



Spring 2013

# The Sage Page Spring 2013

Winthrop University Honors Association

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# The Sage Page

Spring 2013

## Recent Developments in the Honors Program

- Service Learning Updates
- Updates from Current Students
- Why Annie–Laurie Wheat Teaches Honors
- Honorable Mentions
- Honors with International Experience

## From the Honors Program Director

Dear Honors Students, Alumni, Faculty and Friends,

Welcome to our latest edition of The Sage Page. Inside our newsletter you will see that our Honors Program students have been actively involved in honors courses, honors symposia, research, and social activities. Three articles are particularly interesting because they give the perspectives of a freshman, a senior, and an alumna of the Honors Program. Two stu-

dents are spotlighted, Matthew Neal who will be graduating this May, and Amber Schilling who studied abroad in India last spring semester. The Honorable Mentions section of the newsletter highlights some of the conferences attended by students along with other activities. As always, I want to thank each student who contributed to this edition, particularly Griffin Glaze, the newsletter editor who worked on the entire edition. I want to also

thank honors alumni for keeping us updated on your interests and careers and to please contact us about any updates you may have by completing the form on the



Kathy Lyon, Ph.D.  
Honors Program Director

back page or contacting us at the address located there. Enjoy!

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## What Honors Has Done for Me

*Mirielle Smith*



Miri at Stonehenge while on her study abroad trip to England made possible by the Geraldine Hurley Trammel Fellowship for Study and Travel.

The Honors Program brought me to Winthrop, and, outside of a few misadventures in the dining hall,

I have never regretted the choice. Like most honors freshmen, I benefitted from the early move-in day, and

most especially the pizza party that night. I met my first friends at Winthrop that night. Later I was encouraged by my Big and several other upperclassmen to run for office. Because of their support, I have served as a WUHA! officer for the past three years, first as treasurer, then as newsletter editor, and finally as vice president. I have had the chance to provide these same opportunities for many other honors students and many opportunities for service to the community and Winthrop as a whole. Honors has positively impacted my life in many other ways as

well. My experiences in the program and the encouragement I received from upperclassmen and Dr. Lyon helped me submit a paper to the Southern Regional Honors Council Conference in my sophomore year. I have since presented at SRHC again, at the Winthrop University English Undergraduate Research Conference, the Big South Undergraduate Research Symposium, the Southern Writing Center Association Conference, and at the Comics and Popular Arts Conference at Dragon\*Con. Of course, credit must go to my profes-

sors and hopefully to my writing, but the support of the Honors Program gave me the confidence to apply.

My honors thesis has also been an important part of my life here. As an aspiring screenwriter, I chose to write a creative thesis in the form of a screenplay. In addition to the support of my thesis committee, I received the Geraldine Hurley Trammel Fellowship for Study and Travel Abroad to do research for my screenplay, which has greatly benefitted me as a writer. The inspiration of travel-

ing abroad in Europe and the push of having a thesis deadline combined perfectly. I love Winthrop. I have had wonderful teachers and met wonderful people outside of the Honors Program. I have written critically and creatively outside of the Honors Program and have had fascinating classes outside of the Honors Program. But the first people I met, my first friends, and the first people to encourage me in my honors and non-honors academics and extracurricular activities during my time at Winthrop were in the Honors Program.

## Why I Teach Honors....Annie-Laurie Wheat

*Mirielle Smith*

Annie-Laurie Wheat is a professor of theatre in the Department of Theatre and Dance. Professor Wheat has an M.F.A. in drama and theatre from the University of Georgia; is an active member of the National Association of Schools of Theater (NAST), the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival (KC/ACTF), and the Southeastern Theater Conference; and primarily teaches Acting 1 and Script Analysis at Winthrop. During the fall 2012 semester she taught five classes: three sections of Acting 1, a joint honors and non-honors Script Analysis, and one section of ACAD. Professor Wheat has taught THRT 210H Honors Script Analysis and an honors symposium on ancient Greek theater entitled "It's All Greek to Me," as well as having had honors students contract her courses in the past.

"The majority of the people [honors and non-honors] come every time, the majority of the people take all the quizzes," but there is a difference between the engagement of the two groups according to Professor Wheat. "Honors students typically write better quizzes...The honors students—not all of them, but some of them—are much better at class discussion and weighing in on topics...more willing to state their opinions, which is so much fun." Of course, honors students are not perfect and do not score perfectly

on every quiz, but Professor Wheat simply declares that this "just proves that the honors students are human, so that's good. That's a good thing!" She reports that although honors students can become less attentive—"normal"—as the semester progresses,

*"It was refreshing...to have a group of honors students in 'It's All Greek to Me' willing to just do something different and interesting and jump into it, and when I had to travel I didn't have to worry because class still met without me...I loved it. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven!"*

due to their heavy work loads and various commitments, she finds them "delightful" in the beginning of the semester and again by the end. They are absolutely more engaged and committed. Most significantly the students are interested in "learning for learning's sake."

This is why Professor Wheat loves honors classes and continues to teach them. "It's always fun to have a group of students who really like to study and work," she reflects: "I find it amazing that everybody doesn't have that drive. I just don't get it." Profes-

sor Wheat reports that in teaching the symposium, her first all-honors course, "it was refreshing...to have a group of honors students in 'It's All Greek to Me' willing to just do something different and interesting and jump into it, and when I had to travel I didn't have to worry because class still met without me...I loved it. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven!" The students selected which play to perform and sent regular reports on days when their professor could not attend. "It was great."

Professor Wheat's love for her honors students extends beyond the classes she teaches: "I love when they're out presenting [papers] and going places and doing things that your average student doesn't always do." She explains, "It really just kind of makes you proud that you're part of that, that you're part of that group...and you can feel pride for the university that Winthrop has the Honors Program and has students who are representing the university so well out in the further reaches of the world."



*Annie-Laurie Wheat,  
Department of Theatre  
and Dance*

# Honors Symposia

## *Griffin Glaze and Rachel Burns*



*Griffin dressed as Ellen Degeneres for her presentation on women in the media who have impacted her.*

This past fall, I was able to take the “Women in Media” honors symposium with Dr. Kareema Grey. Before ever taking this course on women in the media, I knew that the media’s portrayal of women was not always the most positive.

The pressures from the media to be thin and beautiful in order to attain status in the world are definitely not unknown to me. Even the women who are smart and strong are judged more harshly by their physical appearance than men.

What surprised me the most about the course were the ways that the media’s portrayal of women can affect the way that women perceive themselves. The media that people are receiving is still

very controlled by men, so the media often shows males perceptions of woman and not who women actually are. When I graduate from Winthrop in May 2013, I will be leaving school with a degree in graphic design. I am hoping to get a job in some design firm or advertising agency. In that business, I want to try to be an agent of change within the business to make sure that women are being fairly represented within the media that I am helping to create.

If there is a greater awareness about the subject of females in the media, then there will be more people who have the ability to effect change. The first step to solving the problem of negative images of women in the media is to make both men and women more aware.

- Griffin Glaze

When Dr. Nakia Pope announced that he would be leaving our Comics, Art, and Aesthetics honors course midyear, there was consternation in all our faces. How would the class continue? Would we still get credit? What would

our new workload be? Our concerns were needless, however. After installing a webcam in our Courtyard class room, classes continued as they had before, full of discussions based on readings and interpretations of our texts. We missed our professor but over Skype it was if he had never left. I respect Dr. Pope for his handling of the course material. In a class full of nerds, an argument about superheroes could easily dominate class time. Dr. Pope walked the tenuous line between boring and irrelevant well, letting his own enthusiasm for the topic soak into the atmosphere while restraining himself enough to push us towards deeper analysis and understanding. We were forced to ask ourselves what we believed art was at its core, a question I still haven’t answered fully, and more. I signed up for a class on superheroes, what I got was a class that made me take a second look at a whole new medium, opening my eyes to rich stories that deserve to be read and not all of them about a chauvinist in spandex.

- Rachel Burns

# Spring 2013 Honors Courses

## *Abby Carroll*

Spring 2013 is an exciting semester for students who are looking to complete the 1-credit-hour symposium class required for the honors degree. Three symposia are offered: Amish Culture, LGBT Studies, and The Beatles: A Music and Popular Culture Revolution. Amish Culture, taught by Dr. Mark Dewalt, who has authored a book on Amish education in the U.S., seeks to educate honors students on both the way of life of the Amish and the doctrine behind it. The class includes presentations from guest speakers, a

simulated day in an Amish classroom, and a field trip to an Amish community near Rock Hill. LGBT Studies, taught by Dr. Kelly James, who specializes in scholarly work concerning sex and gender systems, challenges honors students to examine social and legal challenges faced by this minority group in society. Topics covered include non-heteronormative identity formation and diversity within the LGBT population. The Beatles, taught by Professor John Timmons, invites honors students to explore eight specif-

ic years of The Beatles’ work, and to consider it to be not only music, but historically significant pieces of art as well. The class requires students to recognize the interaction of historical events of the 1960s with the cultural contributions of these revolutionary artists. While these three classes are quite different in content, one thing is certain: honors students engaging in these courses have intriguing and unique academic experiences to look forward to this semester!

# WUHA! A Semester in Pictures



Above: Honors students spend a day weeding and planting in the Rock Hill Community Garden. Left: Amber Shilling sells doughnuts to raise money for the WUHA! Relay for Life Team.



Left: WUHA ladies share the love at the Valentine's Dessert Party. Above: Christine Davenport makes a Valentine for someone special.



Above: Destinee Johnson and Karly Long plant seeds, while Abby Carrol shows her enthusiasm for gardening. Right: Anna Eckenrode, Austin Bischoff, Julia Greiner, and Connor Renfro, collect canned goods for the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen.



## Fall Service Learning

*Destinee Johnson*

This past fall, WUHA! continued its strong tradition of providing service learning opportunities to honors students. WUHA! members volunteered in the Rock Hill Community Garden on Make A Difference Day. October 27 marked the largest annual day of giving in America with an estimated three-million volunteers participating

across the country. WUHA! worked in the garden along with other Winthrop organizations and staff from the Winthrop Office of Career and Civic Engagement. The produce from the Community Garden will be donated to the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen. WUHA! members also supported the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen by sponsoring two

canned food drives at Earth Fare. The spring semester will provide even more opportunities for WUHA! to help and lead others. We will continue our fundraising efforts for the Winthrop School in Rocha, Nicaragua and kick off our Relay for Life team planning and fundraising.

## Why I Chose Honors

*Austin Bichoff*

Since I first started to attend Winthrop University, I've noticed a vast number of freshmen make the choice to join the Honors Program. As soon as I noticed this delightful occurrence, only one question came to mind: Why did they choose to join the Honors Program?

Melanie Hicks, one of my Honors ACAD students, answered, "My mother encouraged me to join the program." This seemed to be a common answer among many of the new honors freshmen. Many freshmen chose to join the Honors Program because their parents had

some influence in their decision. "It was always my choice to join the Honors Program, but my mom was a major influence in making that decision," said Brittany Langston, freshmen and member of the Honors Program. "She explained the perks of joining, such as early registration, early move-in, and being a person of high standing within the community." With those advantages, who wouldn't want to join? Parents have always been influential to the choices their children make. In this case, it was for the good of watching Brittany succeed in college.

Some joined the Honors Program because they had been honors students their entire lives. "I've been in honors classes since 8th grade, and I've taken AP and IB classes since then," said Crystal Thomison, member of the Honors Program. "I wanted to meet likeminded individuals, so we could bounce ideas off one another and learn as much as possible." As honors students, I believe we share Crystal's desire to be with students who share similar values and have that insurmountable need to learn.

## What Honors Continues to Do for Me

*Melody Chapman, 2012, Honors Program Degree with International Experience*



For my first law school exam, I wore my "go geek" WUHA! t-shirt. I desperately wanted a bit of cheer for myself and the other stressed

out first years frantically typing next to me. Winthrop was my home for four years, and I couldn't have chosen a better place to start my higher education. I am very thankful to Winthrop and the Honors Program, because I developed good habits that I still utilize today. Every time I have to think in depth, write to substantiate a point, or research a topic I'm using skills that I honed at Winthrop. The Hon-

ors Program gave me great opportunities to utilize these skills and practice until I had it just right. Besides the academic benefits, I found that WUHA! gave me great mentors and amazing friends. I'm still very close to people in the Winthrop community, and it means a lot knowing that they carry on the torch. Now wherever I go, and whatever I do, I carry a little bit of Winthrop with me.

*Melody Chapman, class of 2012, is currently a 2015 JD Candidate at Mercer University.*

## Honorable Mentions

*David Thackham*, a junior multimedia journalism major, is attending a global leadership conference in London during his study abroad experience in Ireland this semester.

*Ashley Moore*, a junior English secondary education major, is presenting at the South-eastern Writing Center Association conference and Winthrop University English Undergrad conference.

*Marissa Nichols*, a junior human resources major, was elected president of WUSHRM, Winthrop Society of Human Resource Management and will be attending SHRM's national conference with the organization in June in Chicago.

*Julia Greiner*, a junior athletic training major, was assistant chief student marshall for December graduation and will be chief student marshall for graduation in May. Julia also went to SEATA (South Eastern Athletic Training Association) student symposium/conference in Atlanta.

*Destinee Johnson*, a junior biochemistry major, presented her undergraduate research at the Suddath Symposium at Georgia Tech this February.

## Academia Achieved : Reflections on Fall 2012

*Amber Schilling*

This year started off great as the upperclassmen honors students helped to move in our largest incoming class yet. At around 80 students, this year's freshman class came in motivated and wanting to participate in WUHA!, filling up the Honors Center at our two Welcome Week events! Our Harry Potter themed t-shirt was a big success, and many of the freshmen signed up to participate in our Bigs and Littles Program. Everyone had a great time at the reveal, where Littles had to find their Bigs based on themed-costumes such as superheroes, colored socks, or wearing WU gear.

Many of our Bigs and Littles pairs attended Fall Fest in

October, again in costume as we hosted our first ever costume contest! Desserts were enjoyed and games of musical chairs played. Our annual t-shirt party also allowed honors students a chance to kick back and craft with their friends, and we had a great turnout at our service learning projects this semester. WUHA! members helped clean up the Rock Hill Community Garden and held a very successful can drive at Earth Fare.

Plenty of freshmen also attended the special Honors Advising Session hosted by Dr. Peter Judge, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Kathy Lyon and other Winthrop faculty members

who take a special interest in the Honors Program came out to share stories, tips, and tricks with honors students in the College of Arts and Sciences. It was a valuable experience for honors students, especially freshmen, to hear from professors and other students about how to succeed in the Honors Program.

Overall, this has been a great semester. I've really enjoyed being able to see the growth in the Honors Program and WUHA! this semester, and it warms my heart every time I see someone wearing an "Academia Achieved" t-shirt! I can't wait to see what next semester will bring for us!

## Student Spotlight: Matthew Neal



*Above: Matthew Neal, president of the math NERDS (Nu Epsilon Rho Delta)*

Matthew Neal is a senior education major with a focus in mathematics. Though his achievements in academic competitions and research have made him one of the top students on campus, it is his passion for both teaching and mathematics that truly puts him above the rest. Matthew came into Winthrop University as a South Carolina Teach-

ing Fellow, a program that recruits high school seniors into the teaching program and provides development opportunities through state grants. Neal will be enrolling in the MAT5 program at Winthrop to get his certification as a mathematics teacher.

The summer of Neal's freshman year, Winthrop held a research program in cryptography where he worked specifically with the applications of a particular type of functions known as elliptic curves. From his work over the summer, he was able to publish an article entitled "A History of Elliptic Curves and Their Applications" in *The MathMate*, the official online journal of the South Carolina Teachers of Mathematics. He also gave a

presentation at the Mathematical Association of America sectional meeting in Tuscaloosa, Ala. "I attribute a large portion of my success to the guidance of the Winthrop mathematics department, and I am very thankful to them for that," Neal reflects.

Along with his mathematics research, Neal has also taken part in several academic competitions. He has competed in the CO-MAP mathematical contest in modeling, 2012 ACM programming competition, and 2013 Quiz Bowl. "I'm a competitive person, but these competitions are really about challenging yourself rather than trying to beat the other people in the room," Neal said.

## Honors With International Experience: *India*



Since my return from the subcontinent in May, people always ask me, “So, how was India?” Usually, I’ll answer some combination of, “Beautiful, wonderful, terrifying, challenging, insane, horrifying, the most amazing experience of my life.” Summing up four months in a country so very different from America is not an easy task. I could talk all day about the beauty of India and her people, the rarity of cheese, and the hassles of living in a country of 1.6 billion people.

I’ve never seen any place as chaotic and crazy as India. When you step outside each day, you never know what might happen. You don’t know if the rickshaw driver will know the restaurant you want to go to, if the ATM will be working, or if a protest will interrupt your class. You especially don’t know if the bus is going to come to take you the two and a half miles to class, or if you’ll have to walk the whole way under the blistering Indian sun. India likes to keep you on your toes. It’s a constant overload of the senses and your patience. From the crowds of colorful saris and beeping rickshaws to the burning heat to the cultural boundaries that influence all of your interactions with Indians, living in Hyderabad as a young American woman was a challenge, to say the least.

The one thing that didn’t challenge me was the actual studying part of study abroad. Compared to

a regular semester at Winthrop, my time at the University of Hyderabad was a breeze. The hardest part about school was just getting to class because my classes were five kilometers from my hostel, and the bus system was not to be depended upon. My initial fear at being in classes for Indian graduate students disappeared quickly, and I spent the rest of the semester not worried a bit about school. I knew I’d never have another time in my life where I was so free to do anything I wanted.

And I did do anything I wanted. I took a trip to the Bay of Bengal and got sun poisoning after spending a marvelous day on the beach at Pondicherry. I stayed in a \$14 hotel in Chennai with blood on the walls. I babysat the most remarkable child ever, Tanvi, the daughter of my Hindi teacher, Bhavani. I visited the Taj Mahal, the Pink City of Jaipur, the Gateway to India (in both Delhi and Mumbai!), Charminar, and some of the best museums in India. I went out to fancy sari-clad dinners with my friends and ordered meals I could never afford at home. I played Holi on campus. I visited the Dharavi slum in Mumbai and witnessed the true face of poverty. I chopped off my own hair one night and did a decent job at my own haircut. I went on a rock walk and had an asthma attack climbing a giant rock hill thing. I bartered for kurtas and saris in craft villages and went pearl shopping in Hy-

derabad, which is known as the City of Pearls. I did yoga on the balcony under the stars, getting eaten alive by giant mosquitoes the whole time. I rejoiced over cheese and real desserts. I yelled at rickshaw drivers who tried to rip me off and experienced acts of kindness that, although they were small, meant so much to a girl 9,000 miles from home.

Living in India was not easy. There were times when I wanted nothing more than to get away from that place as soon as possible. I was lonely and missing Winthrop at times, I faced situations I’d never encountered before, and there was always the fear of living in a country rated as one of the most difficult to live in as a woman, let alone study abroad. But my time there has given me things I will always treasure, which made all the troubles more than worthwhile: new friends, wonderful memories, seven saris, a profound sense of patience and ability to just “go with the flow,” and a deep appreciation for everything that I have as a woman going to college in America. I’ve seen the flipside of the life I live, and I thank my lucky stars for the gifts I have been given.—Amber Schilling

*Amber studied abroad in the spring of 2012. Top Left: Amber visits the Taj Mahal. Middle: Amber dressed in a traditional Sari. Right: Amber after participating in Holi.*



