

THE
Medallion



50 Years

Southern Miss
**HONORS
COLLEGE**

S P R I N G 2 0 2 4

LETTER from the DEAN

Dear Alumni and Friends,

What an exciting time it is to be a part of the Southern Miss Honors College, and what a pleasure it has been to serve as your interim dean. Everyone who knows me knows that I am passionate about our Southern Miss students, and serving in this position, as the Class of 2024—a class that started their Golden Eagle journey in the throes of a pandemic—walked across the stage at Reed Green Coliseum, has been an absolute highlight.

Of course, there have been additional highpoints this year, as well. The University inaugurated the 11th president of The University of Southern Mississippi, one of our favorite Honors College graduates, Dr. Joe Paul. The Honors College hired a new director of nationally competitive programs and awards to ensure that our students have the support they need to meet their goals. Thanks to a generous grant from the Jimmy A. Payne Foundation, we were able to open The Loft, a study space for Honors College students in Cook Library. And our Honors Abroad team traveled to Germany for the second year in a row and celebrated the new year at the Harbor of Hamburg.

We have also been preparing to celebrate big moments in the history of the Honors College. 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of University Forum, the University's premier speaker series. Be on the lookout for information on the 2024-25 lineup for Forum, a special Homecoming Forum celebration, and the opportunity to share your favorite Forum memories. Later in this issue, you will also get to hear from Byron Glick, a member of the first class of students to begin their Southern Miss journey after the Honors program officially became the Honors College. In 2026, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Honors College, the first Honors College in the state of Mississippi.

We invite you to celebrate our storied history with us over the next two years. From Forum (1974) to our first Honors classes (1965) to the Honors College itself (1976), we have much to celebrate and much to learn from you: the students, family members, faculty and friends, who contributed to the unique educational experience that is the Southern Miss Honors College. The entire Honors College team looks forward to celebrating these milestones with you.



Dr. Joyce Inman
Honors College

New Staff INTRODUCTIONS

As the Honors College continues to grow and develop as a community, we are thrilled to welcome a group of individuals who are passionate about education and dedicated to supporting our students. From admissions and advising to research and outreach, our new team members bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the Honors College. We are proud to have Dr. Rebecca Tuuri as interim associate dean, Mary Beard as the director of Nationally Competitive Programs and Awards, Kelli Sellers as academic advisor and coordinator of Honors research initiatives, and Helen Greene as coordinator of recruitment and strategic communication.



REBECCA TUURI
Associate Dean

Dr. Rebecca Tuuri recently joined the Honors College as the interim associate dean. She has loved being a part of the Honors College since arriving at Southern Miss in 2013 as an assistant (now associate) professor of history. Before starting in her new Honors College position in June, she served as thesis advisor for multiple Honors College students, taught Colloquium, and served on the Steering Committee for the Drapeau Center for Undergraduate Research. This past year, she has been working with the HON 300/301 (junior year thesis preparation course) faculty and our Honors

College Academic Advisory Council to revise our curriculum to be even more effective for our students. She also serves as the chair of the Planning Committee for the Undergraduate Symposium for Research and Creative Activity and assists with the administration of the Drapeau Center for Undergraduate Research. Through the UGS and DCUR competitions, Dr. Tuuri helps not only Honors College students, but all Southern Miss students who wish to take their scholarly research and creative activity to the top.

“My favorite part of working with Honors College students is helping them develop a sense of themselves as scholars. I love working with them as they think through what their potential research topics might be and then seeing that spark as they realize they can study something they are passionate about and share their original research with the world.”

MARY BEARD
Director of Nationally Competitive Programs and Awards

Raised in Hattiesburg, Mary A. Beard comes to the Honors College with 14 years of experience at The University of Southern Mississippi. She spent 11 of those years in Career Services, where she honed her skills in helping students excel in the areas of career development and professionalism. Mary describes her current position as director of Nationally Competitive Programs and Awards as an extension of her identity because helping students successfully articulate their stories almost comes second nature to her. “What I like most about this position is being able to work with students who already possess promising components, which can be molded into stories that successfully showcase their academic interests and achievements on a national or international level. They are truly capable of showing the world that they are golden, and that excites me.”

Prior to working at USM, Mary was the executive director of Aldersgate Mission. She holds a master's degree in psychology from Southern Illinois University, a bachelor's degree in psychology from William Carey University, and she is currently pursuing a second bachelor's degree in finance from The University of Southern Mississippi.



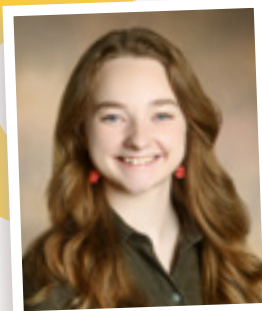
KELLI SELLERS

Academic Advisor and Coordinator of Honors Research Initiatives

Kelli Sellers is a Mississippi native who received her B.A. in English (2009) and her M.A. in English literature (2012) from Southern Miss. She went on to teach full-time here at Southern Miss, teaching a range of courses, including Composition, World Literature and Honors. She also served as the Basic Writing Program coordinator for over five years in the School of Humanities before making the move to the Honors College in June 2023. She and her husband, Tom, live in Hattiesburg with their two German shepherds and attend as many concerts as possible. Kelli likes to knit, paint, read, travel and spend as much time as possible with her niece and nephew.



"In my position here in the Honors College, I get to work with students during the thesis process. Education and writing have always been important in my own life, but I also realize how daunting the work can be. During the research process, students are finding their authorial voices and are often working through original research for the first time. I love being able to work alongside them during this process, seeing them grow as scholars and as people."



HELEN GREENE

Coordinator of Recruitment and Strategic Communication

Helen grew up in Canton, Miss., and moved to Hattiesburg in 2017 to attend Southern Miss. She is an Honors College graduate and earned her Bachelor of Arts in international studies in 2021 and her Master of Science in geography in 2023. She loves being outdoors and is slowly trying to convert the Honors team to her love of all things geography. She began working as the Honors College coordinator of recruitment and strategic communication in August 2023.

"My favorite thing about the Honors College is the interdisciplinary curriculum. As an Honors graduate, and as someone who has hopped between the humanities and the sciences, I love talking to prospective students about all their interests and passions. It is always rewarding to help them figure out how they can integrate all the different things they want to study and learn by being a part of the Honors College."



Start of the year social at the Hattiesburg Zoo

The LOFT



On September 26, 2023, the Honors College hosted the grand opening of The Loft, a new study lounge for Honors Scholars in room 208 of Cook Library. Working with Dr. John Eye, dean of University Libraries, the Honors College envisioned a centralized gathering space for Honors

College students. Honors academic advisor and coordinator of living-learning programs, Jessie James-Prince, and Honors student, Robbie McDonald, began working together on how to transform the former classroom into a lounge space for student use. A now-graduated interior design student, Robbie was passionate about implementing interior design in educational settings.

"Throughout my undergraduate degree, I searched for ways to make a difference in my interior design community, as well as my honors community. I felt so honored when the Honors College approached me because it showed their commitment to have a space that was created for students and by students. I wanted to design a space that was multifunctional and had areas that could be easily transformed for a variety of purposes. I also wanted to choose fabrics and finishes that felt modern, fun and timeless so that students can enjoy the space for years to come."

Robbie's designs for the space included restaurant-style study booths, interchangeable dry-erase and tackboards for the walls, ADA-compliant tables, and more. The Honors College applied for and was awarded a Jimmy A. Payne Foundation grant to renovate and furnish the room. River Prince with Prince Sign Co. designed and painted an Honors College mural for The Loft in August 2023, and in September 2023, the room was fully furnished in preparation for the grand opening. Stocked with board games and coffee supplies, The Loft is now open to Honors students for studying or relaxing during Cook Library hours.

Long before The Loft was opened, Honors students have had 24/7 access to a study room on the first floor of the Honor House. In 2020, this room was also renovated with the help of a Jimmy A. Payne Foundation grant, and the students' regular use of this space combined with the growth of the Honors College made the Honors team realize that a second, more centralized gathering space was needed. Robbie shares, "The result was a perfect hideaway that serves as a place for students to learn and grow in a warm and welcoming environment. I couldn't be happier with what we created and the impact that it will have for future students."

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT BYRON GLICK



Paul B. Johnson State Park, 1977



*Jackson State Fair,
Jackson, Miss., 1976*

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversaries of University Forum and the Honors College, we wanted to begin by looking back as we prepare to look forward. Imagine our delight when Mr. Byron Glick, Honors College class of '81, reached out with pictures of the student cohort from the fall 1976 semester, the year the Honors program officially became the Honors College.

Talking with Glick about his experiences in the Honors College reminded me of the extraordinary value in the educational opportunities that the Honors College has provided to generations of Southern Miss students. From small and intimate classes to opportunities to travel together, to coursework that encourages students to be curious and to search for meaning in everything around them, the Southern Miss Honors College provided Glick, his peers, and those who have attended our University since with an invaluable start in life.

The intimacy of the Honors College experience is evident in all of Glick's stories: taking classes with Dr. Jac Tarpe, who, Glick notes, made him believe that he could be a writer; participating in first-year rivalries and political debates; traveling to Honors conferences together; and writing his Honors thesis on a play by Robert Frost. Glick recalls details about his college experiences with an ease that almost inspires jealousy, and in the excerpt below, he has written a thank you note to the Southern Miss Honors College. I can think of no better way to begin our 50th anniversary celebrations than this.

Joyce Inman
Dr. Joyce Inman
Honors College



*National Association of Honors
Colleges (now NCHC), Ohio, 1977*



To the Honors College faculty and staff, past and present, my cohort of fellow students and to all who have followed us:

Here we are. Almost 50 years in the future from that fall day in 1976, when the 40 students that comprised the first class of the newly minted Honors College sat down in our first colloquium class. I don't think any of us, students or faculty, quite knew what to expect, and as the reality unrolled itself, any expectations seemed poor in comparison to the actual experience.

I am so deeply grateful for that time that saying, "Thank You," seems wholly insufficient, but it is, I hope, a place to start. So, thank you. Thank you to the faculty that stretched my mind and heart. Thank you to my fellow students with whom I celebrated the great awakening that was our first year. And thank you to all who have followed as the Honors College has evolved and grown while maintaining that wonder and drive to understand our world in all its intricate connections and mystery.

In some ways it seems impossible that it's been five decades. So much of what I learned and experienced then seems still relevant and fresh now. And yet, between then and now, all kinds of changes have taken place. There is the Internet, cell phones, oxymoronically named social media, electric cars, a warming planet, widespread recycling. It seems a testament to the value of the Honors College experience that even with changes too numerous to list, the experience does, in fact, still feel fresh and relevant.

We talk of deep divisions in our body politic, tinged with a kind of hopelessness that we might never move beyond our culture wars, to survive or even thrive in what comes next. But these aren't new conversations. I find myself thinking of Socrates and wondering what he might have been thinking about his polarized society on his last day in prison some 2,400 years ago, and I wonder what he might say about our polarized society today.

It is the Honors College that introduced me to the facts of Socrates' political reality, but more than that, instilled in me the desire to understand situations beyond surface realities, to search for connections between seeming unrelated aspects of culture, science and daily life beyond location and across time. I wish I had an immediate answer for the problems we face as a society. I don't. But I do have a confidence that those answers exist and will emerge over time if we tend to the interrelationship of all things and all people. If history is an indicator, even in the most difficult times, there will be moments of transcendence, beauty and simple progress.

And that is closer to what I want to say "Thank You" for. Yes, thank you for a magical fall in 1976 and all that followed (there are many stories to tell). But more than that, thank you for a way of being in this world I find myself in, with all its troubles and all its transcendence.

Byron Glick
Byron Glick
Alumnus from the first cohort of the USM Honors College



STUDENT FEATURES

The Honors College is a community of exceptional students who strive for academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, and meaningful engagement with the world around them. These scholars challenge themselves with rigorous coursework, engage in research and creative projects, and contribute to the community through service and leadership. We are excited to showcase some of the exceptional achievements and experiences of our Honors College students, highlighting their diverse passions, goals and aspirations. Whether pursuing careers in STEM fields, the humanities or the arts, our students are poised to make a positive impact on the world, and we are proud to feature their stories!

JERAMIE POSEY (First Year)

Jeramie Posey, a Presidential Scholar and National Merit finalist, is a freshman majoring in computer science who also plays defensive end on the Southern Miss football team. He loves football, technology and music, and following graduation hopes to pursue a master's degree while also continuing his football career. His dream is to have a career in computer science as a software engineer and developer, where he will develop his own applications to improve the quality of life of its users.

Jeramie shares that the Honors College has become an invaluable part of his student life on campus as he's been able to attend concerts, showcases, seminars with famous authors and political figures, and so much more! Jeramie states, "Through Honors, I've met a variety of new fellow scholars from all over the country and globe, helping me expand and diversify my own friend groups and connections. I have been introduced to many different perspectives and ways of thinking in my colloquium class, challenging me to expand, re-evaluate, and add to my own opinions." When asked what his most memorable experience in the Honors College has been so far, Jeramie brought up how much fun he had at Wild About Honors, the Honors College's annual meet and greet event held in August at the Hattiesburg Zoo. This event pushed him out of his comfort zone and ultimately was the beginning of friendships he still has today. Jeramie stated, "Even though I came into the event (and college itself) with virtually no friends outside of football, hours later, I found myself laughing and walking through the zoo with others, looking for stamps for the scavenger hunt, and watching animals. The trip relieved any apprehension I had about making new friends or how I'd fit into the Honors College and was some of the most fun that I've had since I've been at USM."

Despite only being in college for two semesters, Jeramie has become invested in the research of complete, objective history. Jeramie explains, "I have found it interesting throughout several discussions and book reviews in my Colloquium classes that much of what I thought I knew about historical events and places, or much of what has been taught, was historically incorrect or incomplete. I have become determined to find out the whole truth for myself." This has led him to observe and rethink how much of what we learn in school or from media is often biased. Jeramie continued, "I believe that if more people were willing to consider that what they know about history isn't all there is to know and take the time to learn more, we could bridge more gaps of conflict and ignorance between us."

According to Jeramie, the Honors College has allowed him to get the most out of his freshman year, and he's eager to see more of the growth and opportunities it offers!



MADDIE MORESI (Second Year)

Maddie Moresi is an Honors College Discovery Scholar from O'Fallon, Mo., and is majoring in biological sciences with a forensic science and chemistry minor. She is a sophomore at Southern Miss and serves as the Ambassadors' vice president on the Honors College Leadership Council. She is an Honors resident assistant, a HCLC community life member, and a Forensic Science Society member. Not only is Maddie heavily involved in the Honors College and across campus, but she has also maintained her spot on the USM President's List since her first semester of freshman year and was awarded the USM Housing Academic Excellence Award. Maddie's greatest passions include all sorts of crafting, like painting, sewing and embroidery, spending time with her dogs and family, and watching *Big Brother* with her friends.

When asked about her Honors experience, Maddie explained that as a student coming into college, the Honors College helped her to form a strong foundation for getting involved, as well as prepare her for the difficulty of college coursework. Whether learning about the origins of Disney stories in colloquium, meeting new students through her leadership role as Ambassador VP, analyzing visual media through "good bad films," or spending two weeks in Germany learning about its history and culture in her seminar classes, Maddie gives the Honors College the credit for diversifying her education and allowing her to encounter a wide variety of experiences that have influenced how she views the world.

Maddie shares that her most memorable experiences in the Honors College are the ones where she has been able to see the world! Maddie states, "Thanks to the Honors College, I have been able to travel throughout my Honors education. I loved being able to bond with my classmates on our Colloquium trip to Disney World, and I greatly enjoyed my Germany trip during my spring seminar class. I have so many memories from both trips that will live on forever. I did not expect to be able to have these kinds of travels, but now I have these unforgettable experiences."

Throughout her experience, Maddie has learned that she is passionate about all types of research! She's most excited to get involved in a lab on campus since she enjoys piecing together evidence to formulate conclusions across a variety of research topics. Following graduation, Maddie hopes to work in a forensic crime lab as a DNA analyst. She also dreams of returning to school one day to teach forensics to a new generation of students.



MORGAN WILSON (Third Year)

Major/Minor: Math major, computer science minor

Awards: SMART Scholarship

Passions: Mathematics, swing dancing and music!

Involvement: Honors College Academic Committee, WISE, SPS (social media coordinator), Research Club

Tell us about your experience in the Honors College: The Honors College has jumpstarted my academic career by providing me with ample connections and opportunities. Not only that, but it provided me with the community I needed to be successful in a major where it was hard to find my place. This gave me the confidence to begin research in my sophomore year and try something that I knew I wouldn't immediately be good at. I wouldn't be where I am today, socially or academically, without the Honors College. I am extremely grateful for the Honors College and all that they do year-round for their students.

What is your most memorable experience in the Honors College? Choosing just one experience as the most memorable is challenging, considering throughout my time at USM, the Honors College has consistently provided multiple every semester. Participating in the Sophomore Showcases in the fall and spring was one of the best experiences because it brought the entire Honors class from freshman year together. Seeing what everyone had been working on and catching up with students from previous years was a highlight. Plus, working on a project all semester and finally seeing it come together was super rewarding. Another memorable experience was attending Disney in the spring of 2022 with Dr. Inman's class, where we delved deeper into the uncertainties of Disney as an extension of our coursework. It was an enriching adventure that not only expanded our understanding of the subject matter, but also brought our class closer together. This is definitely a recurring theme in the Honors College. I would like to give a big shout out to Dr. Inman. Her classes played a crucial role in shaping my early experiences here at USM.

What have you become passionate about researching during your time in the Honors College? The Honors College helped me to ignite my passion for research over the past couple of years. As I'm a math major, I couldn't begin research surrounding that until later in my college career, but colloquium and seminar ignited the idea to start asking questions early. In my sophomore year, I initially delved into researching models to simulate disease interactions, such as COVID-19. However, starting early provided me with the opportunity to explore various branches of mathematical research. Currently, I am investigating knighted pawn tours, which involve solving a Hamiltonian cycle problem—a notable NP problem in graph theory. My goal is to develop an efficient algorithm to generate different advanced paths, but I am currently at the forefront of this adventure. Projects like these will provide me with the research and presentation skills necessary to excel as a mathematician.

What is your plan after graduating? I've been honored to receive the SMART Scholarship from the Department of Defense (DoD). This means that during the summers preceding my graduation and for two years post-graduation, I will be working at NRL the Naval Research Laboratory. These internships are designed to equip me for full-time employment at NRL. Eventually, I want to pursue graduate school and further my education while continuing to work at NRL. In addition to my commitments with the SMART Scholarship, I also have a personal aspiration to travel to Europe with my family and experience a different country. This desire adds another layer of excitement to my journey.



ANZA ALI (Fourth Year)

Major/Minor: Biological sciences major, chemistry minor

Passions: I love trekking, writing poems, and collecting snow globes.

Involvement: Honors Ambassador, Student Ambassador at Unibuddy, Academic Co-chairman of Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students, International Student Mentor, Freshman Associate in Student Government Association

Tell us about your experience in the Honors College: Being a part of the Honors College has been an enriching journey that surpassed my academic expectations. The sense of community within the Honors College has been transformative, and I have forged lasting connections with fellow students who share my passion for learning.

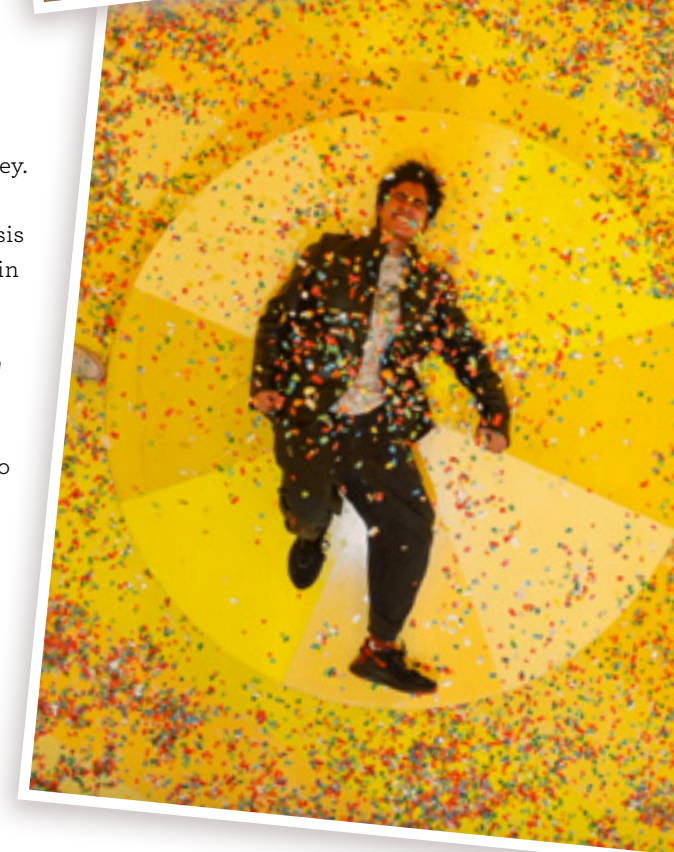
What is your most memorable experience in the Honors College? One of the most memorable experiences during my time in the Honors College was the captivating trip to Houston. The trip was designed to blend academic enrichment with cultural exploration; it provided a platform for students to bond outside the classroom. Exploring the vibrant city together, we sampled local cuisine, attended cultural events, and immersed ourselves in the rich history of Houston.

What have you become passionate about researching during your time in the Honors College? I have cultivated a profound interest in several interdisciplinary fields that have significantly shaped my academic journey. Specifically, vector biology has captivated my attention with its intricate exploration of vectors' roles in disease transmission, which is also the basis of my Honors thesis, deciphering the role of tRNA synthetase inhibitors in tick physiology.

If you have received an Honors College or DCUR grant, please describe how it has benefitted you: The Honors College grant for my thesis has been a pivotal factor in the successful completion of my research. This financial support provided me with the resources and flexibility needed to conduct in-depth investigations, procure essential materials, and access specialized databases crucial for my thesis work.

What is your plan after graduating? I aim to transition seamlessly into an advanced academic program that aligns with my fervent interest in biomedical devices. Recognizing the multidisciplinary nature of this field, I intend to explore graduate programs renowned for their comprehensive curriculum and cutting-edge research facilities.

Favorite Quote: When everyone is trying to be something, be nothing. Range with emptiness. -Shams Tabraizi



MUSIC CITY MEMORIES:

ACTIVE-LEARNING TRIPS AND COLLOQUIUM

The Honors College believes that community building begins before students arrive on campus and that learning happens both inside and outside of the classroom. Colloquium, the foundational course that Honors scholars take their first year, plays a significant role in this mission. As the first class that students choose when creating their schedules, the course aims to help students to find their people and places in the university. This year, students and faculty explored themes of connection through rigorous reading, investigative writing, and unique traveling experiences with their peers.

Drs. Joseph Cheatle and Brad Phillis traveled with their classes to Montgomery, Alabama, where they explored the connections between past and present. Prof. Hali Black's class adventured through caves and mountains in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as they learned more about the marks that we leave on our planet. Dr. Ilian Iliev and Prof. Allen Chen traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, with their students. Other classes made new discoveries closer to home, from North Mississippi to the Gulf Coast.

In the fall semester, Prof. Sellers and her students studied the ways that music and storytelling help us to form connections between one another and to see the familiar world in new ways. They began the semester by reading memoirs and cultural analyses that interrogated the role of music in memory-making. Prof. Sellers explains, "We all have a song that reminds us of a particular place and time. Beginning with something like music that students find familiar and asking them to get more curious about it helps them to take the first steps of academic inquiry. An important step toward discovery."

During fall break, Prof. Sellers' and Dr. Ashley Allen's classes travelled to Nashville, Tennessee, where they attended a live music performance at the Grand Ole Opry. Students also had a private, guided tour of the museum of the Country Music Hall of Fame, where they learned, through historical records and artifacts, more about the ways that the culture of the city both informs and is informed



by music. On their last night in Nashville, students gathered for dinner together at Assembly Hall, across the street from the historic Ryman. One student, Riley Cavanagh, reflected on a moment when she and her peers sat at their table listening to a local musician play: "None of us were talking, but just listening to him sing. I couldn't believe that these people, who I considered simply my classmates only a few days ago, were now friends with whom I had developed inside jokes, and we were just listening to this music."

Students agree, however, that one of the most rewarding experiences of the trip (besides the long van ride) was a songwriting workshop they attended at the Country Music Hall of Fame. Before leaving USM for Nashville, students created song outlines using guidelines that the museum provided. In a workshop led by a Nashville songwriter, students turned these outlines into a song. They saw the creative and writing processes from the first stages of drafting to the final, recorded song, which they were able to share with others. Prof. Sellers remarked, "This experience was incredible and really illustrates the importance of the active-learning trip in the Honors curriculum. Not only did students cement their friendships with one another, but the trip extended their learning beyond the classroom. Students brought with them to Nashville an idea that began in the classroom. And while there, they turned this idea into something tangible that they took home with them."



Scan here to listen to the song students wrote!



Honors Abroad in Germany



Active-learning trip to the Mississippi Aquarium



Dr. Ian Cicco's Sophomore Seminar Class



SEMINAR HIGHLIGHT: RELIGION AND EMPIRE



Each semester, our Honors Faculty Fellows design and teach Honors Seminar classes specifically for our sophomores. The culmination of the Honors Foundation curriculum, these seminars help our students understand real-world issues and conversations, ask rigorous and intentional questions related to seminar topics, and practice the intensive research skills they need as they move toward the thesis portion of the curriculum. Unlike Colloquium, with sections organized around similar overarching themes, seminar courses are all unique and allow both the instructors and students to engage with specific and specialized areas. This year, we had seminar classes whose topics ranged from science fiction and musical theatre to hip hop and ethics. Professors Joseph Peterson (history) and Michael Aderibigbe (English) co-planned and co-taught a

seminar class about religion and empire, a course in which they and their students considered “past and present-day moments where religions have been used, abused or transformed by imperial contact.”

In addition to more traditional approaches to research, this course also allowed students to explore the topic and express their understanding through creative means. These projects ranged from cooking meals, to making a recipe book, to developing a website about their research. However, a few projects stood out to the instructors. Ashley Garcia Prado, sophomore forensics major, created a sculpture meant to symbolize the “push and pull” she herself feels as a Christian Mexican of indigenous heritage. The sculpture reflects the interplay between indigenous Mexican religious beliefs and traditional Christian religious practice, a relationship that is depicted especially beautifully (and tragically) as the materials of the sculpture cracked and fell from the piece, perhaps inadvertently highlighting the difficulty in maintaining an arguably divided identity.

Ngan Trat, sophomore finance major, chose to express her understanding of the course's theme through a different medium: painting. Focusing on the impact of missionaries and how their work negatively influenced local cultures and peoples, Trat's painting depicts the victims of the settler colonialism and forced assimilation of those they colonized. Her painting draws upon a 17th-century Dutch painting called *The Corpses of the De Witt Brothers*, which depicts two Dutch politicians who were killed by a local mob following political and military turmoil. However, Trat's painting focuses on the material and human impact of colonialism by depicting the victims of such practices. These new subjects

include a Kikuyu character from Kenyan novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* and a real person named Chanie Wenjack, who died while trying to run away from a Native American residential school in Canada.

These examples are just a few of the works, both creative and traditional, that our students and professors have been working on this semester. Their scholarship, aligned with the Honors College's goals of instilling curiosity and creativity in our students, shows that our professors and students strive for a deeper understanding of the world around them and their relationship to that world.



LIZ WYNNE ON THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF AN *Eagle SPUR Grant*



The Drapeau Center for Undergraduate Research (DCUR) is administered through the Honors College but is accessible to all students at Southern Miss. Through its Eagle Scholars Program for Undergraduate Research (Eagle SPUR) and Summer Drapeau Research grants, DCUR can help students across the institution pursue life-changing research. This was the case for Liz Wynne, an Honors Keystone student and junior biological sciences major (minoring in chemistry) from Pickens, Mississippi.

Liz first learned about the Eagle SPUR award from her mentor, Professor Don Yee, when she began working in his research lab, studying mosquito behavior. Liz applied in fall 2022 to study the oviposition site selection and larval survival rate of an understudied mosquito, *Culex secutor*. Winning the SPUR grant presented exciting opportunities for Liz: “I primarily handled sample processing in the lab at first, but after being awarded the Eagle SPUR grant, my mentor offered me the life-changing opportunity to travel to Puerto Rico and assist with the experimental design and execution of the project's second phase in the rainforest. While in Puerto Rico over the summer of 2023, I also conducted independent research; this work resulted in me writing a first-author manuscript and presenting at both regional and national conferences.”

Winning the award also helped Liz see herself as a genuine scholar: “Conducting my Eagle SPUR-funded research made me fully realize, for the first time, that I *am* an adept scientist; it granted me the confidence to continue pushing myself to achieve things that I may presently consider to be beyond my reach.”



Liz has won significant honors since she returned from her grant-funded research trip. She has been named a Ronald E. McNair Scholar; was nominated to compete for the prestigious Barry Goldwater Scholarship; and was awarded the Entomological Society of America's first place “President's Prize” for her presentation highlighting her Eagle SPUR-funded research. She notes, “The Eagle SPUR award was the very first award I received for my research—winning it not only strengthened my CV, but also gave me the confidence to apply for other awards.” The opportunity also

helped her with her professional goals: “The experience of conducting my Eagle SPUR-funded research also further solidified my academic goals and clarified my future trajectory. I'm now certain that I want to pursue graduate studies and a career as a research scientist.”

Overall, Liz wants everyone to know, “If you are dedicated to being involved in research as an undergraduate, you will continually be supported by USM faculty and the Honors College.”

We are so proud of Liz's remarkable research journey!





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