

HF Newsletter

Skidmore College Periclean Honors Forum

November 2015



Upcoming Events

December 14th **Holiday Study Break Party:** to get you through that Final push! Honors Forum Lounge, 12-3 pm. Featuring pizza and salads from Nine Miles East!

To Be Determined **The Formal Dinner** at Longfellow Restaurant has been postponed: stay tuned for more

After Honors Forum: Daniel Johnstone and Eva Cover, '14

A year and a half after graduating with Honors Forum minors, Dan and Eva just celebrated their 4th anniversary as a couple in Thailand, where they are both employed full-time as teachers. They collaborated for their Citizenship Project, promoting academic festival to make it more accessible to the Skidmore and greater Saratoga communities.

Daniel Johnstone: Major: Psychology, **Minor:** Environmental Studies, Honors Forum

Eva Cover: Major: History, **Minor:** Italian and Honors Forum

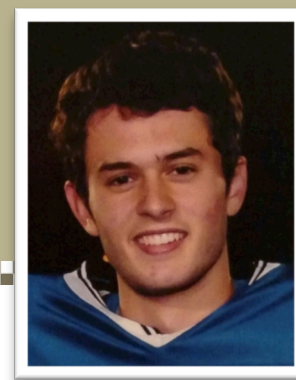
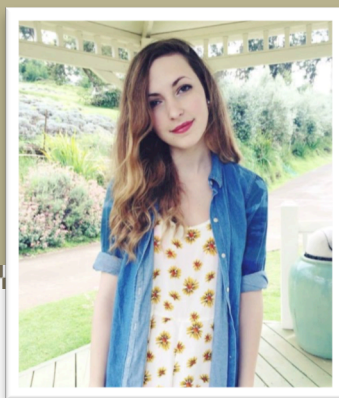
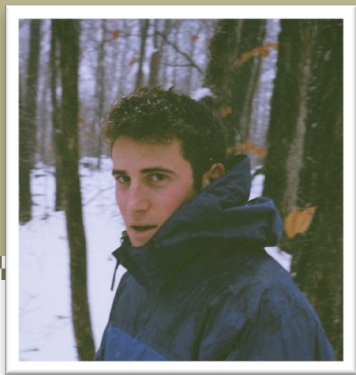
Q: What was your Honors Forum capstone?

DJ: I signed up for a one credit add-on to the Psychology of Religion Course, the result of which was a 20 page correlational analysis of the relationship between belief in the afterlife, death-related anxiety, and life satisfaction. *(Continued on Pg. 2)*

Shades of Gray Panel Discussion: Does Your Vote Matter?

On November 4th, HF hosted Professors from the Government, Environmental Studies, Sociology, and Economics Departments, as well as two students--Gabriela Perez and Dylan Quinn--teamed up for an exciting debate on the nature of the United States' democratic system.





Meet Our Newest E-Board Members!

David, Morgan, and Dylan are this semester's Co-Vice President, Social Media Coordinator, and Franklin Forum Representative.

David Immerman, '17:

Position: Co-Vice President

Studying: Government

Citizenship Project: David plans to use his skills as a member of Skidmore's Integrity Board to provide support to David Karp following restorative justice trainings at other colleges.

"I joined the Honors Forum Executive Committee to not only get more involved in the Community, but also to help create its purpose."

Morgan Lavoie, '17:

Position: Social Media Coordinator

Studying: Neuroscience

Citizenship Project: Using her experience in the Writing Center, Morgan will provide a resource to students seeking help with Honors-Worthy writing for Citizenship and other projects.

"I want to act as a resource for fellow Honors Forum members."

Dylan Quinn, '18:

Position: Franklin Forum Representative (Fall); Co Vice-President (Spring)

Studying: Government

Citizenship Project: Dylan plans on hosting a convention with surrounding universities and colleges next year, where lectures will explore Philosophy, Religion, and Politics.

"I have always been a part of student government. I enjoy helping the Skidmore Community."

After Honors Forum, (Cont.):

EC: My capstone project was a one credit add-on to a history class entitled Religion in Early America. I researched the role of language in conquest and expansion, specifically examining language as a mechanism of conquest. I think the capstone project gives students the opportunity to pursue what fascinates and inspires them to ask questions. It gave me the opportunity to connect my love of language and my love of history.



Q: Now that you've graduated, what stands out to you about Honors Forum? Are there particular courses you took that you think about?

DJ: John Brueggeman's HF Sociology course was a game changer for me my Sophomore

year... If Professor Brueggeman's class helped me to think and argue a point, Catherine Golden's class, "The Reading Life," taught me how to write. Even though I never took another English class at Skidmore, Dr. Golden's class made me fall in love with writing again after being a little burnt out from Senior year of high school, college apps, etc. Now that I am a teacher, I remember these classes as models of what a classroom should be— something for me to aspire to.

EC: I took Professor John Brueggeman's Imaginings course as a second semester freshman and I loved it. I consider this course one of the best I took at Skidmore because 1) It was filled with self-selecting students who knew the class would require a high level of participation, 2) the books examined a wide range of topics 3) the class was discussion based, 4) Prof. Brueggerman required each student to lead the discussion on one book.



Q: The Honors forum values challenge, leadership, excellence, and life of the mind. How have those qualities helped you in navigating your experience in Thailand? Is there anything particularly honors-worthy about your experience in Thailand?

DJ: Skidmore is a wonderful place and I grew a lot socially and intellectually. Living abroad has been equally formative in a trial-by-fire sort of way. Adapting to the customs, social norms, food, and language has been a daily challenge— some days harder than others. Teaching in this environment has tested my patience and resolve but ultimately, I think I am a better teacher, leader, and person.]

EC: The Honors Forum value of leadership is something that I see in my everyday life in Thailand. As a foreign teacher, I occupy a leadership position as both an individual who can broaden student intellectual horizons, but also as a cultural ambassador. I'm able to share that I am American, but my father is not American, that half of my family is not from the United States and that I do not fit many visual stereotypes of "Americanism" found in Thailand.

Our experiences in Thailand represent a second education that complements our four years at Skidmore. At Skidmore, I learned to think deeply, ask clear questions and be curious yet sensitive, while adapting to life surrounded by people of all kinds. I use those same skills on a day-to-day basis in Thailand, whether I'm trying to understand a cultural norm or order food at the night market. I've become patient; I listen more than I speak. I think about how I fit into my adopted city and neighborhood.

DJ: To all Skidmore Honors Forum members, I would absolutely recommend not just traveling, but living abroad post graduation. Teaching is a wonderful way to live abroad and immerse yourself in another culture, another perspective. Whether you have it "all figured out" or are just as uncertain as you were going into college, there is no better way to expand your mind than to shake up your worldview through travel.

“From Theory to Practice: A Quarter Century of Practicing Social Work”

On Wednesday, October 14th, Skidmore Social Work Professor Peter McCarthy spoke in depth about his personal experience as a social worker.



The first time I met Peter McCarthy, he told me that social work takes the research of sociologists and practically applies it to the lives of real people. It was at the accepted candidates' department fair, and I knew as soon as I met Professor McCarthy that I would be taking a class with him when I got to Skidmore.

On a Wednesday night, students and faculty gathered in the second floor of the dining hall to hear Professor McCarthy deliver Honors Forum's annual Ramsey Lecture. His lecture kept the audience captivated as he shared his approach to the daunting, yet encouraging experiences from years in the Social Work field. Social work majors in the audience nodded knowingly as he told stories they had heard countless times in class. Other audience members sat in silence, shocked by the seemingly impossible nature of the job he described.

Though the stories varied, his message remained the same throughout. It was the same message he gave me the first time I met him; in Social Work, the ability to engage is far more important than any theoretical understanding.

This point is illustrated best by his three “E’s”: Engagement, Environment, and Expectations. Professor McCarthy spoke about the vital ability of a social worker to engage with his/her client, being highly informed by his/her ability to contextualize the individual's problems within the physical and social environment. What are the individual's expectations of his/her meeting with the social worker, and how can he/she expect to feel empowered moving forward?

In making these points, Professor McCarthy underlined the importance of context as well as an emphasis on creative thought: “We have this great slogan at

Skidmore: Creative Thought Matters. And it absolutely does. But it is only the first step,” he urged the audience, “We need to engage.”

And engage he did! If you missed this year's Jon Ramsey lecture, don't miss it next year- the Ramsey lecture is hosted every fall by the Honors Forum. If you are



Student attendees enjoy event hors d'oeuvres.

graduating this year, you can always stop by Professor McCarthy's office for a one-on-one lesson in the methods of a social worker. The delicious cheese and crackers may be absent, but Professor McCarthy is always ready to engage.