



University Honors Program Voice of Excellence in Action

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Honors Classics Semester Abroad, Summer 1A **The Haunts of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles.....** **6 Credit Hours, Honors Colloquium, and Honors Research Seminar**

Once in a lifetime opportunity to earn 6 honors credits in Greece. We will offer HNRS 397 and HNRS 398 in May-June, 2008.

In Crete, we will explore the remnants of the Minoan Civilization. From there to Santorini, the island thought to be the Lost Atlantis, then, the islands of Naxos and Paros, that guided ancient sailors to their destinations. Arriving in Pireaus, we will depart for Ancient Corinth, and the ancient theater at Epidaurus, the Plains of Argos, where ancient Kings ruled with iron and bronze armament. From Argos to Olympia, the site of the Olympic Games, then to the island of Ithaka, the home of Odysseus. From Ithaka to Nafpaktos and Delphi, then to Thebes, and, finally, to Athens for our flight home. We will stay primarily in college dormitories and small hotels. There will be time for swimming, participating in island life, and learning the cultures of contemporary as well as ancient Greece.

Due to the drop in the value of the \$US, we will be paying considerably more for the trip than we hoped. At this time, the cost of the trip, including tuition for two courses, airfare, hotels, and transportation between all sites is \$3497. Interested? Submit a deposit of \$500.00 to the International Programs Office, Rosemary Schneekloth, by March 1.

Registration Goes "LIVE" and Online

If you haven't activated your **NEIUport Account** as yet, you need to do so NOW. You will need this account to register for summer classes, as TTRS will no longer be used for registration. You can activate your account at www.neiu.edu/neiuport.

Second Semester Activities Schedule Open

Your suggestions are welcome for honors activities for the spring. We are planning an alumni dinner that will welcome familiar faces and honors scholars from the past to join us on campus in April. Please contact Kathy to serve on welcoming committee.

Brown Bag Lunches
Last Friday of the Month, 2:00-3:00PM

Please plan to join us for one or more of the **Spring Semester Brown Bag Lunches**. We have invited faculty, alumni, and professionals to present and engage in conversation on the following topics on the last Friday of each month in the B-Wing Conference Room from 2-3PM: On January 25, Dr. Michael Davros shared ideas on getting your work published. On the next several last Fridays, we will continue to host topics of general interest across disciplines:

February 29 *Be Your Own Boss: Skills, Chills, Thrills and Bills!*

Owning your own business can be exciting and challenging, and the opportunity for earning more than a salary, providing employment for others, and making decisions that move an industry forward can be seductive. The risks are also great, however. Young business owners share their experiences of their first years.

March 28 *Faculty-Student Research Collaborations.*

Faculty currently working with students in research communities, and those who would like to do so, are invited to come and share ideas with one another. If you are thinking of your thesis for next year, now is the time to consider a faculty member you would like to have as a mentor, and faculty can tap into the creativity and excitement of student research candidates.

Research Presentation Opportunities

The Upper Midwest Honors Council: April 3-5

Deadline for Abstracts; February 29

If you are planning to present your research or creative activity at the Annual Student Research and Creative Activity Symposium on Campus the following week, you might enjoy presenting it in upper Wisconsin, at the University of Wisconsin in Stout. The UHP will pay for lodging, transportation and registration fees. You will be able to see your peers, other honors students, and perhaps, even some of the honors faculty from the upper Midwest, presenting their research. If you are interested, please Kathy know as soon as possible, as we must submit abstract by February 29.

NEIU Annual Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium: April 11

DEADLINE for Submissions: Abstracts due March 3, 2008– In My Office by 4:00PM!

Once you have presented your research in Stout, you can return to our campus as professionals. This will be a local, rather than regional level presentation venue. We will provide lunch, and, since your abstract and power point presentations have already been perfected for the presentation in the preceding week, you are all set– no excuses for failing to register for our very own symposium. Honors students usually make up almost 25% of the participants, so I am counting on you! Applications can be found online on NEIU's website.

Featured Alum: Melissa Anderson

Melissa graduated last year with a BA in Biology. She served an internship at Rutgers University over the summer, and was offered admission to their doctoral program. She chose instead to accept the offer of University of Virginia to study the proteins involved in cervical cancer. Here, for our edification, are some reflections on her first semester of graduate school:

"So I've officially completed (and passed) one full semester of graduate school. **To say that it was difficult or challenging would be an understatement** of mass proportions. I knew graduate school wasn't going to be easy, but I thought that I was relatively prepared for what "they" (whoever they are) would throw at me (or as prepared as I pos-

sibly could be).

I was wrong.

Knowing that something is going to be very challenging, competitive, emotional, heart-wrenching, stressful, trying and will test your determination and ability to remain "sort-of" sane on a weekly basis is something that you really can't prepare for. During this first semester I've spent many days on auto-pilot, just getting to class and doing my best not to have an outburst of Turrets syndrome proportions for no real reason at all. Attempting to explain the emotional and mental rollercoaster to people who have not experienced something like this is impossible. I'm not saying I don't appreciate the effort (because I do mom), but rationally trying to explain how you can go from feeling like you can do this, you're smart, you're qualified, you're learning and gosh darn it, people like you- in one moment, to the shattering opposite of how the hell did you even get an undergrad degree, let alone get into graduate school, what the hell were you thinking signing up for this, you're not qualified to even measure butter, let alone run an experiment and who cares if people like you, because you hate everyone- in the very next moment. Yeah, sounds pretty dramatic, extreme and trying...now go through that a few times a week.

Then try explaining why in God's name you're going to do this for another semester (and yes, hopefully another 5-7 years) to people who haven't gone through this. When I was applying for graduate school and writing my personal statements, I remember something I said about how I don't believe that it's necessarily about how innately "smart" you are, but about how determined, how motivated and how willing you are to accept many failures along the way in order to obtain your Ph.D. It was something that I discussed with my interviewers, how I may not have the best grades, GRE scores or accomplishments of other applicants, but that in being a little older than most of them I have definitely learned that how much you're willing to put into something and how able you are to have something go wrong time and time again and still get up the next morning and try it again is way more valuable than a 4.0 or a perfect GRE score. After this first semester, I fully realized just how much all that is really and actually true. You can have a bad ass record from a top notch school, but if you are not mentally prepared to deal with all this and still stick with it, there is no way in hell you will get through.

So, as for what's going on now and in the near future, I start my second lab rotation early next week. The focus of this lab is on cytomegalovirus (CMV) and natural killer cells (NK) of the immune system. I'm going to be working with a 4th year graduate student in the lab looking into the effect (or not) of CMV on the pancreas, using a mouse model. I've never worked with mice before, so I'm looking forward to getting some experience with that and learning some new techniques.

On January 7th all the first year MII (Microbiology, Immunology, and Infectious Disease) graduate students have to do a 10 minute presentation to the department on our first lab rotation. In true Melissa form, I haven't yet started working on my presentation and I still need to present it to the Kedes lab (where I did my rotation) before I present to the department on the 7th. I promise to at least get a rough draft done today.

I'm taking 2 classes this semester that start January 16th; one on the molecular basis of cancer and the other on immunology. Then once a week I have a bioethics class, a journal club and a seminar. This semester we'll be doing our second and third lab rotations while taking classes. It's going to mean less time for studying, but at least it's 2 classes instead of 3. In the cancer class, we don't have exams throughout the semester, just one huge project at the end where we (as a small group) have to cure cancer. Yeah, I know, good luck with that.

The second lab rotation goes to the end of February and the third and final one goes from March to the end of April. Then before April 30th we all have to pick our thesis lab- the lab where we're going to work for the next 4-6 years. I haven't yet decided on my third rotation, but I really need to figure that out sooner rather than later.

As for my first lab rotation in the Kedes lab, I really loved it. Dean (the boss) is an MD, PhD and he's a really great, normal guy with a good sense of humor. We quickly figured out a way to communicate with one another and we get along well. I love the other people in the lab. Evonne has quickly become a very close friend of mine, I have much respect for Lisa, the post doc, who is super smart, very funny and always willing to check my formulas and Lynn is an MD/PhD student who can teach all of us a little about just going with the flow and not being so stressed. So, I think the point of what I'm babbling about is that while I still have 2 more rotations to do, I can see myself very happy doing my thesis work in the Kedes lab.

As for the personal side of my life, I was lucky enough to go to Belleville a few weeks ago after the semester ended to hang with the family for a few days. It was really great to be able to see everyone for a few days, especially the kids, who don't care if you pass Biochem, because they can't even say it (which, by the way, I did pass, with a B+, so I didn't even barely pass- I totally passed!).

Thanks, Melissa! You have said it better than any of us could, and you have made us all proud- And all the rest of you who are where Melissa was last year- here's to your success as well!

With great pride, Dr. Kathy Kardaras