

The Florida International University HONORS COLLEGE Magazine

# SUMMA CUM LAUDE

SPRING 2014



**Honors**  
*In and Out of the Classroom*

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This issue of *Summa cum Laude* highlights some of the innovative teachers and courses that form the core of the Honors experience. Ultimately, everything we do connects back to our curriculum—study abroad, undergraduate research, the annual A&V art exhibition. All the pieces of an Honors education mesh together into a coherent program of study that each student can tailor to his or her major, interests, and future plans. At the same time, we encourage students to move outside their comfort zones—to take the course they never thought could fit into their plans, to assemble their learning from both inside and outside the classroom—creating by the time they leave FIU a web of interwoven knowledge and skills taken from multiple disciplines and formats. The goal is to send into the world a cadre of young leaders with the ability to bring many fields and tactics to solving real-world problems of every kind. Research has shown that people who can make links between different areas—design, philosophy, the arts, mechanics, economics, whatever—are the most creative and effective at dealing with large-scale issues like health, poverty, urban living, or politics.

Like educators everywhere, we must deal with modern realities: reading actual (or even virtual) books is in decline among young people; information is more readily and selectively available from the internet than it is from lecturers; attention spans are shorter; teaching must account for what we now know about different learning styles; students expect and demand more self-direction in their classes. In the Honors College, we see our role as a laboratory for pedagogical experimentation, a place where new ways of teaching can be tried, adapted, assessed, and either exported or rejected. Our curriculum incorporates both the tried-and-true and the cutting edge, always in the context of continuous improvement.

Student feedback tells us that we are succeeding. Said one first-year student, “The Honors College provides a unique interdisciplinary curriculum that allows students to broaden their studies beyond their chosen majors. The Honors College experience not only produces a well-rounded student but an intellectual as well.” Another notes that her Honors class “has really opened my eyes to the world; it’s sparked my curiosity. I question everything now, like a child constantly asking, Why?”

Perfect! That’s just what we’re trying to accomplish. I hope you enjoy reading about some of the ways we go about getting to that goal.

Lesley A. Northup  
Dean

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Beloved Pet Mummification: Leroy, the Last Dragon by Jacquelyn “JJ” Moultrie for Gretchen Scharnagl’s class on humans and animals. See page 16.

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Today's headlines assure us that college students are unprepared to write standard English, to apply reason and logic to their essays, to do appropriate research, to think critically. Of course, this never applies to Honors students, right? Not! Sadly, many among our best and brightest suffer the same limitations as their lower-scoring peers. There is plenty of blame to go around: Blame the culture of texting and tweeting. Blame the decline of

The course starts off with lively debate sparked by the small book, *Sum: Forty Tales of the Afterlife*, by scientist David Eagleman. Eagleman's imaginative propositions about what might happen after we die are the basis for an early exercise in critical thinking, not to mention the reading of an actual book. The only other paper-and-ink book the students use for the course is a basic writing manual, *Writing Philosophy* by Lewis Vaughan.

# Not Ready for Prime Time?

serious reading. Blame the quality of high school teaching. Blame student laziness. Blame computers. But playing the blame game doesn't solve the problem.

So the Honors College decided to do something about it. Over the last three years, we have developed a year-long, one-credit required course called Introduction to Honors, a booster shot for incoming freshmen aimed at getting them off to a good start as advanced college students.

The focus of the course is building basic skills—rhetorical writing, logical argumentation, research principles, leadership ability—and providing practical resources and helpful advice for students as they navigate the murky waters of a university education. And we resolved to do this with cutting-edge pedagogy.

One credit hour per semester does not provide much time for the Socratic method or even for building community, so our first decision was to “flip” the course. Using the course management system Blackboard, we posted all the content for the course online, where students can access it on their own schedule. Online materials include detailed lessons for accomplishing tasks like writing a book review or arguing logically, PowerPoint presentations on everything from research principles to academic ethics, and pedagogical guidance for instructors. Students are expected to have read all the materials and to be ready to use their limited class time for discussion. The carefully chosen instructors of the fifteen Intro sections are facilitators, not lecturers.

Also posted online are a series of self-administered exercises to refresh soggy memories of grammatical and syntactical rules. Students must complete each exercise with a score of at least 80%. They can retake the quiz (the questions change) until they achieve that goal. These drills are not optional—a student cannot move on to the next lesson until the assigned exercise has been done.

The core of the course is the peer writing workshop. Writing assignments are pegged to larger projects students are developing in the first-year Honors seminar, Origins of Ideas, Ideas of Origins, which all freshmen take. The Intro course allows them to work collectively on turning in a better product. Small groups of students in each section post their written work online a couple of days before it is due, review each other's output, then meet in class for detailed discussion of each other's writing. The peer approach, long recognized as excellent college pedagogy, creates a safe space for critique and improvement.

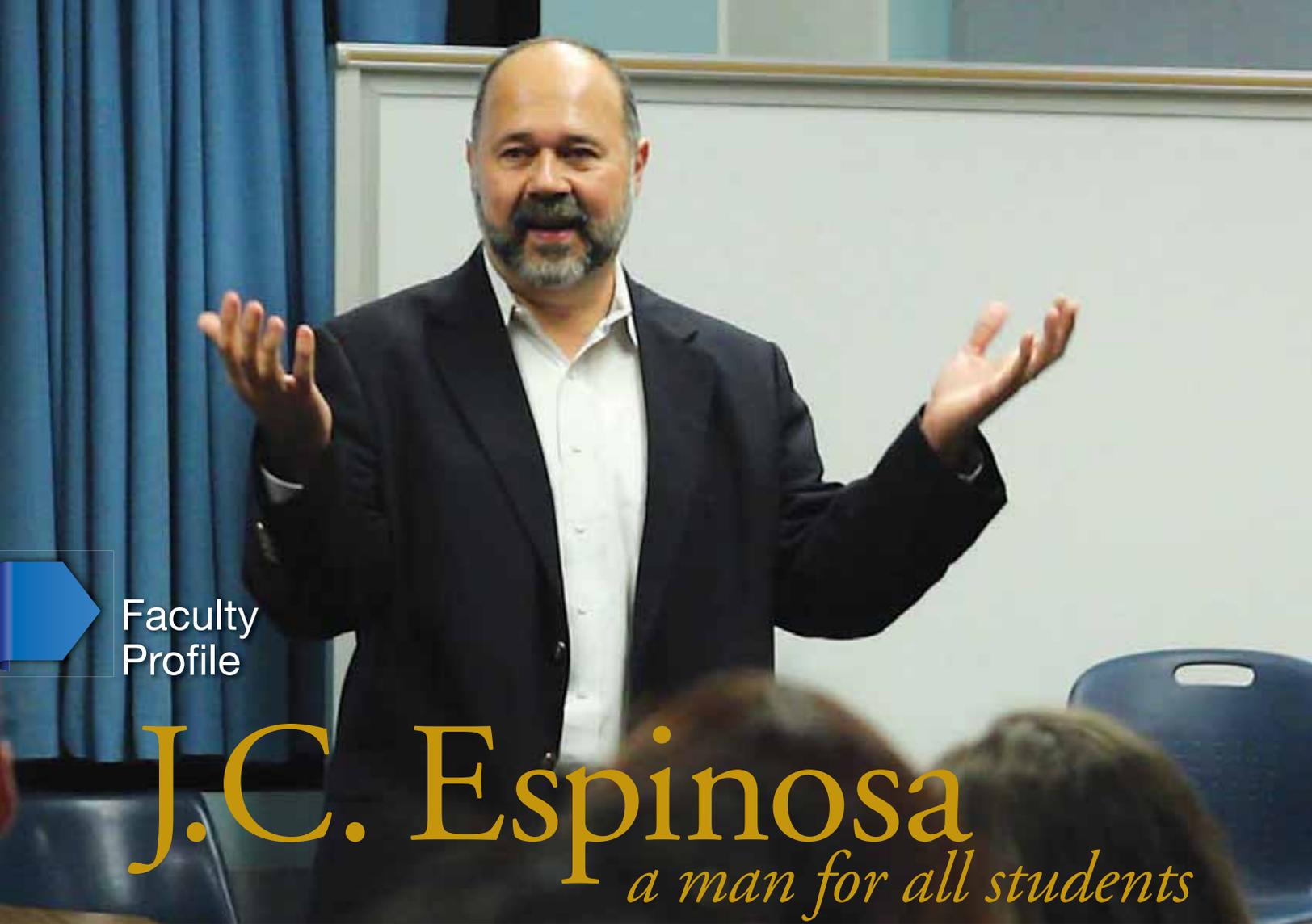
After several years of experimentation, we seem to have hit on the right formula for the class. Instructors and students alike report that it is both helpful and enjoyable. Individual sections develop their own personalities and take on a life of their own. One of our instructors, Umer Rahman, reports that he encouraged student groups to give themselves names. Student humor has produced “the Amazing Procrastinators,” “Los Killer Cupcakes,” and “брюква (Rutabaga),” along with matching logos and graphic design. More importantly, his students have utilized the group discussion board—another feature of Blackboard—for turning in assignments and discussing politics, current events, social media, sports, music, celebrity gossip and more. He also notes the value of the course for building community: “I believe if we can nurture a special bond with our students, they will work harder and produce better results. So far this strategy has worked like a charm.”

The College's development of the Intro course is in keeping with our mission to be a pedagogical laboratory, where new ideas and approaches can be tested, refined, and implemented. The ultimate goal is to create a model for an introductory course that can be used by other honors colleges and programs, or even across all FIU freshmen. □

College graduates can't write  
TODAYS COLLEGE STUDENTS CAN'T COMMUNICATE  
are we failing our kids?  
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS ARE NOT DOING THEIR JOBS

Peer learning in the Honors College lounge.





## Faculty Profile

# J.C. Espinosa

*a man for all students*

Political scientist, avant-garde composer, linguist, environmentalist, world traveler from pole to pole, Cuba expert, art collector, orchid master. You could know all these things about J.C. Espinosa and still not recognize what he brings to the Honors College as a teacher and administrator—creativity, a deep commitment to students, an intellectual magnetism that lines students up at his office door just to be part of the discussion.

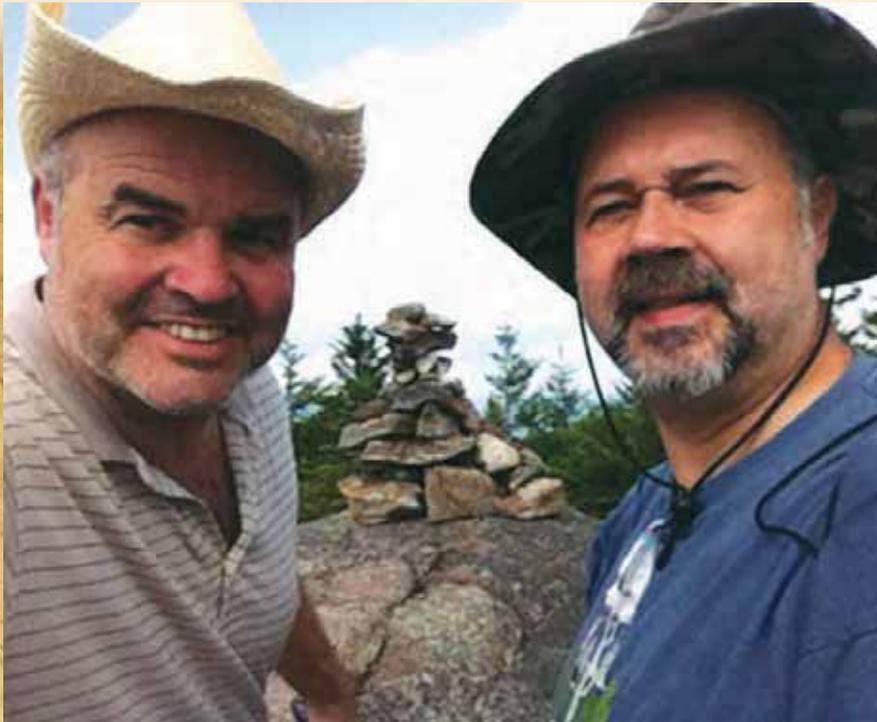
Before coming to Honors in 2006, Espinosa was at Miami Dade College, where he worked directly with President Eduardo Padron and mastered academic administration. But he yearned to return to the classroom and the excitement of sparking intellectual curiosity in students. The Honors College gave him the opportunity to do both as Associate Dean. Over the years, he has served in multiple roles as necessary, heading

external affairs, development and fundraising, and now, in his favorite niche, faculty and curriculum. His responsibilities include hiring the best faculty to teach Honors classes, keeping our courses cutting-edge, and running the rapidly expanding undergraduate research program, ARCH (Advanced Research and Creativity in Honors).

And, of course, he teaches. Putting on temporary hold his popular course on “The Art of War,” an examination of how war is represented through culture, he now teaches a ground-breaking course for second-year students called “The Middle Circle.” This experimental course uses student peer instructors and various formats—large and small group meetings, and “salons”—as it investigates the multi-disciplinary approach needed for modern problem-solving. In the words of Espinosa’s syllabus, “The cure to a heart disorder may be found in chemistry,

biology, physics, psychology, or (who’s to argue?) plumbing. Similarly, a gas delivery company may find that, instead of using a mathematical or statistical algorithm for mapping their truck routes, they are better off modeling their routes on the foraging behavior of Argentine ants.” The course thus stresses the processes of combining and utilizing multiple problem-solving strategies, developing and using proof, understanding the evolution of ideas, and translating those ideas into “eloquent clarity” of expression.

Senior Brian Matilla presented at the 2013 ARCH Conference on the Swarm Project, another innovative pedagogical technique used in the class. He says that “most of the things we have taken from this course, added to what we already learned in our majors, has been assembled into projects that grabbed the interest of the audience during the panel. Everyone’s major will relate at



J. C. Espinosa and artist Xavier Cortada on another creative artistic adventure.

some point down the road. We take our own knowledge, then learn from others' strong points and take the best from that, and then digest that knowledge to help spread it out once again as a bigger package of information and knowledge. In the end, this helps to form that delicate web between people of different majors which is seldom created in the college environment."

The course represents Espinosa's continual search for the best pedagogical methods to train young minds to think clearly, critically, and convincingly. This carries over into his ongoing revision of the crucial first-year course, *Origins of Ideas and Ideas of Origin*. In line with our efforts to make the course as compelling and impactful as possible, Espinosa has introduced everything from a major project on DaVinci's notebooks to research on polymaths—those geniuses among us who bring wide-ranging talents and interests to bear on new questions, and succeed in multiple fields. Said one student recently of the course, "I like the subject material and the constant search for the answers to the 'Big Questions.' It made me think a lot about my own methods of thinking and problem-solving, and I was able to apply this knowledge to my other classes."

Espinosa's academic career began in international relations at the University of Miami and Sveučilište u Zagrebu, where he studied the languages and politics of eastern Europe (his Russian still comes in handy occasionally, and his Croatian recently started a new Faculty Fellow.) At the University of Miami, where he earned his PhD in Comparative Politics and International Relations, his interests turned toward the Caribbean and Cuba, where he was born. His work in that area focused on the role of the Cuban military in the economy and its potential role post-Castro. These days, his main research interests include the arts and political expression, culture and collective identity, and Cuban political culture.

That interest in other countries and cultures has led him to travel from Antarctica to the North Pole, from Vietnam to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Often, those trips are tied to his second great passion, the arts—especially music. Espinosa is a classically trained composer and sound artist whose work includes film scores and over 75 solo, chamber, choral and electro-acoustic pieces. His music expresses his concerns about the environment and the withering of

human and cultural memory, and is often developed in collaboration with an artist using another medium—dance, painting, performance art. In particular, he has worked extensively with Florida Artist of the Year Xavier Cortada, for whom he has created multiple soundscapes, installations, and scores. Their unique eco-art features interdisciplinary collaboration and participatory practices that involve artists, scientists, and communities in preserving and rebuilding the bio-world. His musical acumen has also led to invitations to host pre-concert conversations on music and politics in Stalin's Russia as an introduction to the Cleveland Orchestra's performances of Shostakovich in Miami at the Arsht Center in 2009. Students are sometimes stunned to hear Espinosa's works, which can include everything from recordings of a volcano's deep-earth rumblings to the interactions of vibrators and piano strings.

Despite the risk of burnout from juggling so many projects simultaneously, Espinosa continues to put teaching at the forefront: "I am grateful for the opportunity and liberty to create new courses and experiment with pedagogy. It is not always easy to balance my teaching and administrative duties, but I get my energy from working with students." ■



Student  
Profile

**Fu Zhou**

WU



# Forging New Traditions

By Mary Lou Pfeiffer

Fu Zhou Wu was having none of an arranged marriage planned by her parents. Such a marriage was in the works for Fu, whose parents thought she did not have the intelligence and skills to have an independent career and, instead, was better suited to being a “good, traditional Chinese wife.” Rather than consent to the marriage, in December of 2008, Fu arrived in South Florida with a goal to learn English. She arrived by an interesting route: Laura Alonso Gallo discovered Fu’s marriage plight through Fu’s older sister, Quan, a graphic designer who attended the same university in Madrid as had Laura’s sister. Through this connection, the arranged marriage was replaced by an arranged life-changing trip to America.

Fu was not born in China, but in Nerja, Malaga, Spain, where her Chinese family had immigrated. The second oldest of five siblings, four girls and a boy, she lived in Marbella, Spain, with her parents until she was three, when she was sent to China to live with her grandmother—a journey to save expenses as her parents struggled to support their family. The return to China was also meant to train Fu in her expected traditional role. Fu proudly displays a phone photo of her ninety-year-old grandmother, who remains in China.

At age seven, she returned to Marbella, where her parents opened a Chinese restaurant called “Fu’s House.” Gradually her parents became

financially secure in the food service industry and opened several successful Chinese restaurants. Currently they own and operate “Gran Hong Kong” in Malaga Province, Estepona.

Fu credits Gallo’s husband, John Bussel, with introducing her to International Relations. He explained the importance of her background as a Chinese raised in Spain who also spoke English. She took his advice and majored in IR, through which she plans to apply her global citizenship and fluency in Spanish, Mandarin and other Chinese dialects, French, and English. She credits her favorite professor at FIU, Dr. Jerry Brown, an anthropologist, with offering her a “different spin on learning” that helped her to work diligently under pressure.

Fu, whose name means “felicity” in English, conveys a talent for speaking effectively and charmingly. This thoughtful yet vivacious young woman first served in the BBC/Pines Student Government Association, giving many hours of her time to the SGA to make changes and improvements for students. A year ago she served as the chairperson for the visiting speakers initiative, which included renowned speakers Carl Hiaasen and Larry King. Last year she ran for SGA president and won, campaigning on the promise to make her voice—and that of the students—count.

As president her goal is to secure more course offerings at BBC and the

Pines Center, improved communication between campuses, and better transportation services for students. In particular, she sees the need to improve housing at BBC and feels the university’s “clear vision” is somewhat cloudy regarding BBC and the Pines Center, a situation she finds unfair to students who attend these campuses. One area she hopes to address is the BBC food service provision: “When students are studying long hours in the library, there is a need for good coffee and healthful food, not from vending machines.”

Fu’s future goals include participating in a human rights NGO that will provide her a visa to stay in the US to continue her studies. She is also considering an internship in the human rights arena. Her wish list includes using her talents to act as a bridge-builder for peace. She will eventually return to Spain, and perhaps to China, so she can share her knowledge to improve conditions for the less fortunate.

Fu’s intelligence, perseverance and leadership skills while maintaining a 3.66 GPA as an FIU Honors College student have been remarkable. She mirrors in her own life her advice to others: “Perseverance and hard work while striving for excellence will pay off; sooner or later, success will come!” The Honors College has helped Fu prove her academic ability and forge the life goals of a brave and caring young woman. ■

# Reacting to Reacting to the Past

By John Bailly

Imagine a classroom in which the students are at the podium determining class structure, the semester's agenda, and leading class discussions.

Imagine faculty needing to calm students down as their debate about Rousseau's Social Contract is growing too passionate.

Imagine students sitting in a circle on the housing green at 1 am discussing the role of a king in society and then plotting how to kill the one ruling over them.

Imagine an online class discussion board with nearly 100 messages a day--many posted in the middle of the night.

Imagine a student checking out all 150 books on the French Revolution from the Green Library, and using suitcases to transport them.

Imagine an ideologically conservative student aggressively advocating for the redistribution of wealth. A female student arguing against society granting rights to women. An African-American student explaining the need to preserve the institution of slavery. A Jewish student falling on her knees in front of the class and leading students in a Catholic prayer.

Imagine faculty needing to meet for coffee every day after class to determine the future of democracy.

And imagine, if possible, Dean Northup as Benjamin Franklin and Dean Espinosa as Thomas Jefferson.

None of the above imaginings is fiction. These anecdotes are part of the Reacting

to the Past (RTTP) courses in the Honors College. Pioneered by Mark C. Carnes of Barnard College, RTTP "consists of elaborate role playing games, set in the past, in which students are assigned roles informed by classic texts in the history of ideas...It seeks to draw students into the past, promote engagement with big ideas, and improve intellectual and academic skills."

RTTP was first launched at FIU in the Fall of 2007. After attending an RTTP session at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Philadelphia, I proposed that we try this in the Honors College. RTTP seemed a perfect fit for our interdisciplinary curriculum, as well as our desire to develop critical thinking and public speaking skills. The first RTTP course was taught by myself (an artist), Gwyn Davies of History, Ruben Garrote of Religious Studies, and Pete Markowitz of Physics.

The learning outcomes and student enthusiasm were beyond anything we ever expected. We witnessed shy students develop into confident public speakers, engage classical texts and ideas on a profound level, and connect with one another far beyond the classroom. RTTP contributed to creating a vibrant community of young intellectuals.

Immediately, one game stirred student passions more than other possible historical games, resulting in student class participation on a level experienced

in few other class settings. The France game was a perfect fit for Honors. Entitled "Rousseau, Burke, and Revolution in France, 1791," it was set in a time in which artists, intellectuals, and politicians aimed to recreate civilization. Two years before the French Revolution descended into the Reign of Terror, 1791 was the most ambitious, successful, and idealistic moment of the Revolution.

In this French Revolution and Enlightenment setting, students are able to discuss the role of religion in society, the clash of science and religion, the nature of the social contract and how it should be implemented, monarchy, democracy, tyranny, the rights of women, the privileges of the nobility, the role of the arts, the rights of Jews, the legality and economics of slavery, the death penalty, and the responsibility of the state regarding education. And due to the structure of RTTP as a role-playing game with winners and losers, students experience these issues intensely. Honors students always want to win, and win with style.

Assuming specific historical roles (Louis XVI, La Fayette, Danton, Robespierre, Olympe de Gouges) on a given date (June 26, 1791), students are required to be familiar with all the historical facts prior to that date. Students are often assigned roles that run counter to their personal political positions or personalities in order to further the challenge. From June 26th





“During my reign as President of the National Assembly of France I was a god.”  
—Robert Colom, Anthropology/Film Studies, Class of 2013

on, however, students are free to recreate history. Although they are not allowed to dramatically change their characters’ historical positions, the students can logically evolve their roles and attempt to create new political alliances.

A testimony to the success of RTTP is that the game has a different outcome in each class. Over the years, La Fayette has established a military dictatorship, Danton and Olympe have led the crowd to a successful popular uprising that eliminated the nobility and the Leftists, the King has squashed the revolutionaries and reestablished the monarchy, and Condorcet has made a secret alliance pledging the English to invade France and establish him as ruler. The game outcome is determined by the students’ persuasion, intelligence, and initiative.

In the words of Kathy Paz, who has played the role of Nicolas Condorcet, “Reacting to the Past was one of the highlights of my college experience. In addition to introducing me to people who would become some of my best friends, the class helped me grow into myself. It allowed me to both showcase my strengths and work on areas that needed improvement. By that, I mean that Reacting to the Past requires you not only to use skills that are necessary outside classroom walls but to also hone those skills. Things like open communication, negotiation, and

team work may seem simple enough, but when you’re forced to work with multiple groups with opposing points of view, finding common ground and a way to succeed forces you to become a leader. And that causes you to react and to grow, both mentally and emotionally.”

Likewise, RTTP alumnus Kirk Villalon reports, “No undergrad class prepared me more for law school than Reacting to the Past. It required more independent work and research than any other class but was also the most rewarding experience of my undergrad career. My character was tasked with overthrowing the French monarchy and National Assembly and establishing a revolutionary commune. To remove the monarchy, the revolutionary forces put the king on trial. Never have I prepared more for a virtual trial than the trial of Louis XVI. On the last day of class I led a riot of the citizens of Paris to overthrow the Assembly and establish the First French Insurrectionary Commune.”

It’s not all about the French Revolution, however. Honors classes have also done modules on “Democracy in Greece,” “The Trial of Galileo,” and “Greenwich Village ca. 1913.” It’s also about, as Villalon says, “dramatically improving public speaking skills, social skills, coalition-building skills, and negotiation skills. The class also creates life-long friendships and life-long memories.

“It’s also not just fun and games” notes alumnus Robert Colom. “Reacting to the Past required a very large amount of research: we had to dig up and familiarize ourselves with not only our assigned characters, but also everyone else’s, in order to predict interactions and respond to statements that, if we didn’t know better, could get us killed. I became so invested in my character that I forgot I was in a class altogether. During Reacting, I WAS the representative from La Vendée.”

While the Reacting pedagogy was developed outside FIU, the Honors College has made substantial modifications to the original set of games. Says founder Mark Carnes, “Former Harvard President Derek Bok was pessimistic about the prospects of promoting active-learning pedagogies. ‘What are the prospects for turning colleges into effective learning organizations? Not good, unfortunately,’ he wrote in 2006. Why? Administrators and faculty were set in their ways, and students did not like the extra work that came with active learning. But the faculty, staff and students at the FIU Honors College have all proven him wrong. Their ability to swiftly solve a host of curricular, staffing, training and motivational problems has astonished--and inspired!--the entire Reacting community. The program at FIU will serve as a model for honors colleges throughout the nation.” □



pedro  
pavón '04

# The Right Man at the Right Time

By Adam D. Gorelick

What goes through the mind of a U.S. Army paratrooper, dropping out of the sky surrounded by only the curvature of the earth? Is he focused solely on his mission? Does he have a moment to take in the view? Does he learn something valuable from his aerial perspective? FIU Honors College alumnus, Community Advisory Board member, and now Faculty Fellow Pedro Pavón knows the answers to those questions first-hand, having served as an Army officer. Pavón took with him the unspoken sense of commitment among fellow troopers and the message, “I have put my life on the line. That’s all you need to know.” He also learned the importance of being in the right place at the right time.

Pavón continues to honor those experiences, but it was his service as an Army combat controller and trainer that made the biggest impact. While he trained thousands of personnel for combat operations and deployments overseas, he feels most rewarded having trained elite teams for humanitarian missions that provided food, access to healthcare, logistical support, and infrastructure development to local peoples in Iraq and Afghanistan. This sort of service harmonized with his original decision to volunteer.

Now, as Professor Pavón, the instructor of the new pre-law Honors course on Western Legal Philosophy, he has taken a circuitous path to the classroom. Born to Cuban refugees in the Spanish Canary Islands, Pavón came to Miami as a toddler with his mother, following the death of his father. Like so many before and after them, they had no money and did not speak the language, but somehow made it through.

Thanks to the sacrifices of his mother and stepfather, Pavón graduated from high school and enrolled at FIU as an engineering major while continuing to work full-time.

On September 11, 2001, something changed inside the 20-year-old Pavón. Suddenly, he knew he wanted to contribute to making the world a better place. He switched his major to political science, joined FIU R.O.T.C., graduated from FIU, and joined the Army Reserve as a commissioned officer. Pavón eventually attended the University of Florida College of Law while continuing to spend his weekends on duty as an Army reservist. In law school he was able to focus on student life for the first time and soon became an active student leader, serving as, among other things, president of the Hispanic and Latino Law Student Association.

Law degree in hand, he was selected for a position with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) via the U.S. Attorney General Honors Program, for which he served as a legal advisor at the Miami Immigration Court. It was gratifying work for someone who himself came to this country as a child, became a citizen, and served in the military, and he carried a deep sense of responsibility both to the law and to the lives of immigrant people.

Subsequently, he moved to Washington, DC, where he was tapped first by the U.S. Department of Energy to advise on civil rights and environment justice issues, then again by the DOJ to be the Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General of the United States, for whom he developed litigation strategy related to the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill. Once again in the right place at the right time, he frequently attended meetings with the

Attorney General and senior White House officials, including the President. After these exciting opportunities in federal government, Pavón returned home to Miami, where he now works in private practice, specializing in cyber security and privacy law in a lead role for Carlton Fields Jordan Burt, P.A.

As one of the College’s few alumni faculty, Pavón acknowledges that his experiences have impacted his non-traditional teaching style. From his time serving in government, he acquired a collaborative style of inquiry; rather than focusing on lectures, he instead employs a modified Socratic approach. Describing his role as that of a “crossing guard,” he facilitates group discussions aimed at cultivating the comprehensive rigor and habit of mind required to study and practice law. While some of the class is geared toward addressing the practical concerns of pre-law students, such as getting into law school and preparing for exams, the majority of the course engages theoretical aspects of legal cases and demands that students consider all levels of analysis, question their own beliefs, and approach the issues of each case with the methodical mindset of a practicing attorney. His students love him. For them, he is certainly the right man at the right time.

Professor Pedro Pavón has travelled far in a short period of time. His path—from Cuban exile to FIU to the Army to law school to the federal government to private practice to the Honors College Community Advisory Board and now FIU professor—not only offers his students unique perspectives on a range of issues but also sets for them an example of the wide-open possibilities that await as they engage their own destiny. ■

# Writing 'Til It Hurts: Stories of Real Life

"To survive we tell stories," says Umberto Eco, philosopher, medieval scholar and novelist. Journalist Elizabeth Hanly's course in Creative Non-Fiction focuses on storytelling, in finding the stories that are all around us all the time. Students tell their own stories (personal essays) and the stories of others (oral history). Professor Hanly's goal: "to guide the students to recognize the heart of a narrative and to ease their way towards understanding how to construct writing around it."

Vodka tastes like bile. I've thrown it up too often. Right now I don't care. I don't care that the drink in my hand tastes more like vodka and less like orange juice. I don't care that we are drinking with complete strangers behind the Mobil gas station. The only thing I care about is James' cold eyes still burned in the back of my heart.

I've come to the point where every drink tastes like water, and I'm mighty thirsty. The guy I've been talking to walks over to the vodka bottle standing on the ground to pour me another drink.

Andrea is standing next to the bottle, twirling her long blonde hair while flirting with the other guys. I already know they're going to blow up her phone all week. Little do they know she's all about the attention and not the actual deed, but then again, which 17-year-old girl isn't? I know I'm not about the deed either, which is why James broke up with me. I walk a few steps backward and bump into the wall behind me. Here comes my drink, and the guy whose name I don't even know. He hands me the red cup and puts his hand on the wall leaning in over me. I feel like I'm slowly fading into oblivion, every gulp another push.

I come to and we're still behind the gas station. His lips are on mine, and I don't even know how they got there. I don't want to kiss him; he's so greasy. I think of James.

We broke up a few hours ago I feel a pang of guilt in my stomach, no, wait, that's not guilt. I push Mr. Greasy off of me and stumble past the other guys still standing in the dim light of the gas station sign toward the bathroom door. Where's Andrea? I heave the blue metal door open, fall to my knees on the filthy floor and begin to vomit.

The door falls shut behind me. Shortly after, it's being opened up again. It must be Andrea. "Andrea," I say, "close the door." But the door doesn't close. "Yeah, Andrea," I hear the guys outside mocking me, "close the door." The door falls closed behind me, and the lock is turned.

I try to scramble to my feet, but I can't. He yanks me up by my arm and throws me against the heating unit mounted on the wall. The metal edges stab into my back. I can't stand on my own. He pins me against the wall with all his weight. I try to push him off, but it's like trying to move a boulder. "No," I repeat over and over again, as he grabs my breasts and reaches between my legs. My words come out like a mumble.

He begins to try to tear down my jeans. I'm still a virgin. "No," I say again, this time louder. Suddenly there's a bang against the door from the outside. "Hey!" I recognize Andrea's voice. "What the fuck is going on in there?" It sounds like the angels are singing to me. I draw together all the strength I have in me for one powerful "HELP!"

The door burst open. He steps back from me, causing me to fall directly into Andrea's arms. She is looking back and forth from the group of guys to my attacker who is still standing in the door frame of the bathroom. We need to get out of here. "Please let's go," I beg her and begin to pull her toward the front of the gas station. "You fucking pigs!" She yells at them, as we start to back away.

She puts her arm around me steadying my walk. "Run," she says. And we run as fast as we can. The lights of the city fly past us in a constant blur. We find refuge underneath a slide on a playground. We're stuck here. The trains won't run for another three hours. I pull out my cell, and call the only person that could possibly come rescue us now—James. He answers. "James," I sob. It is so strangely relieving to hear his voice after all that happened today. "James, please come get us. This guy tried to rape me, and we're all alone out here." There's a short silence on the other line. "I'm already home. Sorry."

Angelika Carvajal

As told to Alexander Suarez

My earliest school memory is the 3rd grade or the 2nd grade; one of those two grades. I was about six or seven, and I had a girl friend. We use to drink milk, the little cartons of milk. We were the ones who went down there and got the milk in the cafeteria and brought it back up to the class. And one day the teacher didn't pick me and her together, she picked her and this other guy. And I followed him through the hallway and jumped on him while he was going down the steps and beat him up.

Because he was going to the cafeteria with my gal. See you can't go get milk with my girlfriend.

Probably two days later the teacher asked me to go get milk, and I said no I'm not going because a couple of days ago you sent him with her. So I had it out with the teacher.

I am really a passive guy. I don't like violence. But I don't like abuse either. What I think is abuse might not be someone else's opinion of that. Like another guy being sent with my girlfriend to get milk, that was abuse.

I woke up very early to go to school. I had a crucial exam required for graduation. The hours went by, and I eventually completed the test. I was walking back to my small, silver Dodge Caliber, when my Blackberry rang. It was my mom. She was whispering. I could barely hear her.

"Come to the hospital," she said.

"I know. I just took my exam. Is daddy doing better?" I asked.

She told me we'd talk in the hospital. The hairs on my arm stood up, and I felt the goose bumps on my skin when I let my hand drop, and it accidentally rubbed against my leg.

More hours passed by, and I found myself walking down the familiar hallways of the hospital. I arrived at my father's room and knocked on the door. I was surprised to see so many faces when I walked in. I ignored the faces. I looked over at daddy on his bed. I had never seen him like that before. He had tubes up his nostrils and in his mouth. He had a clear mask over the mouth tube. He had an air bag next to his face. He was laying flat on his back, as the ceiling's light bulb highlighted his yellowish, greenish face.

I walked over to his bed. I stood right next to him. I was quiet for a few minutes. No one said anything. I just looked down at him. I slowly moved my arm up and my hand forward to his shoulder. I pushed it softly. He didn't move. I pushed it a little harder. He didn't move. My push then became a quick shake. He didn't move. I shook his shoulder one more time, but this time I didn't stop.

Daddy, wake up." I said softly. He couldn't hear me. He didn't even flinch.

Daddy! Daddy, wake up! I'm here. I just came back from my exam." I raised my voice. I should not have raised my voice because it cracked.

I hugged him. I hugged him and told him I was sorry because I wasn't there when he was given the mask. I told him I would have skipped my test. I told him I was mad at mom for not calling me earlier. I kept asking him to wake up until Tio Sammy tapped my left shoulder and told me to stop. I wiped my tears and runny nose.

I hugged daddy one more time. When I looked up, his eyes gave me a lazy blink.

"You have no idea how much I love you," he mumbled the words one by one. There was a pause of at least five seconds between each word.

That was the last time he talked to me.

Analia Fiestas

## Good Bye

We lie naked together, skin on skin, in the darkness of the room. His leg is draped around me; his arms holding me close to his chest. My husband smells like wet wood, like a forest after the rain. I want to be buried in his scent, in the odor of his skin, buried here with him forever.

"I'm scared," he sobs into my neck. I have no answer to this. I want to be strong for him, but the fire has reached my throat, and tears are silently running down my face. His grip tightens around me, and I dig my fingers into his back. We are holding on for dear life, but the morning is coming.

As we pull into the parking spot at the airport, my husband sings his favorite marching cadence. "Here we go again. Same old shit again." Good byes are always the same: one last embrace and the metallic smell of the fire-retardant on his ACUs.

Between rows of black leather chairs and monotonous flight announcements, I will now do what countless women have done before me: I'm sending my husband to war. I look into his eyes, and think back to the first time I saw him, standing in the doorway of the barracks, his beautiful eyes as dark as mahogany. I watch now as he passes through security, wave to him one more time, and wait until I've lost sight of the green pattern of his uniform. Only then do I turn around.

"Let mom rest. She has a headache," whispered dad.

He closed the bedroom door behind him.

Before it shut, I saw her in the dark.

Her eyes swollen.

Her lips pursed.

She was wrapped in a comforter

She was bundled to her chin.

I there was no headache.

I want to tell dad. I want to say everything.

But he would think I didn't love him for knowing.

He would think I was on her side.

I there was no headache.

I there was only a woman grieving a lost lover

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"You have no idea how much I love you," he mumbled the words one by one. There was a pause of at least five seconds between each word.

That was the last time he talked to me.

— Analia Fiestas

Once upon a time, there was a boy. Often he played alone, and as he did time would drift in and out of focus. Sunlight would stream, golden bright and new, through the window blinds. And eventually, it would fade away.

Night would come, the day would end, and with darkness came sleep. But he was not afraid of the dark. You see, the boy knew he was not alone. He had a friend.

They would play together in his room. She was the faster one. When they played hide and seek, sometimes she would cover herself with a blanket. He would find her; he would take the blanket from her, but she would vanish, leaving only a chair in her place.

This was not all that they did together, for in his dreams, the two would venture forth into their own wonderlands.

She would take his hand, to lead him on, and they would escape from his bedroom. Running, running. Hiding in warehouses from shady characters, and leading others to safety, like the children in mystery novels.

Sometimes they would be out in the grass, enjoying the trees and the breezes with the other children. Everything was a bit out of blur, out of focus, like the mistaken passage of time. The dreams were fuzzy like that.

But each day, when he awoke, the boy would remember. He would remember his adventures, and he'd lie there, hugging his pillow, thinking of his friend, so he wouldn't forget.

The blanket held her shape, and the emotions within. Joy of a childhood friend. Wanting someone to play with. Wanting...something. Happiness.

One year, she stopped coming. The special dreams that had come like clockwork ceased. Maybe the boy didn't believe enough, maybe he'd lost his friend. Who knows?

I still hug my pillow today.

- I an Beckford

"Your brother is a fag."

The voice came from the desk behind mine.

Was he talking to me?

He never talks to me.

"Her brother is so gay," said a second voice.

My chin brushed my right shoulder

From the corner of my eye, I saw three of them.

They were looking at me.

"Your brother is a faggot."

I turned my body to face them.

Two were sitting and one was standing.

Past the boys, I saw Ms. Portugal

She kept her desk behind our backs.

She looked up from her papers.

Her eyes met my dripping ones.

Ms. Portugal looked back down and continued writing.

-Jessica Meszaros

# Sampling Honors Courses

## Re-imagining Animals and Humans



One of the earliest depictions of a human is as a bird-headed shaman. In a Disney cartoon, we know intuitively that Goofy is a human and that Pluto is a dog, but why? Egyptian animal mummies might be votive offerings to the gods or maybe they were representations of a god—or of a beloved pet. Maybe they were food for the afterlife.

Honors-CARTA Instructor **Gretchen Scharnagl's** upper-division seminar, *When Animals Are Not Animal, When Humans Are Not Human*, combines the approaches of the art studio (mark-

making, observation, creativity) and the science lab (experimentation, research, investigation) to play, practice, find, create, test, experiment, act and reenact, the artistic, historic, cultural, religious and scientific depictions of animals and humans from a variety of disciplines. Students study the work of animal behaviorists Konrad Lorenz and E.O. Wilson, graphic novelist Art Spiegelman, Animal Mummy Project Director Salima Ikram, art theorist Steve Baker, philosopher Jacques Derrida,

and selected contemporary artists while considering how we look at ourselves, how we look at animals, and how this influences how we think of both. Whenever possible, the class abandons the traditional classroom.

Early in the first semester, students in the lab have an unusual collaborative assignment: creating mummies from animals. (The animals are already deceased!) Mummification is one art form the class uses to engender critical thinking about the role that animal and human imagery has played in forming our attitudes and knowledge; the aesthetic language of the presence or absence of the animal and the human in art, science, philosophy, literature, religion, politics and culture; and the way in which creative experimentation leads to knowledge synthesis, innovation, and dissemination.

The class held a public exhibition of their mummies in GC gallery through December. □

## Showcasing Edgy Art

For the last eight years, the students in Senior Honors Instructor **John Bailly's** course, *Art as a Social Language*, have examined the role visual art plays in the social and cultural dialogue of controversial issues. In the spring, the group mounts the *Aesthetics and Values Art Exhibition*, a show of accomplished South Florida artists whose work challenges conventions. The students, very few of whom are art majors, demonstrate their creativity and productivity through the research, fundraising, curation, and organization of the show, which has found a home in the Frost Art Museum and an ever-increasing audience of the players in the area's art scene.

Wendy Wischer expresses the experience of the selected artists: "My participation in the *Aesthetics and Values* exhibition project has proven to be a wonderful experience in many ways. The energy and enthusiasm of the



Professor Bailly and class at the Martin Margulies gallery.

students are truly amazing. I always look forward to their unique insights into the artists, artwork and art community. This is a proven success story of providing an educational experience, integrating communities and initiating lasting connections."

Students hold fundraisers, create websites and a Facebook page (visit it

at [facebook.com/AestheticsAndValues](https://facebook.com/AestheticsAndValues)), work directly with artists, decide on the placement and mounting of art works, produce a curatorial catalog, and serve as docents for the show. They also discover in themselves innate talents and interests. Says alumna Mayanin Castro, "The show is nothing short of a life-changing experience." □

### How Did They Do It?



No bulldozers, no electric drills, no steel. And yet, archeologists continue to uncover monumental buildings, gates, city walls, roads, and ships built by ancient civilizations lacking all these tools.

Archeologist **Jill**

**Baker's** class uncovers the ingenuity of the ancient mind and grapples with their technology. What did these ancients know, and how did they learn it? What machines and tools did they use and for what? And crucially, how does technology and engineering help society advance? How can we apply these principles to our world and to the future?

During the fall semester, the class takes a look at the big stuff—monumental constructions, residences, urban planning. In the spring they look at smaller things that changed the world—machines, sea and land transportation, medicine, time-keeping.

As part of their investigations, students are building and displaying models of ancient technology. □

### In the Peruvian Amazon



Manual Rodriguez, elder of the indigenous Yagua tribe, wears traditional garb as Professor **Jim Riach** discusses the service-research work of Honors students deep in the Amazon.

## Engaged Research in the Community through Honors

Engaged Research in the Community through Honors (ENRICH), an outgrowth of the Honors College's emphasis on service-research and its relationship with the City of Sweetwater, is designed to engage faculty members and students in projects that improve the quality of life of local residents and to provide students with opportunities to develop leadership and research skills, practice civic engagement, learn about the management and governance of a small city, and help integrate the university more fully into the local community. Singly or in small groups, students design projects that first research a social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, educational, or health problem in the city, then propose and execute plans to alleviate them. Course instructor Cecile Houry helps pair the students with faculty experts in their area of research, and directs the progress of their projects. Poster presentations on the students' findings and results are posted at Sweetwater City Hall and used by the city government in its own work. □



## Sampling Honors Courses

### The Everglades: Beginning or End?

This interdisciplinary course examines not only the Everglades eco-system and the politics surrounding its use and conservation, but also the history, literature and art of the one-of-a-kind River of Grass. Students learn plant, habitat and wildlife identification in the field, and “inhabit the lives” of some of its early explorers. With professors Peter Machonis and Devon Graham, they discuss books on location and work with Park Rangers to present educational exhibitions. This course is not for the faint-hearted. Classes take place outdoors, rain or

shine, and involve hiking, biking, canoeing, and slough sloging. Projects include an all-day clean-up service project at Chekika, the most recently acquired part of the Park.

Later in the year, students from the course teach Sweetwater Elementary School students about the Everglades and its critical importance. Research projects from the course have included everything from studies of the effects of sugar cane farming on the area to a book of recipes using native Glades plants and herbs. □



### Changing the World, One Business at a Time



**Professor Robert Hacker's** social entrepreneurship class is once again mounting a team to enter the Hult Prize competition, a start-up accelerator for budding young social entrepreneurs emerging from the world's universities. Last year, a team of five Honors undergraduates from the course placed higher in the

competition than graduate students from Harvard and Yale. Meanwhile, another of Hacker's Honors students has built a team to develop a business concept in cooperation with the Public Defender's Office in Miami Dade County. The model revolves around an enterprise application that increases the

ease and efficiency of defending individuals who cannot afford a lawyer.

Hacker has expanded his Honors courses this year, adding a seminar called Entrepreneurship, Design and Thinking, that gives students an opportunity to delve more deeply into the root questions underlying entrepreneurial activity and to think critically about what it means to develop new businesses. The course focuses on the relationship between the design process and business model development as the two core competencies in entrepreneurship, an understanding of the place of innovation in the new business development process, and the thought processes and heuristics that spawn the creativity for invention and innovation.

This second course on entrepreneurial ways to solve the world's problems allows Honors business students to take up to 12 course credits in this crucial field. □

### Researching the Tequesta

By: Rebeca Piccardo, junior Honors journalism major and international relations minor

Native American sacred sites have fascinated Senior Instructor **Mary Lou Pfeiffer** since she was a graduate student at FIU, majoring in religious studies. Her continued interest in the field inspired her to research the Miami Circle as a graduate student studying Human Rights Law at St. Thomas University, and then as an Honors College faculty member.

The Miami Circle, discovered in 1998, was the first site that showed substantial proof of the existence of the indigenous settlers in Miami—the Tequesta. After more than 15 years' research on the Circle, Pfeiffer had completed the manuscript of a book and was ready to publish. The book recounts the archeological discovery by local preservationists and Pfeiffer's personal involvement with the site, as well as the efforts to save the Circle from destruction.

Just when Pfeiffer had a publication date set, an event occurred that put all her plans on hold—a new Tequesta site had been uncovered that had five or six circles with interconnected pathways. Pfeiffer thinks this new site might be more significant than the Circle, because it establishes concretely that there was a Tequesta settlement in Miami. This new site, called Met Square, caused Pfeiffer to postpone the publication of her book so that she could conduct further research on the site and add it to her manuscript.

Pfeiffer invited students to participate in her research. In her second-year Honors course at the Biscayne Bay Campus, "The Treasures of South Florida," students wrote haikus about the Tequesta, their sacred lands, and the importance of these archeological

sites. Three students from another of Pfeiffer's Honors courses—Florencia Dominguez, Joanna Rodriguez and Fu Zhou Wu—have been working with her to produce a written statement of significance to establish the value of the site. They advocate that the site should be preserved for both educational and historical purposes. "If, in fact, the carbon dating proves these artifacts are older than 600 AD and similar to those found at the Miami Circle, we have a spectacular cultural relic, a treasure beyond what many could imagine, one that is probably unique in the world," said Pfeiffer in the statement. Nonetheless, this site, like the originally discovered Circle, is slated for a major development project. Once again, Pfeiffer is working with preservationists to protect the area's native heritage. □

### Honors Goes Online

At the recent annual conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council, a key debate revolved around the role of online courses in honors programs—and whether there should be any at all. The Honors College at FIU appears to be one of the first to offer some of its courses online. Contrary to the protestations of the naysayers, we have found that adopting this cutting-edge course delivery technique has worked very well. Our first concern—and the one on which the disputation turns—is maintaining the high pedagogical quality that honors courses require. We have guaranteed this by utilizing highly experienced online teachers and by emphasizing the newest advances in online interactivity.

At the same time, we are well aware that we do not want a fully or even mostly online Honors College. Our online offerings are meant to provide students, particularly seniors, an opportunity to complete their Honors

degree despite scheduling difficulties or time spent abroad. Our current three online courses—Human Rights, Global Visions; Women's Issues Worldwide; and The Seven Deadly Sins—taught by Professors Irma de Alonso and Mary Lou Pfeiffer, embrace our interdisciplinary approach and rigorous expectations. Moreover, students in certain fully-online degree programs, such as Interdisciplinary Studies, can also graduate through the Honors College by taking any combination of our online courses, our research thesis option, or a study abroad program.

It may be that nothing can fully substitute for the experience of examining a proposition in the company of other scholars, but in a changing world, honors programs cannot afford to be technologically complacent. We have demonstrated that a carefully developed online component can enhance and enrich honors education. □

### A Japanese Tradition



Mary Lou Pfeiffer guides students through a traditional Japanese tea ceremony in an Honors course.

# WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?



**Juan Brizuela, '13**, now works as the Correspondent for the Department of Architecture and the Department of Art + Art History for the College of

Architecture + The Arts. Juan authors news stories about the school's achievements for publication. □



**Emmanuel Okwor, '13**, was featured this fall in the FIU College of Engineering's OHL School of Construction magazine, *The Constructioneer*. A

specialist in virtual construction and green building, Okwor has accepted a position as a project engineer with general contractor Foster Construction of South Florida, working on a \$42 million municipal complex in Miami Gardens. He is about to launch a new project and is interested in putting together a group of students with computer science, architecture, or programming background to advance and finance the project. Okwor's undergraduate education was supported by a grant from the Honors College's Gerald C. Grant, Jr., scholarship. He was the College's spring 2013 Outstanding Graduate. □



**Hector Mujica, '11**, is currently serving as a social responsibility strategist for Google, overseeing their employee philanthropic engagement in Latin

America and regions of the US. He is also the company's public policy lead for US Hispanic Community Outreach and Business Development, working closely with several policy partners and advocacy organizations around the world. □



**Adria Llerena, '13**, was the October Artist-in-Residence at the Coral Gables MadRac Italian Outlet. Llerena, a BFA student concentrating on painting and figure

drawing, also minored in Art History. In her role as Artist-in-Residence, she displayed paintings featuring figures, landscapes, and cityscapes. Llerena was the president of the FIU Fine Arts Student Association, and presented her work at both the Honors College ARCH Conference and the Florida Undergraduate Research Conference at Stetson University. Her piece on the September 11th attacks won third place in the first FIU College of Law Art Competition in 2010. □



**Carla Rosales, '13**, was chosen to sing the FIU Alma Mater at her December 17 afternoon graduation ceremony. Born in Peru, Carla has learned diverse

languages, including Japanese, French, and Italian. Her studies in diction have also enabled her to sing in countless others, including Latin, German, Hebrew, Norwegian, and Spanish. Carla performs locally in solo recitals and choral ensembles, with several solo turns. □



**Daniel Yellin, '13**, was named a "Worlds Ahead" graduate at the Fall 2013 commencement. In highlighting Danny's achievements, President Rosenberg

noted that the Fine Arts grad "combined his passion for music and education to positively impact his community. He played with the FIU wind ensemble, orchestra, new music ensemble and laptop ensemble. His musical talents landed him first place at FIU's concerto

competition with Paul Creston's 'Concertino for Marimba' and he was selected as a top three artist at the Ars Flores Concerto Competition. Recently, his composition 'No Exit' for laptop ensemble was selected for the 2013 Florida Electro-Acoustic Student Festival."

As a member of FIU's Honors College, his ARCH research consisted of creating 'Ame Ga Furu' ("It Rains"), a composition for percussion, live electronics, and video combining Wabi Sabi, the Japanese philosophy of finding beauty within imperfections, and Glitch Music.

Daniel also was an instructor at El Sistema's Miami Music Project, which aims to change the lives of young people through classical music. For the past three years, Daniel also has taught and composed music for the John A. Ferguson High School marching band. Daniel plans to go to graduate school. □



**Xiomara Uran, '06**, is serving as Rutgers Law-Camden's Spanish interpreter, working with any of the school's 10 clinics and hybrid clinics where students, under

faculty supervision, represent real clients with real problems. The third-year law student is originally from Colombia, where her father, Carlos Horacio Urán Rojas, served as a state council assistant justice and was killed in the 1985 attack against the Palace of Justice. She moved to the U.S. at 15, becoming an American citizen seven years later. In 2006, she and her family learned that her father and the other Supreme Court justices who perished during the attack were on a government assassination list for rulings against drug dealers and unconstitutional military operations. Finally, in November, her father's case was heard by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Colombian government acknowledged its involvement. Xio attends classes with service dog Nakan, who helps her cope with PTSD incurred from a lifetime of threats and intimidation. □

## WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

Share your story at [honors.fiu.edu/share](http://honors.fiu.edu/share)



When **Angie Flores** was pursuing her A.A. in Arts at Miami Dade College, she applied to be the Director of Internal Affairs for the Student Government

Association. The following year she was elected Vice President and got the opportunity to represent the college introducing Dr. Jill Biden at an Aspen Institute ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. Dr. Biden then asked Angie to introduce her at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., which she did, spending the weekend with Dr. Biden and her family and finding everyone very warm and down to earth. Angie was invited to the 2013 presidential inauguration and the Inaugural Ball, and she subsequently spoke with Ernest Green of the Little Rock Nine at the Education Nation Panel for NBC regarding K-8 students. Angie was featured on the cover of MDC's LEAP magazine. □



**Brian Matilla** presented at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) conference in November. FIU's

Graduation Success Initiative (GSI) was a finalist for the MVP Opportunity award, and Brian gave a student's-eye view of the project. He was a panelist at the plenary session, "High Tech, High Touch: Campus Based Strategies for Ensuring Student Success" and gave a brief talk on his success at FIU using GSI tools like MyMajor, My eAdvisor, and the Panther Degree Audit. FIU won the APLU's inaugural Most Visible Progress (MVP) award, based on the Graduation Success Initiative aimed at increasing four-year graduation rates. While at the conference, Brian had the privilege of speaking with other university presidents,

provosts, vice presidents, and major officers. In addition, he was extended an invitation to present his research at the University of Colorado at Boulder this past summer. □



**Chavely Valdes Sanchez**, a senior biology major, was one of only 44 undergraduates from around the country to be awarded a Howard Hughes

Medical Institute EXROP grant, which provides participants with a summer research experience in a cutting-edge stem cell science laboratory at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute. Her research project focused on the outflow tract of the zebrafish heart. Once the program ended, Valdes-Sanchez presented her work at a symposium. She found her research experience helped her gain an insight into a different field of science, since her research at FIU is in a cancer lab. □



**Demetrius Villa** has been selected as a TEDxFIU speaker for 2014. He will be presenting a plan for high-speed rail transport in the US. □



**Nicole Millan** went to Boston this summer on an Honors ARCH scholarship to attend the conjoint meeting of the International Federation of Fertility

Societies and American Society for Reproductive Medicine. This is the largest conference in the world dealing with reproductive research. Her research on male infertility was one of only 18 (out of 2000) to be nominated for a Scientific Paper Prize. Nicole reports that "was the

first time I had ever presented in front of so many people. It was so exciting! I can't wait to do it again. I want to do this for the rest of my life – research, practice, and enhance the field to help my patients. I look forward to continuing to pursue my career in reproductive medicine building on the lessons I've learned throughout my years in Honors." □



In the summer of 2013, physics major **Omar Leon** and two other members of the university's prestigious Ronald E. McNair Post traveled to England to work on a proton detector project at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy (CCFE). □



**Maya Castro** and **Yoan Moreno** gave two presentations this summer at the Rotterdam, Netherlands, Honors Conference, discussing both the

Aesthetic and Values Honors College Art Exhibition and the "Over/Under" project—an imaginative investigation and discovery of Paris by way of the Métro—pioneered by Professor John Bailly during the Honors study abroad trip to France. Recognizing that the Dutch have led non-U.S. countries in the development of honors programs, the College helped finance their trip from its Undergraduate Research grant. Yoan reports that "the conference was a success and the Dutch were amazed at the openness of the programs we presented, over against the rigidity of the Dutch honors system." National Collegiate Honors Council past president Bernice Braid and Sara Quaid, also of NCHC, marveled at the students' presentations, saying "They were so professional, articulate and engaging. The entire audience was captivated." □

## Facultynews



Honors Senior Instructor **John Baily** exhibited his paintings in several shows this year: “Place of Mind’ at Clamp Art; “Cinquante Fifty,” at Clos des Arts; “Place of Mind” at the University of Maine Museum of Art; and “Paint City” at the Miami Beach Urban Studios. His “Place of Mind” works are collaborations with inaugural poet and FIU alumnus Richard Blanco. He also gave three conference presentations on creative pedagogy, at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Boston and the Global Learning Conference in Miami. □



Professor and architect **Camilo Rosales** of the College of Architecture + The Arts has been awarded the Energy and Climate

Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) Grant by the U.S. Department of State to develop programs that support energy reduction in Latin America. He is also working with Schnebly Redland’s Winery as his students design a master plan for the Winery, adding a “green” brewery and wedding chapel. Schnebly’s is a philanthropic partner of the Honors College. □



**Cecile Houry** was nominated for the 2013 Spirit of Service-Learning Award sponsored by the Miami-Dade Teacher of the Year Coalition (TOY) and

the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida (RPCVSF). This award celebrates and shines a light on excellent

educators who are combining academic learning with service and civic engagement to build a better world for all. □



**John Tsalikis**, BMI Professor of Marketing in the College of Business, has published a new textbook, *Marketing*, with Peter Dickson. □



**Glenn Hutchinson**, Assistant Director of the Center for Excellence in Writing, has acted in two local productions this year, “Salsa,” (which he also wrote), for Microteatro, and “Tsunami.” He has also co-authored, with Paula Gillespie, “The Digital Video Project,” in *Tutoring Second Language Writers* (Utah State University Press, forthcoming in 2014). He volunteers to teach writing students at Miami Northwestern High School and Miami Rescue Mission’s Creative Living Class and, through Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees, visits immigrants at Krome Detention Center. □



Excerpts from **Elizabeth Hanly’s** unpublished memoir, *Undress Me Slowly*, will appear in the winter issue of *Exterminating Angel Literary Magazine*. □



Honors College Senior Instructor **Mary Lou Pfeiffer** has been named to a special session at the Truman Little White House Legacy Symposium,

“Dropping the Bomb,” for May 2014. Each year, she secures external funding for Honors students to participate in the Truman symposium. □



**Bennett Schwartz**, Professor of Psychology, has had two books published: *Memory: Foundations and Applications*, (2nd Edition), with Sage Publishers and, with M. L. Howe, M. P. Togliola, and H. Otgaar, *What is Adaptive about Adaptive Memory?* with Oxford University Press. □

## Honors College Day In the Cage!



The Honors College was showcased at the October 26 FIU-Louisiana Tech football game. Seventy-seven Honors students paraded across the field along with President Mark Rosenberg at halftime. Students were treated to free t-shirts, in-game giveaways including i-pods, gift bags, upgraded parking and more. The president gave FIU’s best and brightest resounding support. Despite the game’s outcome, Panther Spirit was alive and well in the Honors College section. This unique opportunity demonstrates the ongoing productive partnership between the Honors College and FIU Athletics. Smart people ♥ sports! □



## Honors College a Major Grant Partner

The Honors College is a key participant in the \$11.4 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant recently given by the US Department of Transportation to FIU. The grant funds the initial stages of the UniversityCity Prosperity Project, an innovative package of technology, streetscaping and transit improvements to connect the city of Sweetwater with

FIU. The plan aims to increase access to jobs on the FIU campus and link FIU with Sweetwater, now envisioned as UniversityCity. TIGER funds will be used to construct a new pedestrian bridge over Tamiami Trail and increase linkages that will benefit both the city and the university. The Honors College is included in the grant because of our long history of partnership with Sweetwater

and the positive and productive relationships it has produced. Our efforts will be led over the next three years by Student Programs Coordinator Adam Gorelick, who will be working on taking the pulse of both communities and on public relations, as well as on leading a group of Honors students in a beta test of a new mobile app to enhance transportation options in the area. □

## International Figure at Honors Place



**Ali Aslan**, the host of the international talk show “Quadriga” on Deutsche Welle TV, spoke at Everglades Hall during the Miami Book Fair to approximately 80 enthusiastic students. Aslan discussed the political scene in Germany, the fate of the European Union and Germany’s standing on the world’s economic stage. After some initial comments Aslan fielded questions from the students. He stayed for almost two hours, and ended with a spirited discussion of Germany’s chances at capturing another World Cup. □



Three members of our Community Advisory Board are finalists for Miami’s Up-and-Comer Awards: **J.C. de Ona** in the field of banking, **Pedro Pavon** in law, and **Tina Vidal** in professional services. Congratulations!

## Honors Giving

### Banker Kathryn Chase gives \$100,000 Honors First Generation Scholarship



Citibank executive and FIU Foundation Board Secretary **Kathryn Chase** has chosen the Honors College to memorialize her late mother, Sarah R. Gaylord,

with a generous gift. Kathryn's gift will establish a scholarship endowment in the College for First Generation students. The donation will be split in order to both build an endowment and create immediate

scholarship impact. Because the State of Florida matches all "FirstGen" donations, the value of the gift will double. It is Kathryn's wish to make the spendable portion of the gift each year available to one student with outstanding potential, financing the full cost of that student's education and campus housing. A leading figure in the financial services industry since 1992, Kathryn began by handling the needs of a portfolio of financially sophisticated clients, and quickly moved on to administration. She rose through the ranks at First Union National Bank, where she implemented strategies to

improve profitability and gain market share through her focus on sales, service, customer satisfaction and employee development. In 2004, she led the start-up of Wachovia's highly successful entry into the Texas market and managed the integration of the Wachovia acquisitions of SouthTrust and World Savings. In 2009, Wachovia was purchased by Wells Fargo where Kathryn was named Regional President of Southeast Florida. Kathryn joined Citibank in 2011 as the Regional President of the Consumer Bank for the Eastern Region and as the Head of the National Small Business segment. □

## Honors Students Earn College Scholarships



Left to right (back row): Maria Eugenia Gonzalez Haesler, Alberto Mizrahi. Front: Syeda Harim Zehra, Dean Lesley Northup, Laura Valencia

Winners of the Tony Menendez Scholarship gratefully receive laptops or notebook computers to further their scholarship. The scholarship, based largely on financial need, was established in Menendez's memory by his employer, Stearns Weaver, and his widow. □



**Elaysha Powell** is the recipient of the Gerald R. Grant, Jr., Endowment Scholarship for this school year. Born and raised in the nation's capital, she attended The Potomac School in Mclean, Virginia. She is fascinated by languages and is majoring in International Relations at FIU. After attending the Student Diversity

Leadership Conference (SDLC) in Philadelphia, she has become a passionate advocate for diversity and the equal treatment of all. She has been very active in tutoring and outreach programs, especially in the inner city. □



**Bryan Diaz** has been awarded the 2013-14 Lucille E. Snaith renewable scholarship. A first-year student from Miami Sunset Senior High School, Bryan was his class's valedictorian. He took many AP, honors, and dual enrollment courses, and held leadership positions in honors societies, sports, and community

service. Bryan now works in the Honors College as a student assistant. Renewed grants for earlier Snaith awardees went to Genesis Esquivel, Raket Harrigan, Amy Diaz, Stephanie Freiria, and Eric Herrera. □



**Maximilian Staedtler** has received a renewal of the Jordan Castellon & Ricardo LLC Scholarship for business and accounting majors. □

### Honors students thank our generous donors on FIU Thanks Day



### Scholarships Renewed

**Helene Graham** has renewed the scholarship she established in the name of her daughter, Sheri Anne Graham, who passed away after a battle with cancer at the age of 36. Mrs. Graham, noting her daughter's vocation in photography, specified that the recipient of the scholarship should be a first-year student in the College of Arts and Sciences. Generally, the gift goes to someone studying the fine or performing arts, but this year's recipient of the scholarship, Johanna Arab, is majoring in biology, with plans to go to medical school. She volunteers at Miami Children's Hospital and engages in advanced research.

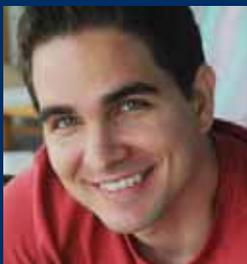
**Harvey Young** and his family have continued their commitment to Honors scholarships by renewing their scholarship for Miami-Dade students who demonstrate outstanding academic qualifications, high motivation and potential, and financial need. The Harvey L. Young Family Foundation Scholarship has been helping Honors students since 1990. This year's awardees were **Adriana Sirven** and **Jessica Spencer**.

Adriana, a Miami native of mixed Nicaraguan and Cuban heritage, is excited by her passion for travel, culture, and world affairs, and is majoring in international relations. A transfer student with an A.A. from Miami-Dade College, she was a member of the debate team, and won "superior" ratings in two Persuasive Speaking Competitions.

Jessica graduated Cum Laude from Spruce Creek High School in Port Orange, Florida, winning the Principal's Award. She is majoring in Biomedical Science and will be interning for FIU's Homecoming Council.

Renewed scholarships for this school year were given to **Michael Diaz** and **Neda Kalhor**. □

### Jonathan Cameron Leads the Way with Planned Gift



Honors alumnus **Jonathan Cameron**, '07, CFP®, a partner in the financial planning firm CameronDowning, has made a major planned gift of \$100,000 to the College. Cameron, who is the president of the Honors College Alumni Association and also sits on the Community Advisory Board, donated through a life insurance policy now owned by FIU. In doing so, he has pioneered a new method of helping to ensure that the College will continue its work of serving students,

especially through scholarships, in perpetuity. Cameron and his partner, Glenn Downing, recently made a presentation to the Honors College staff on this very manageable way to leave a legacy with the Honors College. Several staff members have already shown an interest in following Jonathan's lead, an indication of the commitment of the College team to its mission. Especially for younger donors, a planned gift of this type is extremely inexpensive and also allows for tax deductions. If you are interested in exploring this novel yet fruitful way of contributing to the success of the best and brightest, contact Jonathan at 305-987-8341. □



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Honors Alumni and Friends, come join students and faculty as they visit Bali, Borobudur, Java, the Kraton, Prambanan, Ubud, Tampak Siring, and more!

Summer 2015  
**Indonesia**