

HF Newsletter

Skidmore College Bericlean Honors Forum

December 2015



Coming Next Year...

January 27th

Honors Forum Interest Meeting:
Invite prospective HF members to attend and learn more about the benefits of Honors Forum!

To Be Determined

The **Formal Dinner** at Longfellow Restaurant has been postponed until the Spring: stay tuned for more information!



Does Your Vote Matter? Shades of Gray Panel Provides Insights for Voters

On November 4th, Honors Forum hosted the Shades of Gray panel discussion in the Pohndorff Room of the library, featuring Professors Bob Turner, Andrew Lindner, Sandra Goff, and Chris Mann, from the Environmental Studies, Sociology, Economics, and Government Departments. Two students added tremendously by speaking on the panel: Gabriela Perez, President of student club Democracy Matters, and Dylan Quinn, a government major and honors forum executive. The students and professors teamed up for an exciting debate on the nature of the United States' democratic system, with David Immerman, another Honors Forum executive and Government major, mediating.

The debate was centered around the question "Does Your Vote Matter?" and was focused on voting perception and awareness. Scheduled during a local election and a few months before the primaries for the 2016 Presidential Elections, the discussion was highly relevant to current local and national events. (Continued on Pg. 3)

Morgan Lavoie works in the writing center and wants to help you with Honors-worthy writing! This semester she's held office hours on Sundays from 7-8 pm in the Honors Forum lounge. She will be holding office hours in the spring as well- drop by for help on senior projects, citizenship project



NYC Trip: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

This semester's HF field trip: NYC, Broadway, Pizza

On Saturday, November 14th, Honors Forum went to New York City to see "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" on Broadway. A winner of five Tony awards including "Best Play," this semester's NYC field trip is based on novelist Mark Haddon's award-winning mystery told from the perspective of a 15 year old boy self-described as "a mathematician with some behavioral difficulties." Copies of the book were made available in the Honors Forum lounge for students to read and compare to the Broadway adaptation. Student reviews of the trip were overwhelmingly positive:

"The discussions led by some of the honors forum members at dinner after the show were incredible."

"It was what I hoped it would be: a bunch of students at the same table talking together about an experience we all just had together. It didn't feel so much like a field trip as like a shared community experience."

Members felt that the trip enhanced their Honors Forum experience by exposing them to other members of the HF community and to non-members, many of whom were prospective honors forum students. From one member: "It's always nice to hear from honors forum students what it means to them, and to see students who are interested in coming even with no obligation to go."

"IT WAS WHAT I HOPED IT WOULD BE: A BUNCH OF STUDENTS AT THE SAME TABLE TALKING TOGETHER ABOUT AN EXPERIENCE WE ALL JUST HAD TOGETHER. IT DIDN'T FEEL SO MUCH LIKE A FIELD TRIP AS LIKE A SHARED COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE."

--Honors Forum Student

HF Study Event Recap: Holiday Party

On Monday, December 14th, Honors Forum hosted a holiday party in the lounge with pizza and salad from Nine Miles East and Plum Dandy cookies. It was a huge success, with over 50 Honors Forum attendees. Honors Forum was happy to host an event that brought students together to de-stress and reconnect as a community before break!

From the picnic at the beginning of the semester to this last event to wrap up the year, Honors Forum has had much more participation from students at events this semester. Thanks for coming out, and we'll see you all next year!



Shades of Gray Panel, Continued

"THE FIGHT FOR FAIR
ELECTIONS IS A FIGHT FOR
EVERY SOCIAL CAUSE."

--Democracy Matters

Students interviewed about their experience on the panel and in the audience reacted very positively to the information presented at the discussion. A wide array of perspectives were represented, from Professor Mann's expertise from work on state legislature campaigns to Sandra Goff's understanding of personal decision-making analysis and incentives. As one Honors Forum member noted, "One thing that was so great about Professor Goff's perspective was that way more goes into the voting process

than money and time: social standing, peer pressure, socialization at the familial and communal level."

Another student spoke about Ms. Perez's perspective as President of Democracy Matters, "she brought in the idea that if you're from a really culturally rich or culturally homogeneous area, there's a really strong expectation of how you will vote." A third student added; "Everyone could have stayed and talked for several more hours."

When asked about their most surprising takeaway from the panel, students replied that there seemed to be a really strong consensus among the faculty and students from different disciplines and perspectives that one's vote

commented, "We shouldn't vote in local elections if we don't know what we're talking about, but that is precisely because your vote really does matter in the context of the demographics around you. Your vote matters more in local elections, when there is a lower voter turnout. A strong consensus was reached that in general, our votes matter."

The Shades of Gray Panel was held the evening after Democracy Matters held its own event and panel discussion to encourage student voting. Democracy Matters is a national grassroots organization of student activists who want increased voter representation in the campaign process. In their own words, "The fight for