



Honors Scholar Program



Dr. Wendy Chase

It has been an exceptionally active Spring Semester for honors students and faculty. In keeping with our mission to extend the learning experience beyond the classroom, our students participated in the prestigious Model UN conference hosted by Harvard in Boston; presented their research at the Southern Regional Honors Conference in Asheville; traveled to Nicaragua over Spring Break as part of a comparative politics course; and left their mark in the local community by performing a public art piece downtown at ArtWalk and hosting a beach clean-up at Punta Rassa. I hope you will join us on Thursday, April 20th at 5:00 pm in The Rush Library Auditorium for our thesis presentations and an art exhibition as we congratulate the largest graduating class of honors students in over a decade on their accomplishments.

Honors Scholar Features



Veronica Aguilera
Honors Scholar

One of my most memorable experiences in the Honors Scholar Program was my study abroad trip to the beautiful country of France, where I visited the city of Annecy with my fellow students in an honors French course. From touring the “Palais de l’Isle,” which is the second most-photographed place after the Eiffel Tower, to visiting local museums and historical sites, to eating crepes, and meeting students from all over the world—this study abroad

experience made me realize how much I love the French language and the unique opportunity of discovering myself while learning about a new culture.

My advice to incoming HSP students is to take advantage of every single one of the opportunities the Honors Scholar Program offers. Never think that you are not good enough or that you do not have the capability to accomplish important things. If you take advantage of what the program offers you, you will discover talents you never realized you possessed. While failure is always a possibility when you are trying to achieve greatness, do not let that fear undermine your motivation to continue moving forward with all your aspirations. Most importantly, do not forget to have fun and cherish the moments where you will make everlasting friendships.



Denise Ruiz
Honors Scholar

I began taking honors classes as an affiliate in an economics course. My experience in that class taught me that I am quite interested in the subject. Since I became a full member of the Honors Scholar Program, I have had a wide range of inspiring experiences. I am currently working on an honors thesis on political psychology. Last semester I took the Model United Nations course and we got to participate in the Harvard Model United Nations

conference where my class represented Laos. We met students from many diverse backgrounds and shared points of view. I am taking two co-requisite honors courses. The humanities class and a conceptual art class that have completely shifted perspective on contemporary art. Another highlight of my time in the Honors Scholar Program was the Nicaragua Study Abroad. My comparative politics class went to Nicaragua to collect data for our case study on Nicaraguan politics. We had the opportunity to go to the national assembly and interview people working there. We also interviewed an ex-Contra comandante who is now a political figure, several historical combatants, business owners, members of the FSLN party, the all women leaders of the Santa Julia Coffee Cooperative. We also met the President’s brother, Humberto Ortega, and Edén Pastora, a prominent political figure in Nicaragua and historical combatant. My time in the Honors program has really taken me out of my comfort zone and has been very impactful.



Comparative Politics Class Study Abroad Trip to Nicaragua

FSW



Alexis Knoebel
Honors Scholar

Spending my spring break in Nicaragua is an experience I'll never be able to fully describe with words. It was inspiring on a whole new level and has rekindled my love for politics in an incredible way. I got a chance to hang out with some of the most amazing and diverse people I have ever met, and two of the best professors/administrators I've ever had the privilege of knowing! This past week I met and marched with revolutionaries on both sides of the Contra War, and interviewed some truly incredible people. Meeting college students like me at La Universidad Politecnica de Nicaragua, UPOLI (Polytechnic University of Nicaragua) to participating in a discussion with Edén Pastora in the back corner of a restaurant, the message was resounding, "Political Participation is Important." Something that is often forgotten, is that we do not submit to our future, we create it, and, to be cliché and quote Ghandi, we must be the change we wish to see in the world. Having the opportunity to help out in the Santa Julia community and teach kids was transformative; I'd say they'd taught me a lot more than I could have ever taught them. I left this beautiful nation a different person with thirteen wonderful friends, and what might possibly be the highlight of my life. I can't wait to go back to Nicaragua.



Pictured across the top: FSW students spent time teaching English to children at the Santa Julia School.

Pictured above: FSW students with UPOLI (Universidad Politecnica de Nicaragua) students. Students had time to connect and engage in conversation with peers.

Pictured to the right: FSW students outside the Catedral de Santiago. The cathedral was designed and shipped from Belgium and survived the 1931 earthquake.

Honors Faculty Feature



Stuart Brown
Professor of Theatre

Storytelling is one of the defining traits of human beings. Stories allow us the benefit of experience without having to pay the *cost* of that experience. No other species has this luxury. The kinds of stories we tell shape who we are as individuals and shape our societies. Oscar Brockett puts it like this, “Theatre has perhaps the greatest potential as a humanizing force because much of it asks us to enter imaginatively into the lives of others so we may understand their aspirations and motivations . . . In a world given increasingly to violence . . . the value of being able to understand and feel for others as human beings cannot be overestimated because violence depends on dehumanizing others so that we no longer think of their hopes, aims, and sufferings but rather treat them as objects to be manipulated or on whom to vent our frustrations.”

I think all good directors are also teachers. Theatre is a collaborative craft and I think it is completely natural for a person who enjoys collaborative processes to teach. Because a considerable part of what I do is train people to work professionally in theatre, film, and television, I felt it was important to work in the industry for a significant part of my career before returning to academic life. One thing is certain, while working professionally I never stopped missing the intellectual life you have in a college. My students and my colleagues enhance my experience of life immeasurably.

I tend to be attracted to the work of artists that blur lines and are messy to classify. I’m intrigued by the work of choreographers like Pina Bausch and artists like Laurie Anderson. Today a whole new generation of artists are using an explosion of new tools to make work that finally allows the live, human performer true real-time interaction with their medium (theatrical technology). Projection, digital sound, amazing show control software, and the open source “maker” movement, have democratized access to some really incredible technology. These tools allow artists to extend their imaginations in surprising new ways. A great example of this is the work of animator Paul Barritt and writer/performer Suzanne Andrade for their company, 1927.

Honors Scholar Features

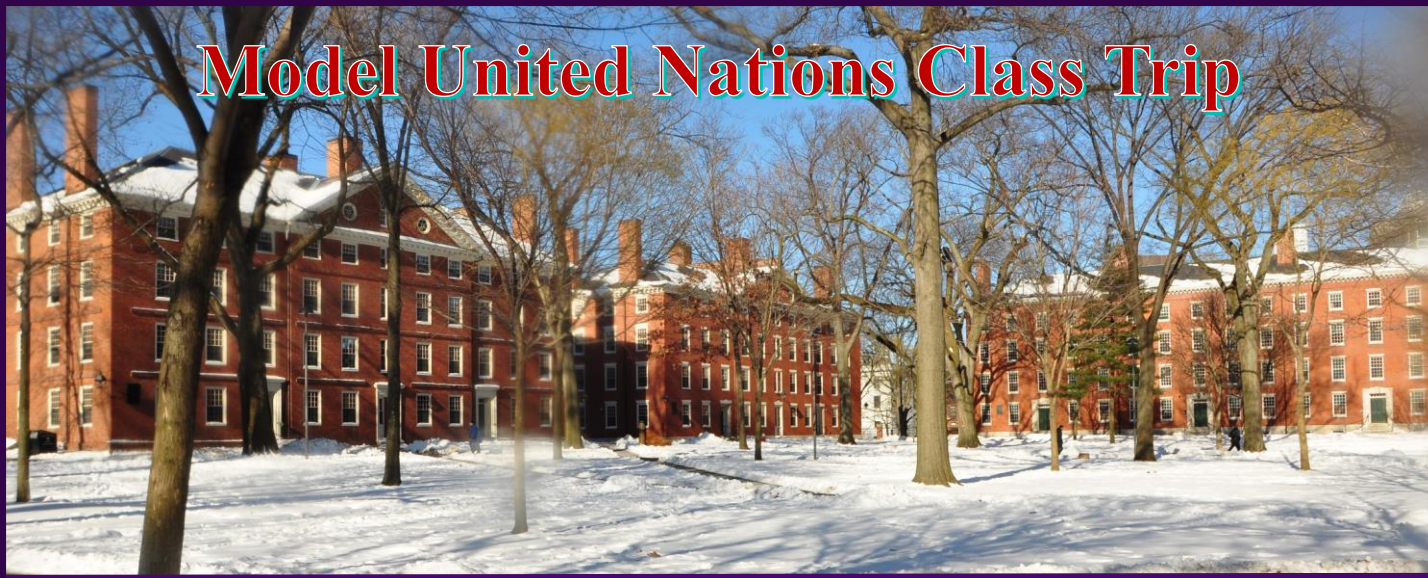


**Franklin
de La Cruz
Gomez**
Honors Scholar

I have been accepted into both the Stern School of Business at NYU and a small but distinctive liberal arts college in Massachusetts called Williams College. I am still negotiating my scholarship packages and considering which institution will lead me in the right direction. My experiences in the Honors Scholar Program helped shape my goals for the future and influenced my decision to pursue a degree in political science. I was able to study abroad in Nicaragua for my Comparative Politics class and this trip truly changed my life, both personally and academically. Not only did I make really great friendships with the students who traveled with me, but I have a much stronger sense of who I am after that trip; I really began to see my place in the world. Going to Nicaragua helped me feel confident in my decision to switch my major to Political Science and pursue a career that actually inspires me. Finally, making the connection about what career I will pursue has been invaluable and I was only able to do this because of HSP.

The relationships I built with my professors and my peers have taught me that I can do so much more than I ever believed that I could. Having access to quality professors like Dr. Chase and Dr. Baltodano as mentors who encouraged me has been amazing. In addition, because of the classes I took helped me realize my strengths in the social sciences and humanities. I have really found what it is that I like, excel at, and enjoy. One of the things I have gained from the Honors Scholar Program is the ability to just say yes to opportunities. I look forward to the future!

Model United Nations Class Trip

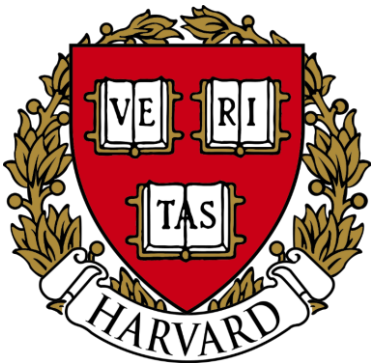


Founded in 1955, only a decade after the creation of the United Nations, Harvard National Model United Nations (HNMUN) is the largest, oldest, and most prestigious conference of its kind. Staffed entirely by Harvard College undergraduates, HNMUN brings over 3,000 students and faculty together from colleges and universities around the world to simulate the activities of the United Nations. HNMUN offers a unique opportunity to experience the challenges of international negotiation and diplomacy. Throughout the conference, delegates gain insight into the workings of the United Nations by actively participating in the resolution of important global issues. Participants will not only work with hundreds of other motivated college students with the common goals of furthering international awareness and building consensus, but will also work within a lively social setting.



Taking part in the Harvard National Model United Nations (HNMUN) Conference was one of the greatest experiences within my college career. Not only were there numerous discussions and debates expressing why our committee paper should pass, but this conference has allowed me to develop the skills of communication, analytical thinking, public speaking, and problem-solving. It was great to learn about how social media was a major issue for several countries not having the rights to publicize people's views and opinions. My biggest accomplishment from the experience was speaking in front of all the delegates, moderators, and judges. I enjoyed the experience and am currently finding ways to continue to be involved with MUN.

Ayesha Anklesaria
Honors Scholar



Honors Faculty Spotlight



**Dr. Myriam
Mompoin**
**Professor of
Humanities**

I have always been interested in cultural and interdisciplinary studies. I majored in French and Cultural Studies, and then pursued multidisciplinary studies that included film, ethnography, comparative literature, architecture, and gender. Even though I loved teaching French, when the opportunity to teach Humanities came up, I welcomed the opportunity

to incorporate all of these interests in a more structured basis. I'm always learning something new about the material I teach which is immensely gratifying and makes it seem less like work.

If there is one idea that I try to communicate to my students it is that there is no, singular or correct way to appreciate a work of art. In my humanities courses, we always start out with the notion of aesthetics and I encourage students to explore their reactions to all sorts of works and to find ways to articulate their ideas about what the work provokes in them. People are often intimidated by the task of critiquing a work of art beyond liking or disliking something. Often, it's just an issue of not having the technical vocabulary to describe the formal aspects of a work. So we start out with exercises that provide that vocabulary associated with the discipline (e.g. drama, music, film, etc.). This empowers students to feel confident about expressing their views and reactions in a manner that everyone will understand and that goes beyond the surface. My honors students have been so wonderful! They are open to learning about various topics and are eager to engage with the material. Preparation goes a long way when it comes to putting classroom time to the best use, and with my honors students, I never have to compensate for homework not having been done. It's been an amazing experience to see the creativity that they bring to presentations, whether in groups or for their research projects. I always learn so much from them. Honors classes are more of an exploration undertaken by all of us, that is what makes the coursework so enjoyable.



Dr. Bruno Baltodano
**Professor of
Political Science**

For me, the decision to become a Political Science Professor was intensely personal... I never met my father nor knew who he was until I was 30 years old. The moment when my mother finally told me who he was, and that the reason he was not there for us was that he had gone into the mountains to fight in the Sandinista revolution

and died in the process – was the moment that I began to look at politics in a different way. I realized that his decision to leave his family was political in nature and, in trying to find my father's voice, I thought the place to begin was in understanding the role that politics plays in our lives. This led me to go back to college. The first class I took was international relations, and I have never been the same person. I chose political science as a career soon thereafter; and I not only found my father's voice but also my own. If there is one idea from my discipline that I wish everyone could understand it is that political participation matters in a democracy. It matters in all political systems but more so in a democracy because, without citizen involvement in government, democracy erodes into... well, something else.

I have been blessed with numerous opportunities to lead trips to Boston and Nicaragua for my Honors classes at FSW. During those trips, Honors students have consistently impressed me with their dedication to the task at hand, their intellectual maturity and their enthusiasm for meeting new experiences and challenges. I will say, undeniably, that these trips with my Honors classes have been the most enriching academic experience of my life thus far.

Creative Engagement



This performance/installation is a collaborative piece that was created by students who took two honors courses in conceptual art that were offered as co-requisites at FSW this spring. Titled “Show Me What Democracy Looks Like”, it is a satirical response to what they perceive to be an absurd political landscape.

Engaged Stewardship

As aligned with the Honors Scholar Program mission, students engage in experiences that cultivate a commitment to social responsibility. This spring, Honors Scholar students volunteered approximately 50 hours working to clean and restore Punta Rassa Pass. Dr. Roz Jester organized the trip and shared her passion and knowledge for marine life while working alongside students.



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