



Honors Program

EXPAND
the Mind

ENRICH
the Soul

EXPLORE
the World

HONORS MISSION

OBU Honors elevates scholarly experience by:

- Cultivating and building upon a Christian intellectual heritage
- Broadening transdisciplinary encounters
- Inspiring innovative research, service, and global engagement

HONORS VISION

The Honors Program fulfills its purpose and pursues its mission through:

- Fostering a vibrant multidisciplinary Honors community
- Faithfully engaging diverse intellectual perspectives
- Maturing servant leadership
- Facilitating study abroad experiences
- Mentoring scholars in independent research



Check us out online!

okbu.edu/honors

2020 Christmas Newsletter

Merry Christmas! Welcome to the fourth annual Honors Program Newsletter. As the director of the Honors Program, it is my privilege to share the exciting endeavors of our Honors students with you, whether you are OBU faculty or staff, current OBU Honors Students, alumni of the Honors Program, or external friends of OBU and OBU Honors.



Dr. Lindsey Panxhi
Honors Program Director

Contents in this year's newsletter:

(written mostly by OBU's own Honors students)

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As you can tell from this table of contents, we fit a lot into an academic year in the OBU Honors Program and students have continued to thrive in spite of the difficult circumstances of COVID-19. While I know not all of you will have time to read every word of our newsletter, I hope you will let some titles catch your eye and take a few moments to read about the learning opportunities that enable OBU Honors students to flourish spiritually, intellectually and interculturally.

(continued on page 2)

A significant highlight and accomplishment for OBU Honors in 2020 has been the doubling of the Honors core curriculum from 12 to 24 credit hours. We successfully launched our new team-taught Honors course this fall and students responded wonderfully to the classroom experience as they encountered the literature and history of the Ancient Near East and classical Greece. They learned from three outstanding Honors professors from the disciplines of philosophy, literature and theology, enjoying a rich, interdisciplinary encounter with the Old Testament, Homer's epics, Greek drama and Greek philosophy. You can read more about the student perspective on our new curriculum in freshman Elia Tyson's article "The Ancient World: A Fresh Look at Ideas from the Past."

In closing, I just want to say that my greatest joy as Honors director is found in observing the transformations in Honors students' lives from freshman to senior year. Students have the chance to grow in their love for God and for one another as they take part in challenging coursework,

enjoy rich conversations with peers and professors, and complete their chosen Honors capstones. Being part of the OBU Honors Program is truly of value, not just as a steppingstone towards a career, but as a season of formation. It is my prayer that each Honors student learns to pursue

not only knowledge, but "the wisdom that comes from heaven" (James 3:17). Such wisdom has eternal worth and will be of benefit not only to our graduates, but also to the world in which they live, work and serve.

– Dr. Lindsey Panxhi



Assistant Director's Corner



Dr. Daniel Spillman

As we near the end of 2020, I'm full of gratitude for the opportunity to work with the amazing students and faculty in the Honors Program here at OBU. Despite a challenging year, the Honors

Program continues to thrive. This August we welcomed the largest freshman Honors class in our history. Our new triple-team taught curriculum – centered on the Classical and Christian traditions – has attracted talented students to OBU. (Dr. Lindsey Panxhi's tireless work this year in building the Honors Program deserves our thanks!)

In addition to the transformative power of a Great Books-focused education, our students continue to form friendships with one another both in and out of the classroom. It's always a great joy as a professor to see our Honors students building friendships, laughing together and having meaningful conversations.

At the Honors retreats in September and October, our Honors students and professors played board games, worshipped and prayed together, and discussed the "permanent things" (to borrow a phrase from T.S. Eliot) in a variety of breakout sessions. I thoroughly enjoyed leading a session on the ethical dimensions of World War II; the discussion was lively! (I'm looking forward to January, when I'll be teaching an Honors colloquium on the history of films made during World War II.)

I'm excited about the future of the Honors Program. Three study abroad trips specifically designed for Honors students will be traveling to Ecuador, Kazakhstan and England/France next year. Numerous students are currently at work on Honors thesis projects in a host of different disciplines. And, we continue to recruit students for next fall's incoming freshman class.

We ask for your prayers that the Lord will continue to bless OBU's Honors Program. We also ask that you give prayerful consideration to building the endowment of

the Honors Program. As Dr. Tawa Anderson mentioned last year, we have three long-term endowment goals:

- (a) Honors scholarships specifically designated for students in the Honors Program
- (b) Scholarships to help students participate in the Honors-sponsored faculty-led Study Abroad trips;
- (c) An endowed faculty Honors Program position.

The Honors Program here at OBU is transforming the lives of students. Please consider supporting our work by contributing to one or more of these endowment goals.

I hope you have a safe and restful Thanksgiving, a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year.

And may God bless OBU!

– Dr. Daniel Spillman
Assistant Director of the Honors Program
Associate Professor of History

The Ancient World: A Fresh Look at Ideas from the Past

by ELIA TYSON

Freshman, Creative Writing

The new Honors Core Curriculum kicked off this fall with The Ancient World course, covering most of the Old Testament, both Homeric epics, several Greek plays and philosophical writings, and more. It was triple-taught by Drs. Tawa Anderson, Jonathan Callis, and Warren McWilliams. Some days one professor gave a lecture to the whole class, and on other days, the class divided into three seminar groups and each of the professors led a discussion of the day's material.

We students have greatly enjoyed the curriculum this fall, with a couple of favorite works being The Odyssey and Aristophanes' The Clouds. We have also loved the professors and their unique personalities: Dr. Anderson for being so fun and engaging, proudly Canadian, and generally awesome; Dr. Callis for his wit, professionalism, and hair; and Dr. McWilliams for his M*A*S*H references, venerable age and amazing repertoire of stories. A certain anonymous student has even created an Instagram page for memes about the material and professors, which has been a great hit, and another incentive to get the reading done and pay attention in class.

In appreciation of their amazing teachers, the class has decided to begin a tradition of doing something special for each of the three at some point during the semester. There are about 35 t-shirts with Dr. Anderson's face on the front and "Canada: it's better than Texas" on the back floating around campus. An official M*A*S*H trivia book signed by the students, and a humorous portrait made by one of our Honors art majors, was gifted to Dr. McWilliams. The students may or may not be even now plotting their final gesture of appreciation for Dr. Callis.

Extracurricular activity aside, every aspect of the class has been very enriching, expanding students' understanding of history, literature and philosophy, and, most

importantly, how each of these relates to Christian faith. The professors are experts in their respective fields, adept at engaging and informing even sleep-deprived, over-caffeinated freshmen. Mary Brannon, a creative writing and graphic design double major, has found the alternating lecture and discussion group model in particular to be a great asset to the course: "It's really cool to have three professors who are each experts on different parts of the class ... we hear from the professor who is most expert on the subject, but we also get to hear from the perspective of professors who are approaching the topics in class from a different angle, based on their own disciplines."

There have been many deep and informative conversations in the seminar groups, ranging from the nature of pagan gods as opposed to the Christian God, to the reason for sin, to the place of theology in politics. Even when the topic strays from the material – hijacked by theological debate or interrupted by Canadian propaganda – it is (almost) always still within the realm of the greater course subjects, and always interesting and informative.

The new curriculum will continue over the next three semesters, with a different set of professors for each, covering the Classical World in spring 2021, Medieval & Early Modern World the following fall, and finally the Modern World in spring 2022.

The Honors Freshman Class of 2020



The Honors freshman class, enthusiastic, even if you can't see their smiles through the facemasks!

By CHRISTIN MULLER, *Senior, Computer Science and Animation*

This fall, the OBU Honors Program had the privilege of welcoming its largest group of freshmen in the history of the program. Each of the 48 brilliant new Honors freshmen brings something unique to our program, and we are thrilled to welcome them to Bison Hill and to Honors. This incoming cohort is certainly very accomplished, having a mean ACT of 29.1 and a mean SAT of 1337.

While much of this year's incoming class comes from Oklahoma, other students in the freshman cohort hail from all over the United States. This includes students from New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Colorado and Montana. The geographical spread of the freshman class is not the only thing that makes this group of students unique, however. The academic pursuits of the freshman class span 24 different majors and seven different minors, with several students pursuing double majors or double degrees. All six colleges in OBU are represented by the incoming class, with seven students in the nursing college, three in fine arts, six in math and science, seven in theology and ministry, two in business, and 23 in humanities and social sciences.

With such a unique and promising incoming freshman class this year, the Honors Program is looking forward to aiding these students as they continue to achieve and grow throughout their next four years. We hope that they will continue to pursue excellence in everything they do, and we have no doubt that God has wonderful things planned for them during their time in the Honors Program.

Fellowship in the Midst of COVID-19

FALL RETREAT 2020

By NIC STARK
Junior, Musical Arts



TOP PHOTO: Honors Students Gavin Knapp, Andy Hayes, Nic Stark, Emma Busby and Cameron Clark lead worship at the freshman Honors Retreat

Freshmen stand for the reading of God's Word during devotional time



These days, it seems like opportunities to gather and fellowship with peers en masse are few and far between. To live on campus at all is a blessing, and each time two friends are reunited, it is especially sweet. The Honors Program has always sought to foster dynamic student-professor relationships with its bold curricula, and this peculiar season is no exception. Despite some minor changes, the Fall Freshman Honors Retreat was still able to provide a space for relationships to be cultivated between Honors students and faculty, both new and returning.

The most practical aspect of the retreat is the presentation of the Honors Program requirements for the new Honors freshmen. As director of the program, Dr. Panxhi takes the lead in this. Throughout the retreat, the freshmen are brought up to speed on all the requirements for graduation with Honors, including the Honors classes and colloquia they will be required to take. They are also introduced to the three Honors capstone projects: Senior Thesis, Service Practicum and Study Abroad.

Perhaps the most enjoyable facet of the retreat is the interaction with fellow Honors peers. New Honors students have the opportunity to mingle, play board games, and build relationships with their faculty and fellow students. They also get to participate in unique breakout sessions led by the Honors professors. Kalyne Henrichsen, graduating Honors peer mentor and worship leader, said, "It was insanely fun, and there were lots of great opportunities to meet new people and connect with old friends. My favorite part was hanging out late at night with everyone! We played games and explored the OBU Green campus. It was fantastic. Dr. Spillman also led a very insightful and engaging seminar on morality in WW2. It was amazing!"

Just as OBU as a whole seeks to integrate faith with learning, the Honors Program seeks to develop its students' spiritual connection with God and with one another. There are encouraging devotionals led by the faculty, as well as times of worship and prayer led by fellow Honors students. Cameron Clark, a Sophomore peer mentor

and worship leader, said, "The retreat helps to build a good godly community of students and focuses everyone on seeking God through our education at OBU."

Catherine Burgess, an Honors freshman, says that "...the retreat brings something special to the Honors community. I think that it provided opportunities for us to interact with other students that we might not have otherwise talked to. Getting to hear from upperclassmen about why they chose Honors and how they managed to balance everything was really encouraging to me and eased a lot of the anxieties that I had coming in."

By the time the new freshmen are leaving their retreat, the hope is that they feel more comfortable to pursue their callings within the Honors Program and within their majors. They have made new friends and connected with some upperclassmen and faculty, so that they can more clearly see the path that God has ordained for them at OBU.

The Hands and Feet of Christ: The Service Practicum

By KATHLEEN HILL
Sophomore, Mathematics

The Honors Service Practicum capstone is a unique experience wherein students are able to broaden their horizons beyond the classroom and spend time being the hands and feet of Christ through 80+ hours of intensive service to the disadvantaged. I can say that my life has been enriched by the Honors Service Practicum.

I and those who completed the Service Practicum this summer and fall had a unique experience: serving in the midst of a global pandemic. God used many Honors students to meet urgent needs created by COVID-19. Micah Hinson volunteered with Packs of Hope to provide resources to foster children in Colorado; Kalyne Henrichsen provided mental health resources over the phone and online with Mental Health's Helpline in Minnesota; Gavin Knapp served with Manos Juntas, a free medical clinic in OKC for those in

need; and Chloe Mostek volunteered at another free clinic, Ministries of Jesus, in Edmond, OK. In my hometown of Amarillo, Texas, COVID-19 brought with it a wave of unemployment and destitution. I, alongside another OBU Honors student, Laramie Snow, had the privilege of working at Valleyview Food Pantry during all of this. We did activities such as pack boxes of food, restock shelves with cans and other food items, and distribute boxes of food to those in need via a drive-through line.

I was deeply moved by the brokenness I saw. I encountered multiple people who once had excellent careers but had lost employment due to COVID-19. I also encountered those who have always lived in terrible conditions and experienced food insecurity daily. All of this was humbling. Admittedly, I have never experienced want for any necessity. I am blessed, and therefore I am obligated to use what I have to bless others.

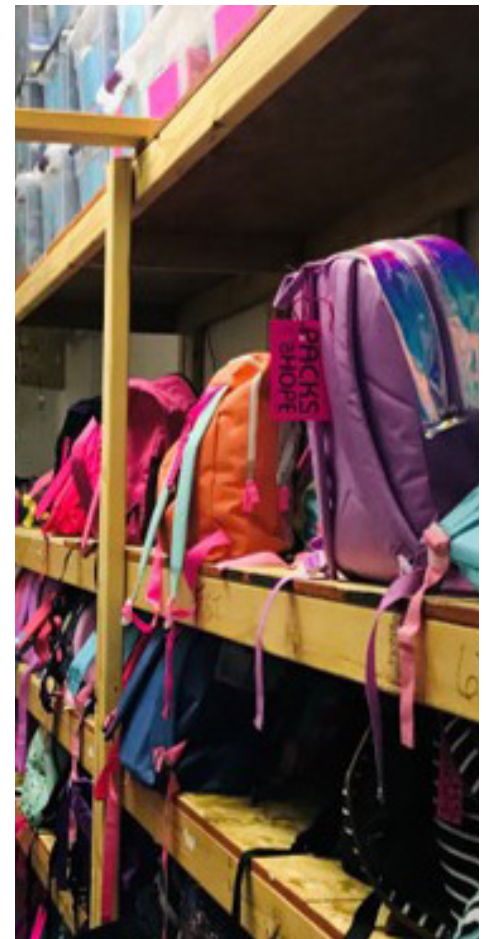
The work I did at Valleyview Food Pantry provided physical relief to these members of society and provided an avenue to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Valleyview Church, the sponsor of Valleyview Food Pantry, provides a supportive network of believers to many customers of the pantry. The ministry is a light in the darkness of a broken world, and it was a joy to be a part of it. I had great fun and an enjoyable time working with friends at the food pantry, and I was able to experience firsthand the call to be the hands and feet of Christ. It is true that I sacrificed a good chunk of time to the food pantry (and experienced some back pain from improperly bending over to pack boxes), but I never legitimately felt like I was sacrificing. Instead, I felt like I was, in some small way, spreading the Light of Christ to those in need. The OBU Honors Service Practicum has inspired me to live a life of service, and I fully intend to continually seek out opportunities to serve.



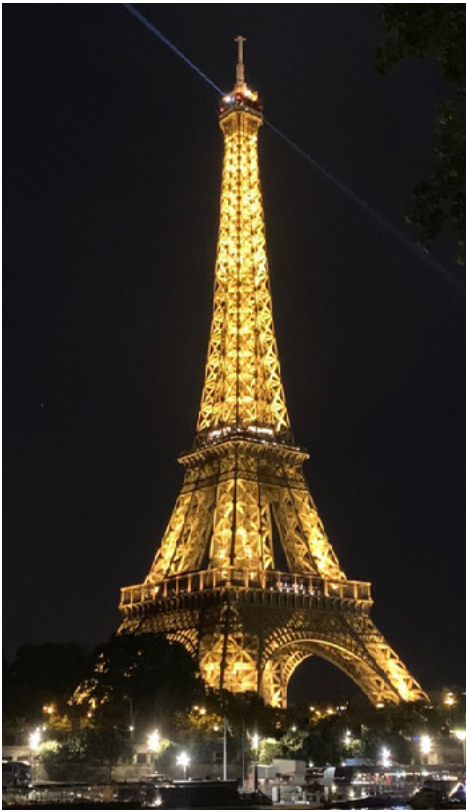
Clothing which will be donated to young girls in foster care through the ministry Packs of Hope.



Micah Hinson poses in front of her workstation at the ministry Packs of Hope.



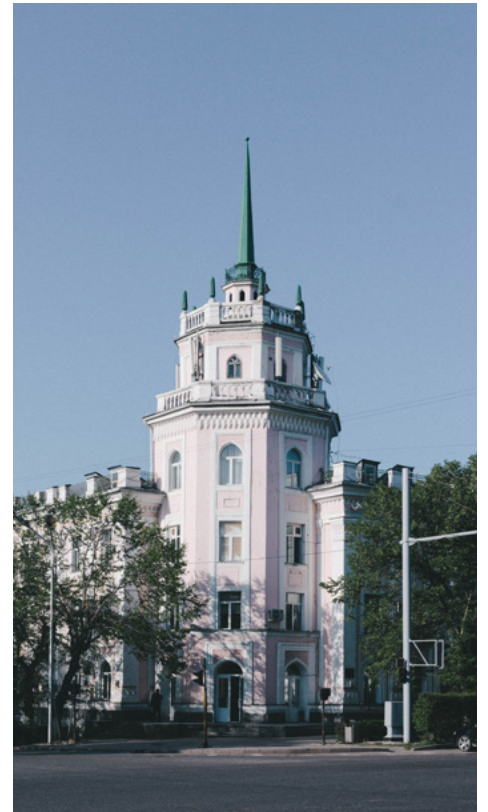
Backpacks filled with clothing wait to be delivered to children in need at Packs of Hope.



Eiffel Tower, Paris



View of Quito, Ecuador



Historical building in Almaty, Kazakhstan

Studying Abroad? Future Travel Plans for OBU Honors Students

By DR. LINDSEY PANXHI



El Panecillo, a 200-meter-high hill Quito, Ecuador

Traveling in 2020...many of us could probably share stories of radically altered travel plans as a result of COVID-19. The Honors Program is no exception. Early in 2019, Dr. Tawa Anderson had begun the long process of planning a month-long study abroad trip in Summer 2020 to China, of all places. As you can imagine, that trip had to be cancelled. None of our students were able to complete their Honors Study Abroad Capstone in 2020. However, many have been able to delay their travel until Summer 2021, and we are prayerfully, cautiously continuing to move forward with trip planning for next summer and January of 2022.

We have two Summer 2021 study abroad trips planned. Many of the students who were going to China are instead planning to go to Kazakhstan for a month, under the experienced leadership of Dr. Houghton, Dean of the Paul Dickinson College of Business, who has led several trips to Kazakhstan before. Another group of students is planning to study abroad in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. This trip will be led by Dr. Lyda Wilbur, our brilliant Spanish professor, myself, and Rachel Stewart, an OBU coordinator in the Global Outreach Center, who has also led many service trips to Ecuador. Both of these trips are adding in a service and community outreach component, which is an exciting new aspect that was not included on previous Honors Study Abroad trips. OBU trip leaders are excited to enable students not only to gain academic and intercultural knowledge, but also to be the hands and feet of Christ, serving and building relationships with locals.

Dr. Spillman, Dr. Rohr, Dr. Roark, and Mme. Roark are also planning to lead an Honors Study Abroad trip to London and Paris in January 2022. On this trip, students will have the chance to encounter World War II sites, to read the works of great British and French authors on location, and to study French while living in Paris. The cold weather will be worth it, as the group will have the chance to explore Christmas markets and engage in experiential learning at museums, castles and cathedrals with far lower crowd volume.

The Honors Program would appreciate your prayers as we move forward with the time-intensive process of planning each of these trips, while also knowing that one or all of them may need to be cancelled if travel is deemed unsafe for our students due to the ongoing pandemic. God is faithful, and we'll trust His plans, whether we end up needing to stay stateside, or get to go abroad as we hope.

Colloquial Thoughts

By KATELYN ONKST
Junior, Business Management

Each year students in the Honors Program are offered a variety of short courses on specific subjects of interest called colloquia. These exciting and thought-provoking courses are often some of Honors students' most memorable classes, as they allow for deeper exploration of subjects that students would not typically get to explore in their major area. To complete the Honors Program, students must take four colloquia, with at least two being outside of their major, though many decide to enroll in more. These classes may be taken for zero or one credit hours and are graded as a pass-fail course, taking pressure off students to allow them to better enjoy themselves and learn the material.

Colloquia benefit both Honors students and professors, since they offer students the opportunity to meet Honors students outside their year and professors they otherwise might not have taken classes with. Many professors talk about how much they enjoy the chance to teach colloquia, which allow them to focus in on topics they have a particular passion for, and which they do not always get to teach in their regular course rotations. Colloquia also offer the opportunity for students to encounter the academic publications OBU professors are producing. For example, Dr. Matthew Emerson, dean of Hobbs College of Theology and Ministry, taught a colloquium titled "Christ's Descent to Hell," which explored questions about where Jesus was between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Students read Dr. Emerson's new book, "He Descended to the Dead: An Evangelical Theology of Holy Saturday" (IVP Academic, 2019), along with other articles, exploring the creedal clause "he descended into hell" from biblical, historical and theological perspectives in order to better understand this neglected aspect of the mission of Christ.

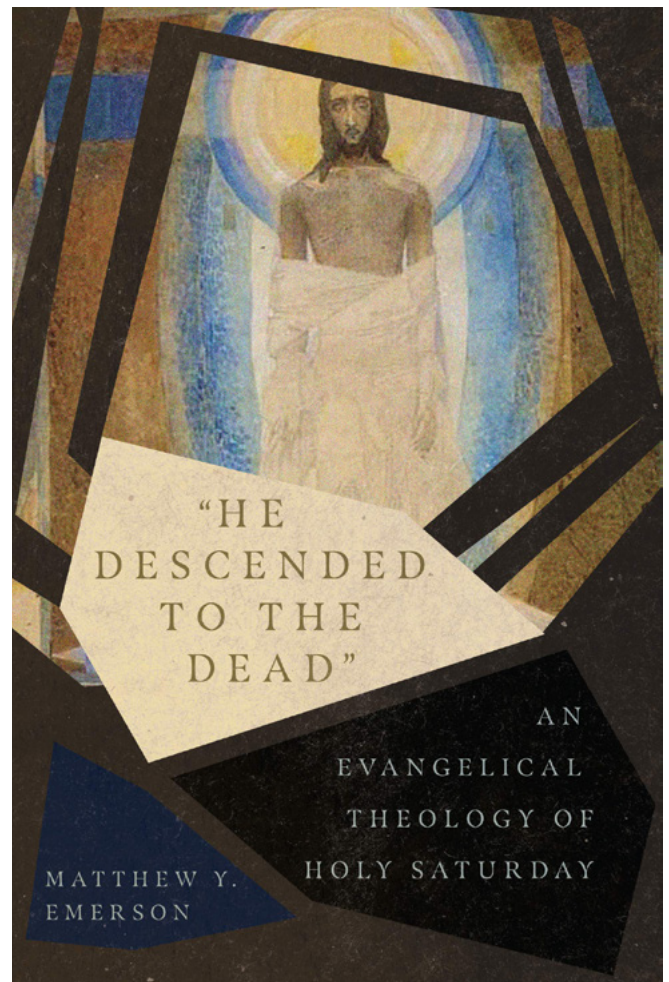
Several Honors students were asked to share about their favorite colloquia of recent semesters. Junior Honors student Violet Webber said her favorite colloquium has been "Veggie Tales: Theological Animation" (Fall 2019) with New Testament professor Dr. Alan Bandy and Animation professor

Ben Baxter. The colloquium explored how Veggie Tales teaches theology to young children, if that storytelling is effective, and in what ways that teaching could be improved. The students also got the chance to storyboard their own Veggie Tales episode and work with the same design software used by the show's creators.

Violet shared: "It was such a unique class that I would not have had the opportunity to take outside of the OBU Honors Program... I thoroughly enjoyed interpreting biblical texts and practicing animation techniques with my fellow Honors friends."

Junior pre-med and physics major Gavin Knapp most enjoyed "From Dinos to Dodos" with Dr. Dale Utt taught during J-term 2019. "During the class, I got the chance to experience the lives of modern archaeologists while studying the genetics of dinosaurs. I even got to excavate my own dinosaur fossil!"

Junior Andrew Hayes's favorite colloquium was "Music and Philosophy" with Dr. Tawa Anderson and Dean Chris Mathews. "There was just something special about meeting early in the morning in a beautiful choir room into which I will never again step foot, singing a hymn, and talking about what philosophically makes something beautiful. Is beauty completely objective, subjective or somewhere in between? We even debated whether some non-traditional pieces, such as Guernica by Picasso, were beautiful or not. To this day, it is still the colloquium I talk about and think about most often." The colloquium met at 8 a.m. in Ford Hall once a week. A small number of students worked in teams to look at various pieces of art and music and assess what it was that made them beautiful or, in some cases, displeasing.



The cover of Dr. Matthew Emerson's book, which students read as a part of their colloquium with him on the topic of Christ's Descent to Hell.

Micah Hinson, junior accounting major, said that she most enjoyed "Holocaust: Evil, Comprehension and Rebuilding" with Dr. Chris McMillion. The class explored what the Christian response ought to be toward the Holocaust and why studying these events are still relevant today. "We read and discussed first-hand accounts from Holocaust survivors. This has been my favorite colloquium because learning about the suffering and faith of the millions of Jews slaughtered and of those who survived not only humbled and convicted me, but it inspired me. Humanity is capable of such evil and such goodness, and the lessons learned from the Holocaust need to be remembered forever."

These hands-on colloquia offer students unique opportunities to gain skills they otherwise would have never encountered in their coursework, providing them with invaluable experiences they will not soon forget.

The Eight Honors Thesis Projects of 2020

By MICAH HINSON
Junior, Professional Accountancy

Of the three Honors capstones, the thesis is arguably the most demanding yet edifying. Students who choose to write a thesis embark on an 18-month journey that stretches their skills as a thinker, writer and student. The project begins with a Contracted Study during which the student explores and conducts in-depth research over a broad topic under the supervision of a professor with expertise in that area. Through the Contracted Study, the student will develop a thesis proposal that sets up the remainder of their project. During their senior year, the student will spend extensive time writing, reading, editing and revising under the guidance of their advisor, the Honors Committee and the Honors Director. When the rough draft is complete, an external expert in their field is consulted as the student makes final revisions. The project concludes with the student giving a presentation in an on-campus forum that showcases the caliber of their work. After their presentation, the student is given a printed and bound copy of their completed work which is “the favorite and most rewarding moment after all that hard work” for students, according to Dannie Deason, 2020 Honors Graduate. Honors theses truly enable students to explore the world, expand their mind, and enrich their soul.

During the 2019-2020 school year, eight students successfully completed and presented senior theses as capstones. For the 2020-2021 school year, six noble Honors students are working hard on their respective thesis projects.

ALEXIS BESCH, a psychology major, analyzed the effectiveness of EEG technology in regard to anxiety in her thesis, “The Anxious Brain: A Systematic Review of EEG Technology as it is Applied to Anxiety.” In her study, Besch concluded from the 12 articles in her systematic review that EEG is considered a practiced and credible tool that can be used to diagnose, treat and predict risk factors of anxiety. The project was supervised by Dr. Canaan Crane, professor of psychology.



Alexis Besch receiving a bound copy of her thesis from Dr. Tawa Anderson and Dr. Lindsey Panxhi.

DANNIE DEASON, a political science major, wrote her thesis titled, “Evaluating Presidential Power in the Proper Context of the Constitutional Separation of Powers.” In an effort to determine the proper role of the president within the context of separation of powers, Deason explored three fundamental questions through which she concluded that the president should take it upon himself to scale back some of the powers of the presidential office. Deason was the recipient of the Dr. Thomas E. Dowdy Memorial Award for top Honors thesis, and her project was supervised by Dr. Chris McMillion, assistant professor of political science.



Dannie Deason receiving a bound copy of her thesis from Dr. Daniel Spillman and Dr. Lindsey Panxhi.

VICTORIA HAMILTON, a graphic design major, completed her thesis titled, "Visual Culture and its Impact on Prayer." Hamilton researched the significance of prayer and its relationship with art, and conceptualized and designed a six-month prayer planner, called Anchor. This project was supervised by Professor Corey Fuller, associate professor of graphic design.



Victoria Hamilton receiving a bound copy of her thesis from Professor Corey Fuller and Dr. Lindsey Panxhi

ANDREW JOYCE, a sociology and Spanish double major, authored a thesis titled, "It's Not Like God Has A Party: A Qualitative Study of the Changing Political Identity of Young Southern Baptists." In his research, Joyce worked to uncover the shifting political identities of young Southern Baptists in the context of an increasingly polarized political culture. Joyce concluded that participants of his study expressed nuanced and complex political viewpoints; thus, being Southern Baptist is not a clear indicator of political views. This project was supervised by Dr. Antonio Chiareli, professor of sociology and intercultural studies.

PAIGE LEHRMANN, a Philosophy and Mathematics double major completed her thesis, "That's Not Partialism, Patrick! Devising a Non-Heretical Mathematical Analogy for the Trinity," in December of 2019. The purpose of her thesis was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of many popular Trinitarian analogies. Because improper analogies can be misleading and detrimental to a person's faith, Lehrmann proposed a dimensional analogy for the Trinity through the combination of philosophy and math that avoided common heretical pitfalls that so many Trinitarian analogies fall victim to. This project was supervised by Dr. Tawa Anderson, Associate Professor of Philosophy.

HUDSON PAYNE, a mathematics and physics double major, wrote his thesis, "Limit Sets of Kissing Schottky Groups in the Pure Quaternions," as an exploration of the Kleinian limit sets studied by Mumford, Series and Wright. He developed a framework by which to build a new fractal in pure quaternion space based on an existing approach in two dimensions. This project was supervised by Dr. Cherith Tucker, associate professor of mathematics.



Hudson Payne receiving a bound copy of his thesis from Dr. Cherith Tucker and Dr. Lindsey Panxhi

JANA SATZLER, a family and community service major, completed a thesis titled, "Intimacy Wars: A Better Model to Defend Against Destructive Dating Patterns." In her study, Satzler explored dating in secular and Christian cultures with an emphasis on analyzing appropriate and effective boundaries. From her research, Satzler proposed a healthy model of dating with a desire to encourage young adults, especially Christians, to have better experiences with relationships. This project was supervised by Dr. Brian Camp, professor of family science.

JONATHAN WOOD, an English major, completed a thesis titled, "From the Heart of Hell: The Miltonic Satan and Melville's Moby-Dick." He argued that the Satan presented in Paradise Lost is not the hero certain Romantics thought him to be. Rather, Herman Melville offers a more accurate understanding of Satan's nature through parallel depictions of Captain Ahab. This project was supervised by Dr. Benjamin Myers, Professor of English.



The graduating Honors class of 2020

Graduation Report of Summer 2020

Commencement is a time to celebrate completions and new beginnings.

With mixed emotions, the OBU Honors Program bids farewell to students who have completed their Honors requirements and their OBU degrees.

Those new graduates then embark upon new adventures in academic, family, and/or vocational spheres of life.

By DR. LINDSEY PANXHI and CHRISTIN MULLER

The Honors Program celebrated our 25th annual Honors Graduation Dinner and Awards Ceremony on an unconventional date: Friday, July 31, 2020. OBU typically celebrates graduation in May, but due to COVID-19, we moved graduation to Saturday, Aug. 1, and enjoyed an outdoor ceremony in the morning (blessed with surprisingly pleasant temperatures.) The evening before, we gathered at Temple Baptist Church's Fellowship Hall to celebrate our 16 students graduating with College Honors. President Thomas, Provost DeWoody, Honors faculty, and Honors seniors and their families enjoyed a meal in the fellowship hall (seated by family groups and socially distanced, of course.) Dr. Tawa Anderson, associate professor of philosophy and former assistant director of the Honors Program, shared an edifying and nostalgic message in which he reflected on his memories from class time, study abroad and the fellowship he has shared with the seniors over the past four years. Graduating seniors were then recognized and hooded:

EMMA BERRY, biochemistry. Emma is attending OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation as a part of the inaugural class.

ALEXIS BESCH, psychology pre-counseling. Alexis hopes to serve Christ abroad in Prague or London, once COVID conditions enable her to travel.

SYDNEY BLEVINS, biology. Sydney is attending OSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine.

ABIGAIL CUNNINGHAM, biology. Abigail works as office director at Anderson House Pregnancy Resource Center. In the next few years, she also hopes to pursue a master's degree.

DANNIE DEASON, political science. Dannie is attending Emory University School of Law on a Dean's Academic Scholarship.

RACHEL FROEBE, biology. Rachel is further exploring her scientific interests before attending graduate school to research genetic engineering.

TORI HAMILTON, graphic design. Tori is pursuing graphic design work in the Oklahoma City area.

CHAD JORDAN, biochemistry. Chad is attending OU-Tulsa's School of Community Medicine.

ANDREW JOYCE, sociology and Spanish. Andrew is now working as an optician in Oklahoma City and preparing for graduate school.

MEGAN KALINOWSKI, nursing. Megan accepted a position in the Nurse Residency program of OU Children's Hospital to work on the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit.

HANNAH KEY, business management. Hannah is pursuing a career in small business administration and is also interested in pursuing production management.

BARRETT PANNELL, chemistry. Barrett is attending the optometry program at the University of Missouri St. Louis.

HUDSON PAYNE, mathematics and Physics. Hudson is attending graduate school at the University of Oklahoma, studying mathematics.

JANA SATZLER, family and community service. Jana is attending the Marriage and Family Therapy Master's Program at OBU. Jana also has the distinction of being the only Honors student to voluntarily complete all three Honors Capstones, instead of the usual two out of three.

SAYDI STELZER, biology. Saydi plans to attend a plant pathology graduate program at University of Arkansas or Oklahoma State University.

JONATHAN WOOD, English. Jonathan is now working at the National American Insurance Company in Chandler, Oklahoma, with plans to attend seminary in the next year.

In addition to the recognition of all our graduating Honors students, four individual Honors students received scholarships and awards. Two Deaton Memorial Scholarships are awarded to a rising junior and rising senior who are among the top three GPAs in their respective classes. This year's recipients were Katelyn Onkst, a junior from Yukon, Oklahoma, majoring in business management with a minor in biblical studies; and Christin Muller, a senior from Little Elm, Texas, pursuing a double degree in animation and computer science.

The Michael E. Travers Memorial Honors Scholarship was established in honor of Dr. Travers, who passed away in March 2017 after a lengthy battle with prostate cancer. The Travers Memorial Honors Scholarship is awarded to a senior in the Honors Program who exemplifies the qualities that marked Dr. Travers' 40-year career in Christian higher education: (a) deep appreciation for and love of the world of ideas and literature, (b) academic excellence, (c) vibrant personal commitment to evangelical Christian faith, and (d) thorough integration of Christian faith with academic endeavors. This year's recipient of the Travers Scholarship was Jonathan Soder, a philosophy major with English and biblical studies minors from Hale Center, Texas.

The Thomas E. Dowdy Memorial Thesis Award was established in honor of Dr. Dowdy, professor of sociology at OBU from 1987 until his death in 2006. The monetary prize award, established by his wife, Mrs. Beverly Dowdy, honors the memory of Dr. Dowdy and his deep commitment to outstanding student scholarship at Oklahoma Baptist University. The 2020 recipient of the Dowdy Memorial Thesis Award was Dannie Deason, a Political Science major with a History minor from Sedan, New Mexico. The criteria for determining the merits of a thesis include an evaluation of thesis content, style, originality and extensive research. Deason's thesis, "Evaluating Presidential Power in the Proper Context of the Constitutional Separation of Powers," excelled in all of these areas.

It was a joy to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduating seniors, and to recognize the ongoing, excellent work of our rising juniors and seniors, at the Honors Program's 25th Graduation Awards Ceremony.



Honors Graduate Jana Satzler receiving her thesis copy after her hooding.



Honors Graduate Andrew Joyce receiving his thesis copy after his hooding.



Life in London and at Literati Press: A Recent Honors Alum's Adventures

By CHLOE HARRISON
OBU Honors Graduate of 2019

I can honestly say that making the decision to join the Honors community was a choice that changed my life. I can still remember my first day in HON 1013, feeling completely out of my depth but wanting to prove my inner critic wrong. That first semester – reading great literature, engaging in class discussions and writing countless reflection essays – was one of the most challenging and intellectually stimulating periods of my life. It set a high precedent and helped me develop skills that benefited me throughout the rest of my time at OBU. Looking back now, it's hard to believe that the shy girl who was terrified to speak

up in that first class is the same girl who would present and defend a thesis to a room of her peers and professors a mere four year later.

Being an Honors student was transformative in many ways, but perhaps the most life-altering experience was the Study Abroad capstone. The summer before my senior year at OBU, I had the incredible opportunity to go on a month-long trip to London, England, with a group of Honors students. Traveling to London had always been a dream of mine, so I was the first one to sign up when the trip was announced. Getting to explore the city that had inspired so many of my favorite books and getting to know all of the students and professors who went on the trip was such a blessing. Pickwick Hall and the little community we built there will always hold a special place in my heart.

My time studying abroad in London was also instrumental in solidifying my future. My initial dream – to visit the city – had been achieved. After, there was another dream rising to the surface, one that I had kept quiet and unspoken for fear that it was too far-fetched. I began to dream about living in London. I did not stop with the dream, though. I made a conscious effort to see how I would fit into the bustle of London, and most importantly, I prayed. What I came to realize as our

trip drew to an end was that God would be with me guiding my path no matter where I ended up. It was not a question of destiny, but a question of devotion. I knew that if I chose London, God would provide.

My senior year passed in a blur of classes, thesis writing and revisions, and the desperate kind of memory-making with friends that only happens when you know a chapter of life is about to end. A totally new chapter was about to begin, and that same year I was flying across the Atlantic to start my postgraduate life in London, where I had been accepted into a Publishing MA course at the University of Roehampton. The Honors Program was instrumental in my invitation to the program. I made my first connection with the MA Publishing convenor with the help of my thesis advisor by having her act as the external reader of my thesis, which focused on the author-editor relationship. I also believe I wouldn't have had to confidence to move to another country on my own without first having travelled to London with the Honors Program.

Those first few months living in London were not easy, but they were exhilarating. I had already been a tourist in London. Now, I wanted to be a Londoner, and to experience the city as someone who lived there. Most of my classes were in the evening, so I would spend the days commuting into Central and trying to see as much of the city as I possibly could. Mostly, this involved visiting a new independent bookshop or finishing my class reading in a cute café or pub.

While I was learning so much about the publishing industry in my modules,



Working at Literati Press Bookshop, helping curate their collection



Left to right: Chloe at Tower Bridge with fellow Honors students Allison Foster, Rachel Burchfield, and Lauren Shiveley



Enjoying a stroll through Notting Hill

I never felt overwhelmed by the amount of work. In fact, they were nowhere near as challenging as the Honors courses I took in undergrad. Of course, the threat of the dissertation was always looming, but the required word count was not even half the length of my Honors thesis. I felt adequately – if not *overly* – prepared to finish my degree because of the excellent education I had received at OBU. I was excited for the approaching summer, when I planned to travel around Europe and start applying for publishing internships.

Then the whole global pandemic thing happened.

When the COVID-19 headlines first started popping up in the papers, I didn't take it seriously. It was just another foreign disease that would go away in a couple

weeks. When events I had been looking forward to started getting cancelled and there were rumors that the university would close down because of the rising numbers, it was an inconvenience. When I saw people on the Tube wearing masks and my parents laughingly suggested I come home, it was a joke. I enjoyed the view from Primrose Hill with my coursemates in early March, not knowing that it would be my last time commuting into Central, or that a week later I would be on a plane headed back to Oklahoma.

The coronavirus definitely altered my plans for the future, but I know that I am far from alone in that. In fact, I'm one of the lucky ones. Lucky that I could come home. Lucky to be with family. Lucky to find a summer job. Lucky to be able to finish my degree online and receive a

distinction on my dissertation. Lucky to be alive.

Recently, I started working at Literati Press Bookshop in the Paseo District of Oklahoma City, where I get to read and share my favorite books with people for a living. My roommate is actually one of the first people I met at Roehampton. Life is funny that way. I feel like things are finally aligning, and I know God is in control, even in the chaos.

My life has changed drastically over the last eight months, but if studying editing has taught me anything, it is that revision is expected and necessary. My story is not over. Eventually, I want to return to London and finish what I started. For now, though, I am happy to pursue this next draft.

An Overview of the Honors Program

In case you know of high school students who would be excited to take part in the OBU Honors Program, here is information from the brochure we like to distribute to interested students and families. We would be thrilled if our readers would share this newsletter with any students, parents or high school teachers who may be excited to learn more about OBU Honors and our new team-taught curriculum!

THE IDEA OF HONORS

Looking for an enriching challenge in your undergraduate education?

The Honors Program at Oklahoma Baptist University may be your answer. OBU Honors elevates scholarly experience by:

- Cultivating and building upon a Christian intellectual heritage,
- Broadening transdisciplinary encounters, and
- Inspiring innovative research, service and global engagement.

The Honors Program pursues its mission through:

- Fostering a vibrant multidisciplinary Honors community,
- Faithfully engaging diverse intellectual perspectives,
- Maturing servant leadership,
- Facilitating study abroad experience, and
- Mentoring scholars in independent research.

Honors offers our brightest students a range of opportunities to study and explore with similarly motivated students and OBU's best faculty. As a member of the Honors Program, you will join a close-knit community of Christian scholars. We are dedicated to helping you expand your mind, enrich your soul and explore God's world.

Completion of the program will set you apart as a "Graduate with College Honors" at Commencement. Your participation in the Honors Program prepares you for future success, making you an outstanding candidate for graduate studies or prestigious careers in your field. But please don't join simply for the tangible benefits. The real rewards of our program reside in the rich relationships with peers, faculty and ideas. And be warned: such relationships are likely to change your life.

THE PROGRAM

The Honors Program builds on the strong foundation of OBU's liberal arts curriculum. Participation in the program will add some obligations and perhaps a few hours to your degree



plan, but the result is a richer, fuller experience of study and academic achievement.

Honors classes are distinctive in their in-depth exploration of the Great Books of Western civilization, enriched by historical, theological and philosophical readings. Freshmen dive into the Ancient World in the fall, followed by the Classical World in the spring. Sophomores study the Medieval and Early Modern World in the fall, and the Modern World in the spring. Along with these core classes, Honors students take at least four colloquia and complete contracted study or the Oklahoma Scholar-Leadership Enrichment Program (OSLEP).

In addition to these courses, all Honors Program graduates complete at least two of three “capstone” activities. These include study abroad, a service practicum and a senior thesis. Each of these is individually arranged through the director of the Honors Program and is supervised by one or more faculty members or a designated outside expert.

Honors Program courses are taught by OBU’s most outstanding faculty members, and as an Honors student, you are provided careful advisement and supervision by both the director of the Honors Program and a faculty member in your major field of study.

If you qualify, and if you choose to be part of the Honors Program, you won’t be overwhelmed by commitments to class and homework. Honors students have time to take part in many other activities on and off campus. Instead, you will be committing to a program of study that will shepherd your heart, mind and soul to serve and glorify Christ, and you will encounter a community of faculty and fellow students joining you in the same pursuit.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

All highly qualified and intellectually inquisitive students admitted to OBU are invited to apply to the Honors Program. Applicants should have a 3.5 GPA or higher. While the Honors Program does not have a minimum standardized test score requirement, the average ACT composite score for the last five entering classes has been a 29 and the average SAT score has been a 1350. A comparable CLT score is a 91. Applicants are also required to submit a resume, a 2-5 page writing sample and a letter of recommendation from a teacher.

Priority Application Deadline: March 31

Apply online: okbu.edu/academics/honors

The Pillars of OBU’s Honors Program

Eight Core Classes (24 credits)

Honors classes are team-taught by three professors from fields such as philosophy, literature, fine arts, history and theology, creating a dynamic, discussion-based learning environment based on the Great Books tradition.

1. Freshman Fall: HON 1013 and HON 1113
The Ancient World covers the OT, the Ancient Near East and classical Greece.
(Replaces REL 1013 and ENGL 1163 in Common Core.)
2. Freshman Spring: HON 2013 and HON 2143
The Classical World covers the Roman Empire and the rise of Christianity.
(Replaces HIST 2013 and ENGL 2013 in Common Core.)
3. Sophomore Fall: HON 2543 and HON 2643
The Medieval and Early Modern World covers medieval Christendom, the Renaissance and the Reformation.
(Replaces FNAR 2063 and HIST 2023 in Common Core.)
4. Sophomore Spring: HON 3013 and HON 3113
The Modern World covers the Enlightenment through the 21st century.
(Replaces REL 3073 and ENGL 2023 in Common Core.)

Four Colloquia (0-4 credits)

Honors Colloquia (HON 2119-2719) are focused (0-1 credit) courses on special topics intended to enhance your academic experience.

Any semester.

Contracted Study or OSLEP (1-3 credits)

Contracted Study (HON 3779) is a 1-2 credit arranged faculty-supervised research project.
Spring, junior year: on top of regular Degree Plan.

or OSLEP (Oklahoma Scholar-Leadership Enrichment Program) Seminars are state-wide topical Honors seminars offered throughout the academic year.
Any semester: can be credits toward major.

Two Honors Capstones (0-6 credits)

1. **Honors Thesis** (HON/XXXX 4999) – faculty-supervised research culminating in a major written project.
Fall, senior year: 3 credits toward major.
2. **Study Abroad** (HON 4889) – an immersive foreign cultural and study experience (minimum 4 weeks).
Any semester: 0-3 credits.
3. **Service Practicum** (HON 4770) – an intensive volunteer internship (minimum 80 hours) with an approved ministry.
Any semester: 0 credit hours.



EXPAND
the Mind

ENRICH
the Soul

EXPLORE
the World

If you are an OBU honors alumnus and would like to update the OBU honors community as to your life events since graduation, please email details to the honors director,

lindsey.panxhi@okbu.edu