

# FSW Honors Scholar Program

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

In her book, *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*, Rebecca Solnit writes, “Hope is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists. Optimists think it will all be fine without our involvement; pessimists take the opposite position; both excuse themselves from action.” There is no question that we are living in uncertain times. And yet, in spite of the precariousness of this moment, and the pervasive anxiety about the future, our Honors Scholars appear to have accomplished the most lasting and indispensable goal of all educational endeavors: they have experienced the transformational joy of learning. Once a student discovers the potency of the process of discovery, they can thrive in the face of the unknown.

The word “school” comes from the Greek *scholē*, which meant both “leisure” and “learned conversation”. In my first draft of this newsletter, I was tempted to list the tangible accomplishments of our students: the scholarships they received, the names of the prestigious universities into which they were accepted, the conferences at which they presented original research. If you read about the students who are featured in this newsletter, or attend our capstone project presentations or our Honors Cord Ceremony, you will be duly impressed by these achievements, as am I. But what has left an indelible mark on me this semester, as I have talked with dozens of our students, is how many of them spoke about having found their path, or their voice, or their passion, through “leisurely” interactions with their professors, their peers, and the content of their courses. What these students kept describing was the power of community—a community that extends beyond the confines of the Honors Scholar Program.

FSW is a unique institution and the people make the place. Everyone knows that students are always looking for great professors—but students do not always realize how inspired professors are by their students. I have had the pleasure of working here for fifteen years and never have I been more thankful to be tucked into this little slice of the planet with all of you than I have during this time of crisis. It is certainly disappointing not to be able to come together at commencement to mark this milestone for our graduates and celebrate our membership in a community of open inquiry. But we can take heart in the knowledge that through our shared love of learning, we have cultivated a fundamental disposition towards hope. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”



Dr. Wendy Chase

Coordinator, Honors Scholar Program

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Student Capstone Presentations, Monday April 20th at 2:00pm (see page 8 for more details)
- Honors Cord Ceremony, Thursday April 30th

## FACULTY FEATURE: PROFESSOR MONICA KURPINSKI



From the time I was in elementary school, I knew I wanted to teach. My friends came over to play school on the weekends and in summer, and of course I gave them homework. (Mostly I taught them grammar—it was West Virginia, so we all needed it.) When I was an undergrad, one of my professors allowed me to help him as an unofficial teaching assistant, and I was hooked. Once I entered graduate school, I quickly learned that the best part of teaching is not standing there dispensing content but rather encouraging students to think for themselves and listening to what they have to say. In every class over these 30 years of teaching, I have been introduced to so many fascinating ways of looking at the world, and I owe all that to students. I believe we all learn from each other, and that has been the guiding principle of my courses through the years. As a Humanities professor, the thing I wish that people would understand from the

outside is that “just talking about art and culture” is valuable and necessary to a fully-developed intellectual life. Sure, it’s not training you to perform a task to use in “the real world,” but when you get out in that real world, thinking about art and cultures and diversity will allow you to do your job and conduct your life with openness, understanding, curiosity, and empathy. Humanities gets right to the essence of what it means to be human, how we convey ways of understanding our experiences, and why we should analyze and understand both. The arts transcend time and allow us to contemplate our individual place in something that is and has been much greater than ourselves. The perception that Humanities is useless or a waste of time reveals our culture’s narrow and disappointing focus on consumption and short-term diversions as the centers of meaning. When I think of students I’ve taught in FSW’s Honors Scholar Program, I think of these words first: curious, conscientious, and careful. After the initial few weeks of classes, added to those are the words surprising, sparkling, and spontaneous. As I watch students in the HSP evolve over the semester, each time I see them slowly embracing the unfamiliar, practicing intellectual daring, and allowing themselves room to be imperfect. Sometimes that last one is difficult, but what better a place to allow for revision, expansion, and growth than in the Humanities? Examples that stand out to me are many—the science-focused student who vociferously defended the aesthetic of a Bauhaus teakettle, the music lover who introduced us all to some neo-Dadaist techno, and the logician who rode his bike 14 miles each way to a cemetery to complete an assignment on memorialization. Our HSP students truly embody the interdisciplinary spirit of education, and I am proud and thankful to have the opportunity to participate in their educational experience.



## HONORS IN ACTION: HONORS CAPSTONE RESEARCH TRIP



### •What inspired you about this project?

Shirin: Well first of all I am a photographer and that's my passion. When I heard that we would have the opportunity to take pictures for a documentary about an artist who is an activist, I was stoked! Lizbeth took pictures of people who got deported. Bringing awareness about this topic to people inspired me the most. As an artist you always try to speak about what you believe in, and create a statement you feel proud of. I wanted to do that - that inspired me.

### •How does it feel working on something that is such a major issue right now not only in the USA but the world?

Shirin: It feels great! It makes you proud of yourself to speak up. The whole issue is close to my heart since it effects me too, but everyone should not be afraid do what they can, with something they are passionate about to help and bring awareness.

### •What advice would you give future capstone project students?

Shirin: Think about something you are really passionate about! Don't waste this amazing opportunity to do something just for a grade, do it because it makes YOU proud of YOUR-SELF. You'll never know how many doors will open after you did such a project.. so use it and have fun!

*If sometimes our great artists have been the most critical of our society, it is because their sensitivity and their concern for justice, which must motivate any true artist, makes him aware that our Nation falls short of its highest potential. I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist.*

**-President John F Kennedy**



## TORI'S TINY TALK

Hello Bucs! I just wanted to take a minute to tell you all how incredibly proud I am of you. You have overcome extreme adversity and have handled it with such grace. I know this semester has been challenging in ways no one would have ever expected, but you all are champs! I want you all to take a moment and be proud of yourself, now take a deep breath, let it out slowly and just bask in this moment. If you are sitting there and letting the anxious thoughts take control you may not feel like you have anything to be proud of, well I am here to tell you otherwise. You are literally continuing to pursue your academic goals through a pandemic! If that isn't dedication I don't know what is. On a real note, self care and self love is so important in these times. We need to be in-tune with our bodies to know what we need, but most importantly we need to listen to our bodies. Don't forget to drink water, get some sleep, and know when you need a break from social media. I am

here for you all in any capacity you may need. I can be an ear to listen, a cheerleader, or just a friendly face to chat with. Don't lose hope, be smart (I know you all have this one covered), and stay safe!



If you or someone you know is struggling please reach out to the Counselors at FSW. Email [counseling@fsw.edu](mailto:counseling@fsw.edu) for appointments. Emergency situations should call 911 or the FSW Police at (239) 489-9203. Students who have never seen a counselor will be able to schedule a Zoom appointment, but they will need to complete the paperwork ahead of time. All of that can be arranged by sending the email to [counseling@fsw.edu](mailto:counseling@fsw.edu).

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: KELLY MAGUIRE

My name is Kelly Maguire and I am currently a Sophomore here at FSW. I am the President of the Active Minds club here at FSW, an Honors Scholar member, Leadership Academy student, and Phi Theta Kappa Florida All-State team member and Coca Cola Gold Scholar recipient. After graduating this May, I will be volunteering abroad in Thailand to help rural villages with English Education, sustainable agriculture, and reforestation projects. This fall, I will be transferring to Florida Gulf Coast University to pursue a degree in psychology.

I have discovered my true passion and purpose of advocating for mental health while overcoming my own mental health issues and using that to empower others while I have been here at FSW. When I first came to Florida and enrolled here, I was really struggling to find my place, and learning how to adjust to a new environment. There were many days where the simple act of getting ready and leaving the house for school was too exhausting for me. I was living with severe depression, anxiety, OCD, and PTSD, yet I wasn't fully aware of it at the time.

My professors and the staff at FSW really helped pull me out of a dark place. I found solace in starting a chapter of Active Minds on our campus, where students like myself could discuss mental health in a place that was safe and conducive to creating a more positive mental health culture on campus. Thanks to the honors program and many other influential figures at FSW, I was able to attend the National Active Minds conference in Washington D.C. along with other peers from the Honors program.

This opportunity saved my life. A week following the conference, I took a leave of absence from school to attend treatment for my mental health. I have to thank Dr. Chase and all of my other professors for helping me stay on track with all of my schoolwork, but more importantly for helping motivate and encourage me to overcome the great obstacles I was facing. This time of stepping back, acknowledging my needs, and asking for help allowed me to become the person I am today.

I had always wanted to work in the mental health field, but it was at FSW that I was able to see my true path and purpose here in this world. I returned to school in the fall



and worked on creating more mental health initiatives on campus to help other students who may also be struggling. I slowly began sharing my own personal story, and worked on healing myself through therapy every week.

I can say that I am proud of where I have come since enrolling here at FSW. My most memorable experience being involved in the Honors Scholar Program would have to be my involvement with Active Minds and the honors seminar Professor Housley taught, "The Good Life." It was through this course and my work with Active Minds that I discovered how beautiful it is to take an experience that was once so negative and turn it into something that inspires and empowers others.

My greatest piece of advice to anyone who will be joining the Honors Scholar Program is to not be afraid to reach out and ask for help. I know how hard it is to be vulnerable and to acknowledge when help is needed, but trust me when I say it is much worse to pretend everything is okay all of the time. The professors here at FSW, the counseling department, the honors staff, and so many other faculty, staff, and student organizations are here for you. Your voice is your power, and you are capable of standing up for what you believe in and making a lasting difference here on campus.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT; TARA GADOURY

### **What was your favorite class at FSW and why?**

My favorite class was my Summer 2019 Study abroad class with Dr. Pritchett – Highways to Hell: Journeys to the underworld. I have always dreamed of going to Italy, and this class was amazing. I never realized how much Greek Myth appears in the arts, especially during the renaissance. This class led to several things for me, including participating in Harvard's Model UN on a Specialized agency about Italy. My favorite paper I wrote for this class turned into a research poster, and then a conference presentation (with Dr. Pritchett's help and encouragement) at The Southwest Popular American Culture Association Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This class is still changing the way I think, and it was, by far, my favorite class.

### **Tell us about one of your more memorable experiences in the Honors Scholar Program.**

There are so many amazing experiences I have in the Honors Scholar Program. It has honestly changed my life. I would have to say the most memorable for me is my trip to Italy. While anyone can apply to study abroad, the Honors Scholar Program gave me funding to go, without which I would not have been able to study in Italy. Beyond that, Honors has changed the way I think and forced me to get involved on campus, which as an introvert, I would not have done otherwise.

### **Do you have any favorite quotes from a professor?**

There are so many! But there are two that stick with me, both from Dr. Pritchett. First, roughly, "Don't be afraid to say or write your thoughts, you are not bound to them forever, the reason you are here is to learn and to change the way you think." And the second about Greek Myth, "Greek Myth is a circle; you just have to pick a point and jump in."

### **What advice do you have for incoming Honors Scholar students?**

Get Involved as soon as possible and take advantage of your professors' office hours. I have spent many hours in many of my professors' offices over my time at FSW, and those moments have taught me more than classes ever could. We are so fortunate to have so many Ph.D.'s who are at FSW because they want to be. Most Four-year institutions have grad students teaching their courses, so take advantage while you have them! Time flies all too soon! Also, take as many Honors classes as your program allows – they are the best, and our professors are amazing!

### **What are your plans after graduation?**

I plan to major in Classics (Greek and Latin Languages) for my bachelor's degree. After that, I am looking at perhaps a master's in museum studies, and then possibly a Ph.D. in a related field. I have been accepted to Columbia University's School of General Studies and USF. I am hoping to attend Columbia, but I have not made the decision yet.



# *Honors Capstone Presentations*

Monday, April 20th: 2:00-5:15

<https://zoom.us/j/750880009?pwd=cHI5bytMTTY0dIIIWGpxcDRicTJPQT09>

2:00: **Welcome**

2:05: **2019 Hong Kong Protests: A Critical Discourse Analysis of July 21<sup>st</sup>**

By: Tiffany Leung

2:25: ***The Treaty of New Echota and the Jarring Legality of the Cherokee Removal***

By: Lenna Yanes (Dr. Mark Herman)

2:50: ***The Silenced Memory: A Look into Repressed Memories of Early Childhood Trauma***

By: Kelly Maguire

3:05: ***Inside/Out Fort Myers***

By: Justine Alcarraz, Keven Aulet, Martha Bautista, Shirin Bos,  
Haley Gamez, Sara Tinocoabello Duque (Dr. Wendy Chase)

## **BREAK: 3:20-3:40**

3:40: ***Fashion, Flappers and Feminism***

By: Isabella Arroyo

3:55: ***Socio-emotional learning and Emotional Intelligence***

By: David Lobdell (Professor Jaquelyn Davis)

4:05: ***There's Nothing To See Here": Black Spectatorship and the Tragic Mulatto in "Imitation of Life"***

By: Julexiua Ellis

4:20: ***The Lyrion Series: The Reckoning***

By: Talia Rejes Diaz (Dr. Brandi George)

4:35: ***Playas de Tijuana Mural Project: a photo essay***

By: Shirin Bos (Professor Steve Chase)

4:50: ***Tijuana Dreamers: Documentary***

By: Sara Tinocoabello Duque (Dr. Wendy Chase)



## HUMANIZING DEPORTATION:

As part of the *Education for a New Humanity* colloquium, Honors sponsored the *Humanizing Deportation* event. Mr. Terry Coonan, the Executive Director for the Center for the Advancement of Human Rights spoke about the history of refugee and asylum law. Artist and scholar, Lizbeth De La Cruz Santana presented her interactive artwork on the border wall in Friendship Park in Tijuana, Mexico. Ms. Santana uses large scale portraits of childhood arrivals whose families have been separated recently by changes to our immigration policies to call attention to this pressing issue. Mr. Danilo Castillo presented the app he and Ms. Santana are developing to help refugees find humanitarian resources: MigriMap.

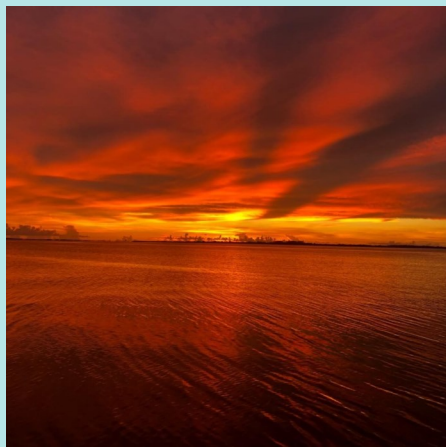




## CLASS HIGHLIGHT: MODEL UNITED NATIONS



Please join the students in our Honors art seminar in their collaborative project, #sharingoursky. This project was inspired by the seemingly paradoxical feeling of being both separate and together during this time of global crisis.



We are all connected under the same sky and yet our ability to perceive that sense of connectedness is currently obscured from view as we have been asked to shelter in place. In order to keep that sense of connection foremost in our mind, we are asking you to visit our Instagram page: #sharingoursky and share a photo of the sky as you see it.

You can share your view of the sky as often as you'd like. We encourage you to dedicate your sky to someone who might be suffering due to this pandemic. It doesn't necessarily have to be someone you know personally; you can dedicate your sky to the memory of Li Wenliang, the Chinese doctor who first alerted the world to the dangers of this virus, or to someone closer to home who might be struggling with being isolated right

now, even if they are physically healthy.

We want to make this # go global because next Wednesday, April 22nd is Earth Day--it is also the last day of our class. At noon Eastern Standard Time on 4/22/2020, we want as many people as possible to post a photo of their sky on Instagram to remind us that we are all in this together. Please share this widely so that we can gather as many people as possible before next Wednesday.

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# CONGRATULATIONS

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Kelly Maguire & Tara Gadoury



The All-Florida Academic Team recognizes outstanding students who have gone above & beyond in their academics, community service, and leadership. This year two of our Honors Scholars were chosen for this prestigious award, Tara Gadoury and Kelly Maguire. An extra special congrats goes to Kelly who also made the Coca-Cola Academic team as a Gold Scholar! Please help us in congratulating them on these incredible achievements!



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# WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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Are you or someone you know interested in the Honor Scholars Program? If you are motivated, hardworking, creative, innovative, forward thinking, or ready to achieve your dreams then the Honor Scholars Program might be right for you! We strive to cultivate your academic excellence, leadership skills, and commitment to being socially responsible. Honors is a great way to build your academic resume, meet like-minded people, and develop your very own research! Email Dr. Chase or Tori about all that the program has to offer!

Contact Us:

Honors Program Coordinator: Dr. Wendy Chase, [wchase@fsw.edu](mailto:wchase@fsw.edu)

Honors Staff Assistant: Tori Frisina, [vfrisina@fsw.edu](mailto:vfrisina@fsw.edu)

Check out our website at [FSW.edu/Honors](http://FSW.edu/Honors)

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