Honors trips are normally like, but this was a great experience. We started off the trip with dinner at The King & I Thai restaurant where there was a variety of food choices, and a lot of new foods were tried. Then we got back on the bus and drove the rest of the way to the Auditorium Theater. At the entrance there were lots of souvenirs that we could buy before heading up to our seats. The performance was amazing with a live orchestra and outstanding singer/actors/dancers accompanied by two sign language interpreters. As Honors students, this was a great opportunity for us to see a great show and connect with our fellow Honors students.



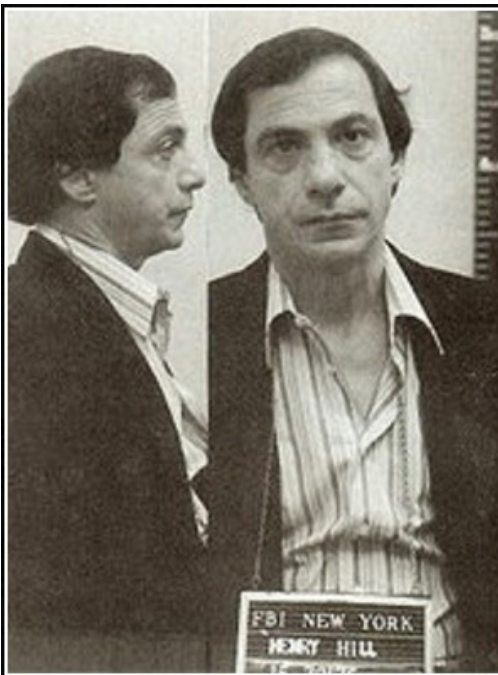
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American Gangster: The Mafia in the Mind of America

By Samantha Smit

When I first saw the “American Gangster: The Mafia in the Mind of America” class listed as an honors seminar, I would be lying if I said I wasn’t excited about the promise of watching movies in class. However, from the moment I sat down and Dr. Reginio began speaking, I knew from the way his eyes lit up and his voice rose and fell in excitement that it was much more than that. I had no experience with “mafia” movies and had been utterly ignorant to how important these movies are to American culture and the development of the Italian mobster stereotype in the media. But more than that, this seminar has delved into what exactly makes people so attracted to these movies.

The answer to that is the “outlaw” in American society. One of the reasons people find these movies so intriguing is a balance of the satisfaction from someone finding justice outside of the corrupt American justice system, but also the natural curiosity people have towards violence. We started with some of the earliest mob movies such as “Musketees of Pig Alley” which laid the groundwork for the movies we see today. We continued through time as the movies were released, making sure to analyze how this mafia trope has developed. From the classics such as “the Godfather” to the very popular tv series “the Sopranos,” we have explored the many ways in which directors have played with this romanticized and equally disturbed genre. Every week brings something exciting to watch and dissect, as well as a related article presented by someone different each time. Whether you are mafia movie obsessed, or a total newbie like me, this course offers something for everyone to learn and explore.



At the age of 12 my ambition was to become a gangster. To be a wiseguy. Being a wiseguy was better than being President of the United States. To be a wiseguy was to own the world.

— Henry Hill —

AZ QUOTES

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American Gangster: The Mafia in the Mind of America

By Sophia Carter

We all know that cinema is a lens of the surrounding world. With that comes the various genres that depict such a world. Mob movies are considered to be one of America's most dominating genres. This reveals the motivations of mobsters and the ideas of materialism as well as the romanticization of violence. A life from the outside which seems so seductive and luxurious but in actuality it is a life of death, constant violence, fear and questioned morality.

In this seminar taught by Dr. Robert Reginio, student will watch various mobster movies considering ethnicity and assimilation within American society. Each film will be viewed from various lenses including the mobster genre, a critique on capitalist America and the human psyche and motivation. As stated prior in this class various films will be shown such as Scarface, The Godfather, Goodfellas which have already been watched and discussed as well as American Gangster and The Sopranos. Each film is broken up between no more than three classes. After each section for that day is shown a conversation is held. A critical analysis and comparison is given on each work as it releases themes of the other works and society as a whole. Before this conversation takes place a student is tasked with reading about the underlying motivations and hermes surrounding a writing piece that relates to that week's film. During this presentation the student is tasked with summarizing their designated writing piece and taking views from that outside source and connecting it to that week's piece as stated prior but is also used as a jump off for the class conversation to be had. Overall this is a good class not necessarily for those with a familiarity with the mobster genre but for anyone intrigued by not only the lifestyle but the motivations and underlying concepts of ethnicity, violence, capitalism and race relations within America.



Students gather for some friendly competition for Dr. Gagne's Dungeon & Dragons Seminar

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**PARENTAL
ADVISORY**
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Bad Words

By Alyra Rain

Almost everyone swears- even your professors. Especially your professors. Where did “bad words” come from, and why do we care about them? What even counts as profane? How did our modern expletives evolve, and are they really all about religion or physicality? These are a few of the basic ideas expanded upon in Bad Words. The class covers everything related to foul language that Dr. Robert Myers can think of, from Chaucer to decorative gourds to Tipper Gore.

Students discuss a variety of resources related to each week’s inappropriate topic, like childhood, sexism and discrimination, history, and more. All are viewed through a relentlessly anthropological lens, and all involve some serious profanity. We also listened to “WAP.” Discussions are generally passionate and animated, and final presentations can be about any obscene topic that interests students, in any reasonable medium. This riveting seminar is f*cking awesome (see Week Seven for an exploration of censorship).



Students representing Honors at an Admissions event

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The Aliens Did It?

By Izzy Rabiner

When you are confused or curious about something about the world, what is the first idea that comes to mind? Aliens! (obviously). This is what the course, “The Aliens Did It?” is all about. From Leonardo DaVinci’s artistic genius being influenced by aliens to global pandemics being caused by aliens coming to Earth and spreading their diseases to us, this class invites students to be imaginative in their ways of thinking.

It is interesting and almost comical to see all of the bizarre ideas that the creators of the Ancient Aliens show come up with, and you will always be leaving Professor D’Angelo’s class having had a good laugh. The final project of this course is to make your own Ancient Aliens episode about Alfred University itself.

Diving deeper into the history of this University and connecting unusual occurrences that students find within the campus to aliens makes this course so much fun. Who knows, maybe the Honors Program was created by aliens!



The Servitor group gathers outside of the Honors House for the last meeting of the year

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The Science and History of Alcohol

By Sydnie Tutmaher

Have you ever wondered what process goes into the formation of beer or wine? In this seminar with Professors Garrett McGowan and Christopher Romanchock, you take a dive into alcohol. You are given both the science and history behind the beer and wine we have today and how it's made, hence the name.

In this class, you are also provided with the opportunity to go to a brewery and a winery. During the class time, as to not impact other classes, you take a ride to one of the facilities and are able to taste test what is made and learn about the process it takes to make what you have in front of you. Not only do you get to go to a brewery or winery, but you are also able to make your own beer and wine with the professors to further your understanding of the process and for a fun activity to do.

Unless you are 21, you are unable to drink what you make; however, once you turn 21, it will be available for you to try. The course ends with a final project of making coasters and/or writing papers on a wine, beer, and liquor of your choosing.



At The Brewery of Broken Dreams, you are given a sample of beer, a glass of water, and chips

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Students volunteering at Living Acres



First annual Honors Pancakes and Pajamas party!



Group discussion during Honors orientation

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Spring 2023 Seminars

Alfred E. Nigmas

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

Quest for Knowledge: Dungeons & Dragons

Seasoned players, Dungeon Masters, and newbies can join this honorific quest for knowledge. Adventurers in this course will read not-so-ancient scrolls on topics related to the literary roots of Dungeons & Dragons, the societal impact of the game, the "backlash" from parent and religious groups, racism, sexism, the role of magic in society, role-playing and identity, morality, and why no one really likes kobolds. Join weekly quiz-quests for experience points (i.e., grades), play a bit, and create a character sheet based on your analysis of a well-known persona for the final.

American Gothic: The Films of David Lynch

Sex and violence: as American as apple pie, right? The films of David Lynch give us a gorgeous and disturbing view of the shiny surfaces and dark murk at the heart of American life. Stylish like Hitchcock, more daring than Tarantino, Lynch's movies are as unique and (wonderfully) perverse as your most stunning dreams. In this course we will watch and discuss Lynch's movies with appropriate divergences into dream interpretation theory, the world of sexual and social deviance, and Hollywood (the world of deviant dreams). We'll watch: *Eraserhead*, *Blue Velvet*, *Twin Peaks* (select TV episodes and *Fire Walk With Me*), *Mulholland Drive*, and *Inland Empire*. A final project will consist in students writing a short scene (dialogue and description) inspired by Lynch.

The Science of Baking

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

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Spring 2023 Seminars cont.

Mathematics & Machine Guns

What was the logistical genius of Napoleon Bonaparte? How much total force would one warrior have experienced being a part of a shield wall? This course, co-taught by a professor of mathematics and a former infantry platoon leader in the United States Army, will cover vignettes in military history when the numbers behind what happened can give us a better understanding of the situation overall. The course will be lecture and discussion-based with students submitting reflections throughout the course and the final project being a presentation made by the students on a connection between mathematics and an aspect of warfare.

Printed Matter

This course will explore the recent history of printed matter through social media and popular culture. Students will get a hands-on approach in all aspects of designing, stenciling, printing and reproduction. From printing on clothes to objects, we'll cover a variety of methods around print and marking. We'll discuss color theory, practical design elements, Photoshop and all the current trends shaping modern prints and impressions. A final critique of your printed matter in the form of a site-specific project that will showcase your vision and talents. Materials and lab usage will be provided. Students of all backgrounds and levels of experience are welcome.

Adverse & Protective Child Experiences

This course will explore how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can negatively influence development contributing to both physical and mental illnesses. It will also explore how protective and compensatory childhood experiences (PACEs) can mitigate the detrimental effects of adverse ones. Information from a broad range of fields will be discussed, including child psychology, parenting, psychopathology, neuropsychology, health psychology, medicine, sociology, and education.

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Kicking off the new year at the Honors House with cake and honorary member, Sabi