

The Honors Oracle



February 2024

Spring 2024

Issue 1

Meet Mary Beth Ferda, the Newest Honors College Member

by Sydney Gibson

The Honors College is welcoming its newest staff member, Mary Beth Ferda, this semester! Mary Beth is a local, born in West Virginia and raised in the upper Ohio Valley. She has an extensive background in creative writing and freelance copywriting and marketing, including a



Mary Beth Ferda

courtesy of Marshall University

Bachelor of Arts degree from Bethany College in West Virginia and a Master of Fine Arts degree in poetry from the University of Florida. Additionally, Mary Beth also has a background in entrepreneurship through owning a private massage therapy practice for over ten years.

Mary Beth's goal for her position in the Honors College is to listen to the needs of students and tailor resources within the college to those students' needs.

"We all hope that the Honors College becomes more of a community for students and feels more like a home for all students on campus," said Mary Beth, "Marshall as a whole is a

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wonderful place to meet new students and feel at home, but we hope the honors college also feels like a home to help students meet new people that can help them with future careers."

Mary Beth's new position is an excellent way for the

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Honors College to provide more opportunities for their students to have fun and be more involved in campus life. She, along with the head of the honors college, Dr. Hoey, are working together to shape the future of the Honors College as they respond to the needs of

both the staff and students.

“I am excited to give the honors college students a person that they can go to when they have ideas,” Stated Assistant Dean Cara Bailey, “Students are very forward thinking and have lots of momentum with their ideas, so she is here to keep it going

forward.”

Mary Beth encourages all honors students to reach out to her in person, through Instagram, or by email to talk to her about any ideas they have to make their honors college experience the best it can be.

Preparing the Herd for Graduation

by *Mikayla Steele*

As Spring semester is upon us, the finish line for Marshall Seniors is well within sight...finally! There are several events and milestones that each Honors Student should complete as commencement is quickly approaching.

Applications for graduation will have been submitted by the third week of classes, but additional responsibilities for graduation come quickly.

“It can be a struggle to add graduation duties to academics and

extracurriculars,” said Honors Student Madison Gibbs.

As reported in the Herald Dispatch, on March 12th and 13th Marshall will host the Countdown to Commencement for all

2024 graduates. The event goes from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. on both days in the Don Marshall Room in the Memorial Student Center.

Additionally, Honors College Seniors have the *(continued on Page 3)*



President Brad D Smith and past graduate Goran Miladinovic
courtesy of GradImages

Honors Convocation in April to look forward to. Their achievements and hard work will be recognized through “honors and awards that are determined by each department” according to the Convocation’s website.

While the Honors College does not provide tassels or honors cords, an Honors Medallion is awarded to all students who remain in good academic standing with the Honors College. Don’t forget that Cap and Gowns are to be purchased

in the bookstore inside the Memorial Student Center. Commencement occurs on Saturday, April 27th (details still to be determined), good luck and congratulations to soon-to-be graduates!

HCCAP and Upper Division Seminars

by *Maria Ramey*

All honors students know the struggle of picking an honors class for the

semester from the catalogue of courses. While the list of classes is long, the options for honors courses are limited. Have

you ever wondered who gets to decide which honors classes and seminars are offered?

The Honors College Curriculum and Policies Committee (HCCAP) is responsible for exactly that. HCCAP is a committee of 15 people. 13 faculty members from Marshall’s colleges and two honors college students. The committee decides the honors seminars for the semester by reviewing and voting on proposals submitted by professors. If a proposal is approved, the professor will be permitted to teach their seminar class in the upcoming semester.

These proposals are all for

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CAM	Sandra Reed	Art and Design (24)
COEPD	Isaac Larison	Literacy Education (25)
COHP	Elizabeth Pacioles	Health Sciences (25)
COLA	Jana Tigchelaar	English (24)
COS	Herman Mays	Biological Sciences (25)
CECS	Paulus Wahjudi	Computer Science (24)
COB	Nabeneeta Biswas	Finance, Economics, International Business (25)
Student	Myra Cuffee	Honors College (24)
Student	Shawna Lockard	Yeager Scholar, Honors College (24)
Honors College	Brian A. Hoey	Dean, HCCAP Chair
Honors College	Cara Bailey	Assistant Dean, Director of the Society of Yeager Scholars
Honors College	Heather Brooks	Honors Advisor
Honors College	Jami Smith	Office Administrator, HCCAP Secretary

List of current HCCAP representatives

courtesy of <https://www.marshall.edu/honors/teaching/hccap-committee/>

upper-division honors seminar courses (HON 480), which are typically completed during a student's junior or senior year. Every honors student must complete at least one of these seminars during their undergraduate career as an Honors College requirement.

What exactly are these honors seminar courses? Basically, HON 480 courses are a select few seminars centered on special topics voted on by

the HCCAP. Each seminar is taught by professors who have experience in those specific fields. These curriculums are specifically designed to be original from any other class students may have taken. These classes are typically small with around fifteen students or less and are designed to be interdisciplinary. Because there are proposals being reviewed by HCCAP each semester, there will always be new class options for

upcoming juniors and seniors.

Students who want to learn more about the upper-division honors seminar courses should visit the [Honors Courses](#) page on the Marshall University website. There, students will find a list of all current HON 480 seminars with descriptions as well as other courses offered in the Honors College.

Understanding the Fight: Arab-Israeli Conflict Course at Marshall

by John Huff

Over 4 months ago, on October the 7th, the people of Israel came under attack by the Hamas Resistance Movement. Since these attacks took place, there has been controversy all over the world about the situation, and those on both sides of the attacks have called for ceasefires. The idea of who is to blame, as well as the

continued fight between the Palestinians, and the State of Israel has yet again

come to the forefront of American foreign policy.
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courtesy of USA Today

Demonstrations and protests on college campuses around the world have garnered attention from major media outlets; here at Marshall University specifically, a professor decided to help students understand the background behind this conflict. After the events on October 7th, Dr. Christopher White, is a professor of history here at Marshall University, decided to put together HST-445, also known as the Arab-Israeli Conflict course. His goal was to help students understand why this conflict is happening and the events leading up to it.

The class began with background information to get a sense of the region, Dr. White decided to use a book by author Ian Black, “Enemies and Neighbors: Arabs and Jews in

Palestine, and Israel 1917-2017.” As the course material, which is useful for informing students on this conflict's history. After getting the background information from the region, the class dove into some of the lesser-known conflicts from region beginning with British control of the region and the Balfour Declaration, the White Papers, the Deir Yassin Massacre. The class then began the discussion on Six-Day War in which Israel, won against the nations of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. The class will cover all the way up into the current state of relations between Israel and Palestine.

During an interview, the professor was asked if he believed Syria or Lebanon would end up on the radar of the IDF (Israeli Defense

Forces).

“It is possible, but it is a no-win situation. Trying to localize it Gaza and be strategic.” Said Dr. Next, he was asked, with tension at a high in the Middle East, did he believe the US with it support of Israel, put boots on the ground? Dr. White responded with a simple ‘no’. Lastly, Dr. White discussed the future of the course. He was asked specifically if he would be continuing to teach this course in the coming semester.

“If interest remains, I will continue to offer this course.” Said Dr. White. With no end in sight for this conflict, this course might be a great addition not just to your transcript, but to also help your understanding of a very volatile and complex situation.

HON 480: Poverty in the United States

by Emily Akers

In the first week of class, Honors College students in Dr. Missy Reed and Dr.

Marianna Linz’s HON 480 seminar were split into groups and tasked with creating a rainbow from a

bag of random resources. The only caveat—not every group’s tools were the
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courtesy of Clipart Library

same. While some students received colored paper, others worked with only gray crayons.

“No one can make a rainbow if they don’t get access to a whole box of crayons,” said Dr. Linz, chair of the psychology department, about the activity. “I hope they will question the idea that any individual can do anything if they just push hard enough.”

This exercise was a fitting introduction to a class exploring “Poverty in the United States,” which will examine the very disparities discovered during the activity. Only, instead of crayons, real-world

resources will be the assets in question.

“WV is one of the poorest states in the country, and around 80% of Marshall students are from WV, so many of them have probably lived in poverty and know people who live in poverty,” said Dr. Reed, special education professor, when explaining the significance of the topic to our university.

In fact, students’ involvement in this issue was part of the inspiration for the course.

“On a personal level, when I am thinking about seminar topics, I do try to think of things that would be interesting to students and that might be relatable

to them,” said Reed.

“I wanted to teach this class because the younger generations truly get it [the significant problems associated with poverty],” said Linz. The “it” she refers to being the significance of the problems associated with poverty.

“Poverty is an inefficient lifestyle. A person who lives at or below the poverty line spends far more time and effort on daily tasks than the rest of us do,” said Linz, describing what she hopes students learn.

The professors are also hoping to address the stigma associated with those living in poverty.

“Poverty is often the result of lack of opportunity and not the character faults that so many people blame poverty on,” says Reed. “People who live in poverty usually do not live up to stereotypes.”

In addition to understanding the issue, this course will equip

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students with tools to address it. “I want them to question the way things have always been done so that we begin to give people what they need instead of trying to give everyone the same thing,” said Linz.

Currently, the class is developing a project to engage with the Huntington community. Early plans include surveying public

knowledge and meeting with area resource centers, which will culminate in a presentation of the gathered information.

Dr. Linz hopes these efforts can transcend the semester. “I would like to see this offered consistently, not just as an Honors seminar, but as an interdisciplinary course that provides the opportunity not just to learn but to begin to

engage,” she said.

Students hoping to take the class in the future should remain interested.

“It’s very possible, we’ll see how this semester goes and what students think about the course,” said Dr. Reed.

To stay updated on HON 480 topics, visit the Honors College website: <https://www.marshall.edu/honors/courses/>

Letter from the Editor

In case you don’t know, the Oracle is a student-led newsletter run by honors college students. We send out a newsletter each month during the semester with Marshall University and Honors College related stories written by students in the class. If you are interested journalism, the Honors Oracle is the perfect class to not only earn an extra honors credit, but also to grow more acquainted with the Honors College in general. We really like to focus on building community within the honors college, bringing students of all backgrounds together with something we all have alike. If this is something that interests you, be sure to check out HON 484 for Fall 2024!

- **Maria Ramey**

Meet the Staff

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