



# THE DISTINCTION

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## SPRING 2023

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Omaha





Excellence  
 Engagement  
 Inclusion  
 Discovery  
 Integrity  
 Maverick Spirit

## Our Mission

The mission of the University of Nebraska at Omaha University Honors Program is to provide an enhanced and supportive learning environment responsive to the educational needs of highly able and/or exceptionally motivated undergraduate students. Our mission accords with the goals of UNO's Strategic Plan.

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# Celebrating Spring 2023 Honors Graduates

**Ella Aerni**

College of Public Affairs and  
Community Service  
Major: Social Work  
“Meeting Sensory Processing  
Disorder with Sensory  
Integration”  
Advisor: Ciera Warden

**Michael Aguilar**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Molecular and  
Biomedical Biology  
“Education of Physician  
Assistants and the  
Implementation of Medical  
Humanities in the Context of a  
Pandemic”  
Advisor: Timi Barone

**Carly Andersen**

College of Public Affairs and  
Community Service  
Major: Gerontology  
“Facing Loss: An Exploration of  
Attitudes of  
Hospice Patients Nearing the  
End-Of-Life”  
Advisor: Mark Gilbert

**Danny Anderson**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Mathematics  
“Let’s Make Patterns!: The  
Symmetry of the  
Rubik’s Cube”  
Advisor: Griff Elder

**Preston Anderson**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Kinesiology  
“Cardio Assessments of College  
Students at UNO”  
Advisor: Edward Pantan

**Molly Andreasen**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Biology  
“Veterinary Access: Urban vs  
Rural”  
Advisor: Travis Robbins

**Nate Andres**

College of Information Science  
and Technology  
Major: Cybersecurity  
“Managing Werner Enterprises  
Application  
Security Assessment”  
Advisor: Greg Hoff

**Thomas Anthone**

College of Information Science  
and Technology  
Major: Computer Science  
“The State and Use of Virtual  
Tutoring”  
Advisor: Harvey Siy

**Ashley Beamon**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Medical Humanities  
“How Does Birth Control  
Impact the Wellness of People  
who Menstruate?”

**Samuel Blaser**

College of Information Science  
and Technology  
Major: Cybersecurity  
“Analyzing Threats to the  
Infrastructure  
of the Internet”  
Advisor: Greg Hoff

**Regan Catterson**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Elementary Education  
“Utilizing Differentiated  
Instructional Strategies  
to Teach Three-Digit Addition  
and Subtraction”  
Advisor: Sandra Shillingstad

**Jack Cosgrove**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Psychology  
“An Unfiltered Reality: The  
Impact of Social  
Media Usage on Personal  
Satisfaction”  
Advisor: Jonathan Santo



**Jennifer Davis**

College of Engineering  
Major: Civil Engineering  
“Enhancing Security at Baxter  
Arena”  
Advisor: George Hunt

**Shelby Decker**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Elementary Education  
“Teaching Story Problems to  
First-Grade Students  
Utilizing a Variety of  
Differentiated Instructional  
Strategies”  
Advisor: Sandra Shillingstad

**Braydon Dreher**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Molecular and  
Biomedical Biology  
“Investigating Novel  
Chemotherapeutics Against  
the Parasite Toxoplasma gondii”  
Advisor: Paul Davis

**Makayla Eberly**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Communication  
Disorders  
“Comparing Language and  
Motor Learning Skills  
Across Two-Year Olds  
According to Phonological  
Productions, Word-Shape  
Complexity, and Motor  
Learning Tasks”  
Advisor: Shari DeVeny

**Hayden Ernst**

College of Engineering  
Major: Computer Engineering  
“Artificial: A Study on the use  
of Artificial  
Intelligence in Art”  
Advisor: Lucy Morrison

# Celebrating Spring 2023 Honors Graduates

**Alexandra Espinoza**  
College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences Majors:  
Secondary Education; Spanish  
“Analyzing the Effectiveness of  
Graphic Organizers in an  
English Class”  
Advisor: Saundra Shillingstad

**Karoline Ford**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Biology “The Impact of  
Glacial Proximity on the  
Elemental Composition of  
Leachate Derived from  
Sediment Weathering” Advisor:  
Kelly Deuerling

**Jake Garrett**  
College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences Major:  
Secondary Education “*A  
Midsummer Night’s Dream*:  
Integrating Research-Based-  
Instructional Strategies to Assess  
Student Learning” Advisor:  
Saundra Shillingstad

**Zander Gibney**  
College of Information Science  
and Technology Major: IT  
Innovation  
“Go With the Flow: The Flow  
State and the Improv  
Storytelling Game ‘And Scene’”  
Advisor: Ann Fruhling

**Grace Giebler**  
College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences Major:  
Elementary Education “Utilizing  
the Touch Point Math Strategy  
to Increase Math Proficiency”  
Advisor: Saundra Shillingstad

**Ben Goeser**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Majors: English; History  
“Humanizing History: Applying  
Media Storytelling to Lived  
Experiences”  
Advisor: Jodeane Brownlee

**Annie Goodman**  
College of Public Affairs and  
Community Service Major:  
Emergency Management  
“Predicting the PEBKAC  
(Problem Existing Between  
Keyboard and Chair): A  
quantitative analysis of how  
demographics affect personal  
cybersecurity awareness”  
Advisor: Tom Jamieson

**Abigail Guinan**  
College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences Major:  
Communication Disorders  
“Evidence-Based Practice as an  
Undergraduate Clinician”  
Advisor: Kristina Peterkin

**Vanessa Gunderson**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Neuroscience  
“Impact of Financial and  
Demographic Factors on the  
Severity of Dental Caries and  
Treatment Procedure” Advisor:  
Andrew Riquier

**Keirstin Harkleroad**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Sociology “A College  
Breakup’s Effect on Mental  
Health: The Role of Social  
Support”  
Advisor: Kelly MacArthur

**Maverick Harrold**  
College of Communication,  
Fine Arts, and Media Major:  
Music Performance “Chopin  
Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 58: A  
Structural Analysis”  
Advisor: Kristin Taylor

**Maeve Hemmer**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Political Science  
“Analyzing Intergroup  
Dialogue’s Impact on  
Perceptions of Inclusion  
Among Students”  
Advisor: Herb Thompson

**Katie Hill**  
College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences Major:  
Secondary Education “Universal  
Design for Learning (UDL):  
Integrating UDL Instructional  
and Assessment Strategies to  
Assess Student Learning in a  
Middle School Classroom”  
Advisor: Saundra Shillingstad

**Renee Horsley**  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Psychology  
“The Downfall of Daniel  
Fitzpatrick”  
Advisor: Herb Thompson

**Sophia House**  
College of Public Affairs and  
Community Service Major:  
Emergency Management “Data  
Analysis of Fire Safety and  
Preparedness in Collegiate  
Student Residence Halls”  
Advisor: Tom Jamieson

**Elizabeth Howard**  
College of Business  
Administration Major: Business  
Administration “Accounting  
Analysis of a Large Nonprofit”  
Advisor: Aaron Knape

**Marisa Kilzer**  
College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences Major:  
Elementary Education  
“Engaging Students in  
Differentiated Math Lessons to  
Impact Student Learning”  
Advisor: Saundra Shillingstad



# Celebrating Spring 2023 Honors Graduates

**Sydney Klucas**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Majors: Chemistry;  
Neuroscience  
“Correlation between stress  
coping styles and genetic  
variation in adenosine pathway  
of zebrafish”  
Advisor: Ryan Wong

**Laine Knowles**

College of Communication, Fine  
Arts, and Media  
Major: Studio Art  
“Ingredients for an Invisibility  
Cloak or a Blindfold”  
Advisor: Howard Paine

**Sarup Kunwor**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Neuroscience  
“Methamphetamine: A Story of  
Disrupted Functional  
Connectivity, Brain Damage,  
and Structural Impairments”  
Advisor: Ernest Chivero

**Madi Lane**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Majors: Mathematics;  
Economics  
“Creating the Optimal Wedding  
Seating Chart”  
Advisor: Fabio Torres Vitor

**Emily Lorenzen**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Elementary Education  
“Using Formative Assessments  
and Linguistic Representations  
in Math Instruction”  
Advisor: Saundra Shillingstad

**Kelsey Lowe**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Molecular and  
Biomedical Biology  
“Enrichment vs. Isolation: The  
Bigger Factor”  
Advisor: Erik Garcia

**Jedadiah McFarland**

College of Information Science  
and Technology  
Major: Computer Science  
“Form Auto Generation”  
Advisor: Harvey Siy

**Kalina Mavrov**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Biomechanics  
“Gaze During Turning in Older  
Adults”  
Advisor: Carolin Curtze

**Abigail Mitchell**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Majors: Biology; Spanish  
“Difficulties Faced by Non-  
Native English  
Speakers in Healthcare Settings”  
Advisor: Cecilia Tocaimaza-  
Hatch

**Braden Myers**

College of Business  
Administration  
Major: Business Administration  
“Research and Development of  
a Consolidated Training  
Curriculum”  
Advisor: Justin Korth

**Joy Ondrak**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Secondary Education  
“Implementing Nonlinguistic  
Representations in Language  
Arts”  
Advisor: Saundra Shillingstad

**Alaina Pihlgren**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Elementary Education  
“Impact of Differentiated  
Instructional Strategies  
on Student Comprehension of  
Fractions”  
Advisor: Saundra Shillingstad

**Korryn Plantenberg**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: English  
“Intersectional Feminism Within  
the Works of Octavia Butler”  
Advisor: Kristin Girten

**Megan Quinn**

College of Communication, Fine  
Arts, and Media  
Major: Studio Art  
“An Exploration of Pattern:  
British Wildflowers”  
Advisor: Howard Paine

**Meena Rahmanzai**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Molecular and  
Biomedical Biology  
“Student Support: Investigating  
How Different  
UNO Organizations Approach  
Helping Students”  
Advisors: Dustin Wolfe & Katie  
Mahar

**Luis Rodriguez**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Majors: Economics;  
Mathematics  
“Optimizing Wedding Venue  
Selection Process Using Mixed  
Integer Programming” Advisor:  
Fabio Torres Vitor

**Bailey Rucker**

College of Arts and Sciences  
Major: Biology  
“Beyond Puberty: How  
Artificial Hormones  
Impact Depression in Young  
Adults”  
Advisor: Jodi Kreiling

**Garrett Schliep**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences  
Major: Kinesiology  
“The Study of a Generalized  
Fitness Education  
Program’s Effect on Personality  
Traits”  
Advisor: Kelsey Blunck



# Celebrating Spring 2023 Honors Graduates

**Sarah Sedivy**

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Political Science

“Systematic Barriers to Success: The Impact of Redlining on Modern Educational Outcomes in Omaha Public Schools”

Advisor: Terri Crawford

**Sameer Siddiqui**

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Psychology

“On versus Off-Campus Living: An Exploration of College Students’ Mental Wellbeing”

Advisor: Marshall Kole

**Kaitlin Steinauer**

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Geology

“Fault Influence on Castle Mesa Fracture Node Pattern”

Advisor: Harmon Maher

**Hailey Stessman**

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: English

“Żółty Dom: A Digital Archive of a Grandmother’s Legacy”

Advisor: Adrian Duran

**Noah Stickrod**

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Biology

“An analysis of the cytotoxic effects of BPA and DEHP on human epithelial cells”

Advisor: Kristen Johnson

**Catie Tangeman**

College of Education, Health,  
and Human Sciences

Major: Elementary Education

“Teaching Time and Graphs with Differentiated, Interactive Instructional and Assessment Strategies”

Advisor: Sandra Shillingstad

**Matthias Walters**

College of Arts and Sciences

Majors: Chemistry; Biology

“Immunostimulatory Peptide Activity Against Toxoplasmic Bradyzoites in Mice”

Advisor: Paul Davis

**Cheyenne Weis**

College of Arts and Sciences

Majors: Psychology; Medical Humanities

“Art and Rehabilitation: An Analysis of Art in the Treatment of Individuals Recovering from Substance Use Disorders”

Advisor: Sarah Nelson

**Tori Williamson**

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Chemistry

“The Effects of Prior Calculus Classes on Success in Organic Chemistry”

Advisor: Sachin Nedungadi

**Ben Yanovich**

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Chemistry

“An Analysis of the Prevalence and Effects of Over-the-Counter Painkiller Abuse”

Advisor: Alan Gift



## Student Honors Convocation

### Undergraduate Major Honorees

*Honorees selected by departments in which they are majoring must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.33. They are chosen on the basis of academic achievement in addition to their contributions to the university and the community.*

Kaitlin Steinauer	Geology
Braydon Dreher	Molecular and Biomedical Biology
Sarah Sedivy	Political Science
Jack Cosgrove	Psychology
Abigail Guinan	Communication Disorders
Catie Tangeman	Elementary Education
Meg McCoy	Communication Studies
Carly Andersen	Gerontology
Zander Gibney	Information Technology Innovation
Elizabeth Howard	Economics

### Barry Goldwater Scholarship

*The Goldwater Scholarship Program, one of the oldest and most prestigious national scholarships in the natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics in the United States, seeks to identify, encourage, and financially support college sophomores and juniors who show exceptional promise of becoming this Nation's next generation of research leaders in these fields.*

Abigail Swoboda	Molecular and Biomedical Biology
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### Fulbright Scholar Program

*The Fulbright Program, the flagship international academic exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government, has fostered mutual understanding between the United States and other countries since 1946.*

Julia Cormack	English Teaching Assistant, South Korea
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## Learning Culture Through Food

Lauren Rezac and Sarah Sedivy

In March, Dr. Thomas Sanchez's honors class travelled to South Omaha to try the tacos served at the GI Forum — a place that Dr. Sanchez used to frequent during his own college experience. That being said, none of the students had visited this place before. Immediately upon arrival, the class began to gather that this trip would offer more Americanized tacos as opposed to traditional Mexican tacos. Outside of the actual food, the GI Forum was decked out in American Eagle and U.S. military memorabilia.

On the TVs there were Youtube funny video compilations playing, and the patrons present were speaking English. The students chose between beef, chicken, or "Mexican" tacos. Students observed that all of these tacos were filled with cheese, lettuce, and tomatoes along with their meat of choice. The food at the GI Forum is distinct from the offerings of places like Taco Bell or Taco Johns in that they seem more carefully and purposefully made; however, they were certainly also disparate from the authentic Mexican food that the students had been reading about in class.



A month later, the class once again went on an excursion to Taqueria Tijuana, a Mexican restaurant located within the heart of South Omaha and within the hearts of many who reside in the surrounding community. The restaurant offered a more "authentic" alternative to the Americanized Tex-Mex tacos previously consumed at the G.I. Forum. Spanish language could be heard everywhere from the sound of the radio, to the TV stations, to the conversations at neighboring tables. The décor was unpretentious yet displayed great care in creating an environment that reflected Mexican culture. For many in the class, the trip was their first experience visiting South Omaha and eating Mexican food that consisted of more than ground beef and shredded cheese. Many students felt their horizons expand and the desire to explore more of what the area has to offer in the future. The tacos provided literal "food for thought" as the meal facilitated discussions on what makes cuisine authentic, the impact of food on shared culture, and how restaurants serve as urban anchors in their communities. The experience of these shared meals as a class not only brought us closer together as students but also formed a closer connection to these small but integral staples of the community.



**Kaitlyn Nyffeler (left)** received the Honors Student Achievement Award and scholarship.

### Alumni Updates

*Kayla Rudd*, Spring 2021 Honors alum, was accepted to the genetic counseling program at University of Wisconsin - Madison

*Hannah Im*, Spring 2022 Honors alum, was accepted into medical school at University of Nebraska Medical College

# Everything APIA All at Once

Gabbi Anzalone

“Everything APIA All at Once”, a play on the movie *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, was an honors colloquia class offered in spring and taught by Professor Gene Kwak. This course aimed to explore the current literature of Asian Pacific Islander Americans and to open students to the richness of APIA authors. One of the most unique parts of the class was that everything we read had been published within the last three years by new and notable APIA authors, and we even got to have a virtual meeting with Joseph Han, the highly awarded author of *Nuclear Family*.

The culmination of the semester was a group podcast project. Everyone split into groups of three to record an approximately 15-minute podcast, which had an objective of going more in depth with a topic that had been previously explored in one of the works we had read throughout the semester. The beauty of the podcast was its informality and how casual conversation could lead to connections to firsthand experiences. My group included Zoe Fosbinder and Olivia Pfeiffer, and our podcast centered around the mental health of Asian American women in humanities-based graduate programs. This was in conjunction with Elaine Hsieh Chou’s *Disorientation*, which centered around Ingrid, a Taiwanese woman working on her Ph.D. This satirical book was partially in response to the 2015 controversy of a white author using a Chinese pseudonym to get published.

Another student in the class, Jace Westphal, enjoyed "reading and discussing novels, essays, and collections of short stories written by contemporary Asian and Pacific Islander American authors. These works touched on topics such as generational trauma, identity, militarism, academia, and so much more. To wrap up the semester, students made a podcast that aims at generating discussion and research over a topic highlighted in the work. My group also chose *Disorientation*, Chou’s satirical novel written about a Taiwanese American woman struggling in the 8th year of her PhD. We explored the topic of representation in academia, specifically examining white supremacy in the university system." In our final class, we came together to share our experiences with our podcasts, snacks from the Asian Market, and the camaraderie associated with finishing a wonderful semester.



Students gathered to plant and decorate succulents for Earth Day.



## Scribble on a Succulent

# Facing Loss: An Exploration of Attitudes of Hospice Patients Nearing the End-of-Life

Carly Andersen



This project is a qualitative study focusing on analyzing current hospice patients' self-identity through arts-based research, specifically portraiture and drawing.



The drawings will act as a unique way to challenge participants' views of themselves and offer a tangible record of the interactions between the artists and patients through portraiture.



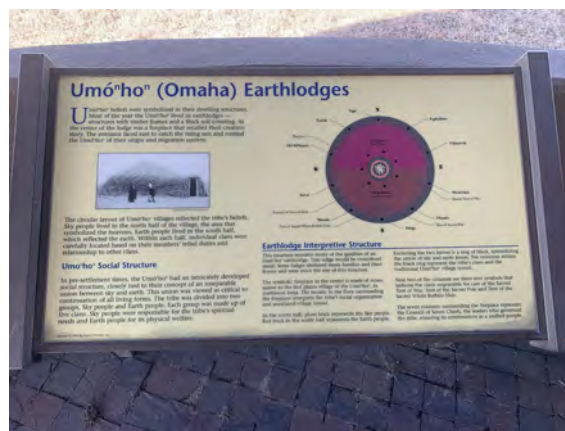
# Macy Reservation Field Trip

Emily Schultz

This spring semester, I was a student in the Honors Colloquium course *Umągpcpeg'čpf 'Umąkpcdkkɔ́*.

In this course, professor Barbara Robins guided us in exploring the importance of and connection to food, the environment, and cultural heritage for Native Americans and other Indigenous peoples across the United States and beyond. Dr. Robins also organized a field trip for an educational experience opportunity in visiting Macy, NE.

We toured the main areas of the Umó'no' Nation Public School, where teacher and JAG career specialist Ricardo Ariza walked us through their work at the school and its importance. Afterward, we ate lunch at the nearby earth lodge on Nebraska Indian Community College's South Campus.



At the school, we learned about all the community work and educational programs they are leading for their students to help students learn more about their ancestral heritage alongside application skills from Ariza. These programs have a project-based learning and experiential knowledge approach, which research shows is beneficial for knowledge retention and practical application. These projects include the school's seven-acre farm, farmer stands with produce from the said farm, a future mural -- buffalo hide "Winter Count" project -- and more. At the earth lodge on the nearby college campus, we ate a delicious lunch of beef and vegetable soup made from vegetables from the farm and had fry bread and cupcakes. Dr. Rudi Mitchell, an elder of the Umó'no' Tribe and a former professor of Native American studies at Creighton University, blessed the meal and shared some history of the Umó'no' tribe with us. Afterward, we shared family recipes and associated stories, as per our work in the course, which helped us grow more as a community of learners. When we were leaving Macy, we stopped at the nearby Blackbird Scenic Overlook, where we saw at least fifteen bald eagles "fishing" in the Missouri River and learned more about the area and background of earth lodges, both in the physical structure and their interpretative structure, as well.

As a future mathematics educator, I am thankful for the opportunity to attend a field trip like this to help expand on what we are learning in the Sustenance and Sustainability course. A plaque at the Blackbird Scenic Overlook had a quote from Eunice Woodhill Stabler, also called Thátawesa, who said "Education is the salvation of my people." Her words are incredibly moving and stand true, as their focus on project-based learning and STEAM outcomes ensures students opportunities and success in becoming strong indigenous leaders and learners.



The new Kiewit Luminarium on the Riverfront highlights this incredible STEAM-focused work with an exhibit and learning experience dedicated to the Umó'no' Nation Public School and their farm. In all, I have become even more passionate about my work in education and hope to continue to carry with me all that I have learned in my practice, as all current research-based pedagogy supports this beneficial style of project-based learning!

# Understanding Catholicism

Candace Sweetmon

*Catholicism and Religion: Catholic Social Teaching*, has had a great impact on both my personal and educational journey. From the beginning of the semester, I have found the content both challenging and interesting; each assigned reading has forced me to think deeper about both my own Catholic faith and how I should respond to the world around me. Class discussions have given me the opportunity to gain a better understanding of how others respond to the Catholic faith, and about opinions that differ from my own. The open, discussion-based class has provided my classmates and me the opportunity to voice our thoughts and questions about the topics facing our world.

In recent discussions, I have been able to make connections between my major, business, and the topics at hand. With the application of Economics to a humanities/philosophy course, I have gained a greater appreciation for the work done in these departments; this has led me to consider adding a religion minor to my course work, a decision I would never have considered without this class.



Though I love the course work, I would be remiss if I did not also write of my appreciation for our professor, Bharat Ranganathan. His genuine care for his students and their success has been an important part of both my and my classmates' semester. With regular, individual office-hour meetings, he has come to know each of us personally; I don't feel like a face in a large lecture hall or an eight-digit student ID to him. As another example, we were given personal and in-person feedback on our midterm papers, which was extremely helpful as most of the class, including myself, are first time philosophy and colloquium students. In class, he makes sure to ask the opinions of specific students that he feels may have insight to topics through their experiences outside of the classroom or through their majors.

Classes are filled with his immense knowledge, thought-provoking questions, and, of course, occasional comedic comments. With the help of my wonderful classmates, insightful professor, and rewarding course work, I have come to understand the basics of philosophical thought and gained a better understanding of one of largest religions in the world. Without understanding the lens others look through, how can we grow closer to those in our community; without this kinship, how are we to provide for those less fortunate for us and show kindness to all?

*"The open, discussion-based class has provided my classmates and me the opportunity to voice our thoughts and questions about the topics facing our world."*



## Musical Connections with Dr. Gabriel

Zoe Euteneuer

The African American and Jewish music honors colloquium is taught by Dr. Jeannette Gabriel, the director of the Schwalb Center of Israel and Jewish studies. As a scholar with a special interest in the histories of marginalized groups, Dr. Gabriel teaches the class in a way that shows the entire complex story between the Black and Jewish communities in America. Throughout the course of the semester, the class has been guided through the relationship between the two communities, starting from the early days of Tin Pan Alley and ending with the modern influences of American hip hop music. Through the use of videos and articles, students are shown both instances of cooperation and conflict between the two communities, and how this relationship manifested in music. Projects were assigned throughout to give students a chance to voice their own thoughts on the provided material; all ranges of opinions are discussed in full and given their own validity, and varying opinions among the students are respected and encouraged.

For me, this class has been eye opening. Dr. Gabriel gives her students broader terms and concepts to help them discuss marginalization in a much more real way, and it has allowed me to better understand and talk about the influence marginalized groups have had on American culture. It has also revealed to me the nuances and symbolism that I had before missed in some of the music I grew up listening to. Truly, the class opens the door to understanding worlds that would have otherwise remained hidden to most UNO students. I was certainly surprised by the long and complicated relationship between Black and Jewish communities. Without Dr. Gabriel's class, the very connection between the two groups would have remained unknown to me.



**Sandra L. Shillingstad, Ed. D.** was the 2022-2023 awardee for Outstanding Honors Faculty



**Jack Cosgrove and Navya Khandavalli** were awarded Outstanding Student Leader Award for the 2022-2023 school year



Spring 2023 **Teacher Scholars Academy** graduating class. Teacher Scholars Academy is a select group of high-achieving teacher candidates who embody leadership qualities and commitment to their communities. Those pictured also completed all of the required coursework to graduate with Honors.



# Policing

Alex Becker

In the honors colloquium, “US Police: Function and Future,” our class has learned about the police’s role in society, especially regarding their involvement with community. As part of the class, we were encouraged to participate in a ride-along with a police officer to learn about policing in practice. Following the ride-along, we were asked to talk about our experience in class to connect concepts we were learning in the classroom with real-life policing.

I took part in a ride-along with Officer Schuster of the Omaha Police Department (OPD). I learned a lot from him and his past experiences, even though he did not have to respond to any calls while I was with him. On a typical night shift in downtown Omaha, Officer Schuster’s patrolling consists of breaking up fights, taking drunk people to drunk tanks or hospitals if needed, and taking homeless people violating laws or causing disturbances to different shelters or mental health living spaces depending on circumstances like weather or their mental state.

Officer discretion is an important part of policing and I saw this in practice during the ride-along. In some cases, like civilians speeding a few miles over the speed limit or a one-to-two-month expired license plate, officers have the ability to make decisions when it comes to giving someone a ticket. In other cases, officers do not have an option; for example, people engaging in illegal activities (drugs or alcohol) in an Omaha Public Park after the park closes. Although I did not see a lot of action on my ride-along, I learned a lot about police officers that correlated what we had been talking about in class. It gave me a good perspective on how to look at police officers when they come up in the news as police officers are constantly working to serve and protect our community in ways we do not always hear about.



High Art, Low Art attending a Puccini opera in Omaha for their class



Honors Student Association collecting heart cards for kids at Children's Hospital



# Honors Contract: Hurtful Messaging

Abbie Russman

This spring, I completed an honors contract about hurtful messages for my Communication and Human Relationships class. In this class, we have covered many topics relating to relationships and what communication typically looks like within relationships that we experience. My professor, Dr. Toller, and I worked on this contract together. My goal was to create a presentation about the topic of hurtful messages with half of the presentation being dedicated to information and half for discussion.

To begin, I did some reading from our class textbook and found some more information from an online textbook. What I discovered are ten different types of hurtful messages that can be used in relationships as well as the responses to these messages, such as informative statements, which contain information the other person does not want to know, and accusations, which criticize the other person. In addition, there are certain factors that influence how hurtful these messages are to the person who is on the receiving end of them.

From the different types I found, I came up with two different example scenarios involving hypothetical conversations about taking out the trash with my roommate. Dr. Toller also recommended that I find another example like a video to demonstrate these types of hurtful messages, so I found a clip from *High School Musical* that involved hurtful messages between Troy and Gabriella, the main characters and love interests in the movie. After showing that video clip, I talked through the types of hurtful messages demonstrated as well as the different responses to those messages that were present.

Additionally, Dr. Toller encouraged me to incorporate academic materials into my presentation. She gave me an article that one of her previous master's thesis students worked on regarding hurtful messages on Facebook. I covered a couple items from this article and asked some questions about it. To wrap up my presentation, I led a discussion with a few general questions about hurtful messages to the class.

Overall, I enjoyed working on this contract. Though this contract was not perfect and did not go as we had originally set in stone, I think I was able to effectively teach the class about this topic. Learning about hurtful messages lends itself to a practical application of being aware of what I am feeling and expressing myself in such a way that does not offend the receiver of the message. Additionally, being able to categorize hurtful messages will be useful in case I am offended by a comment someone makes but I am not sure why I found it offensive. Contracts are an effective way to dive deeper into a topic and gain a broader knowledge from the class.

*"Learning about hurtful messages lends itself to a practical application of being aware of what I am feeling and expressing myself in such a way that does not offend the receiver of the message."*

# Finding My Purpose: Volunteer Work at HETRA

Jaelynn Brenner



Everyone has a calling in life - what we are meant to do. It is up to us to discover our purpose. I found mine while volunteering at HETRA (Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy). When I started I did not know how important HETRA would be to me; I just thought it was going to be a way to stay around horses after my grandparents moved. I was terribly mistaken.

My grandpa and I share a love for horses. He had two on his farm. But when my grandparents made the difficult decision to sell their farmhouse, they had to re-home the horses. Their decision came right around the same time I quit volleyball after nine years of playing. Without my grandpa's horses or volleyball, I felt lost in my identity. Who was I? What would I do with all this free time?

I had heard of a therapeutic horseback riding place - a place called HETRA. After viewing their website, I realized I needed to learn more. Without me knowing, my mom also realized I needed something to fill my time. So on the night I was going to tell her about my volunteering interest, she came home from work to tell me about something she had discovered - a place called HETRA. At that moment, I knew this was going to be special.

Becoming a volunteer meant touring the facility, learning more about the HETRA program and seeing the various volunteer roles. Participants, anywhere from as young as two years or as old as ninety-two, benefit from HETRA's amazing physical, occupational and speech therapists. Participants love coming to HETRA to receive their needed therapy because they have the added benefit of interacting with a horse.

The very first shift I worked I was greeted with warmth and kindness from the staff, and it wasn't long before I was friends with one of the occupational therapists (OT). She took me under her wing, showing me not only the ropes of HETRA but what an OT does as well. With each session, I began to witness how they changed their participants' lives.

Before volunteering at HETRA, I did not know what I wanted to do for a career. All I knew was I wanted to help people, to make an impact on their lives. And I did *not* want to be a nurse or doctor. Then, the next thing I know, I find myself helping OTs with their more difficult participants, and creating new games for them to play, games that would continue to challenge them as they got stronger. I was falling in love with occupational therapy.

I started volunteering as a way to stay busy and still be around horses, but this journey has given me so much more than that. HETRA has completely changed me. I found my calling, my passion. Through my time there, I have discovered who I am, what I want to be, and where my future lies. Volunteering helped me find my purpose. Now find yours!

*"At that moment, I knew this was going to be something special."*

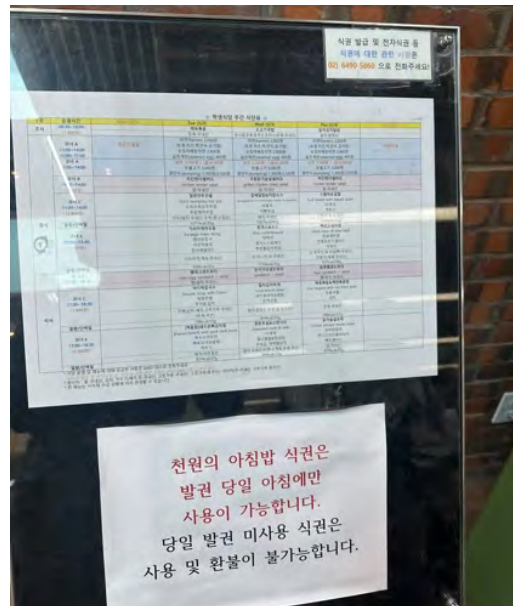


# A Week in South Korea

Kyley Bishop

Since I've been in South Korea for 2 months now, I have kind of figured out a good routine to balance my social life and school life. I consider Tuesday as the beginning of my week, because that is the first day I have classes for the week. On Tuesday, I have 2 classes that come right after one another. Lucky for me, there is a CU -a type of convenience store similar to 7/11- in the main dormitory building. Along with a CU, my campus also has a couple cafés in the student hall and international building. Lucky for me, on Tuesdays, all my classes are in the international building. So if I am unable to grab some lunch or a snack from the CU, I just hop over to the café during one of our class breaks and grab a coffee and a snack.

On Wednesday, I have one class that starts at 9am and goes until 12:50pm. That class goes kind of slow, but then I have the rest of the day to do whatever I want. I usually hang out with my friends and explore the different districts of Seoul. This last Wednesday, my friend and I decided to go to a phone case decorating café. At the café, we pay for a clear phone case, use of supplies, and different charms to decorate our phone case however we want. Afterwards, my friend and I got some smoothies and met up with more friends to go shopping in Hongdae. After a couple hours of walking around, my friend and I took the 45-minute subway ride back home.



On Thursday I have 2 classes. Since my classes aren't right after one another, I usually get lunch with my friend at the school cafeteria between. Then I go back to my dorm for an hour or two and relax or study for my upcoming class -which is my Korean language class. I actually spend the most time -out of all my other classes- studying for Korean language because it is a "put on the spot" type of class. So to escape embarrassment -which rarely happens anyway I try to prepare for the class as best I can. After the class is over, I usually get dinner with my friends. This time we decided to find a place to eat in Hongdae, but we were so hungry we got a quick corn-inspired snack at one of the food stands in the subway.



On Friday, I have no classes, so I tend to sleep in until -well, whenever I wake up really. I spend the day organizing my room, doing any necessary laundry, writing my blog -most of the time-, and hanging out with my friends. This Friday, my

friends and I visited a Department Store to buy and customize a pair of Converse shoes. My Saturdays and Sundays are usually pretty chill and similar. This weekend, I just relaxed and had some movie nights. I went to a couple malls, but nothing too big. This brings me to Monday. Monday is like my recovery day. Monday is when I do any laundry, make sure I have my homework done, organize myself for the beginning of classes the next day. I usually get dinner with one of my friends and we catch up on anything that happened over the weekend or with our roommates.

This is just a general outline of what my week looks like. What I can't put in my schedule is the spontaneous late-night snack runs or last minute dinners that happen between my friends and I. For example, in the middle of writing this, my friend texted me to see if I wanted to get dessert at a restaurant at the other side of the subway station. It's the spontaneous and random things that keeps it interesting.

After a couple hours of walking around, my friend and I took the 45-minute subway ride back home. The closest subway station is quite a small one and is about a 15-minute walk from the university's back gate. The 15 minute walk is through a neighborhood and is quite safe and always has good lighting. One thing about South Korea is that it is quite safe and there are CCTV cameras everywhere. In the neighborhood and around my university are a few stray cats, so it wasn't a surprise that we ran into one on our way back to our dorms.

*"What I can't put in my schedule is the spontaneous late-night snack runs or last minute dinners that happen between friends and I."*





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