

THE HONORS BEACON

Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato



LEADERSHIP

RESEARCH

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Explore, Dream, Discover

A Study Tour to Germany by Jeffrey Nestrud



Mark Twain once famously said, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade

winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” I had the incredible opportunity to spend a total of 10 days in Germany as part of the Germany Study Tour course during the Spring 2012 semester. (Continued on page 3)

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Co-Editors’ Note — Alyssa Filip, Anastasia Humphers-Ginther

Hello and welcome to our first issue as co-editors of our program’s newsletter! As many of you may have noticed, we have changed the layout of the newsletter a little bit. We hope you’ll appreciate it all the same!

This semester we have recruited many new writers, all whom have done a wonderful job in displaying exactly what the Honors Program is about. We hope you enjoy each article; the writers have worked very hard.

As this semester comes to a close we wish you all the very best, and hope you have a wonderful holiday!

Interim Director's Note — Dr. Emily Stark

What an incredible and fast semester this has been! When I agreed to step in as Interim Honors Director, I'm not sure I really knew what I was getting into, and I had no idea how much I would get out of it. Now that things are winding down for the semester and I look ahead to returning to the Psychology department for spring, I'm enjoying taking some time to reflect on what I learned throughout this experience.

I've realized that I was used to thinking in 16-week chunks; each semester is a clean slate. In Honors, I got a taste of thinking farther ahead – from finalizing classes for next year and beginning to plan for 2014/15, to working with students to balance the interests and needs of all classes, to discussing with the Honors Council ways to expand experiences of Honors students – I've had to think about this program as an entity that will exist and change over time. I'm grateful to have had the chance to make a mark on this amazing student and faculty experience, though I also admit to looking forward to teaching my own classes again, too. Working with the people involved in Honors – students, faculty, staff, and administrators, is invigorating, and I'm excited to bring that energy back into my Psychology courses. I also have some ideas to try out in future Honors classes!

I would have been unable to do anything without the support and knowledge of our staff, particularly our administrative assistant Sadie Anderson and our graduate assistant, Robyn Sellers. I agreed to take on this position because I knew Sadie and Robyn would be here to help – they are so committed to the students and are the key to making sure that everything runs smoothly. I have also greatly benefitted from the support and ideas of Dean Barry Ries and the Honors Council, all of whom are so committed to this program that our meetings were inspiring and exciting, rather than just another block on my calendar. Overall, this has been a great semester; thanks to everyone who helped me and worked with me, and especially thanks to the students – you are an amazing group of people, and I can't wait to see the things that you will all accomplish!

First Honors Program graduate – a Reflection by Emma Grumke

Having successfully completed my eFolio defense, I can now say that I will officially be the first Honors Program graduate! The Honors Program has provided me with challenges, obstacles, and opportunities for success over the years, which is why it is such an honor to be the first program graduate. The program is full of high-achieving students and supportive faculty with whom I am lucky to have had the opportunity to work.

The Honors Program has guided me to experiences during my college career that I never saw myself doing.

As a leader, I have learned how important it is to be flexible and lead by example. I was most



fearful of approaching my research project, but it was incredibly rewarding and greatly improved my analytical skills. During job interviews, I often referenced the research project when asked what I was most proud of during my college career. Being able to study abroad completely changed my academic, career and personal life views, which never would have happened without the Honors Program.

I will continue to build on the analytical skills, communication skills, and confidence that the Honors Program has helped me develop. After graduation in December, I will be taking the CPA exam for accounting and will start a full-time Audit Associate position with the accounting firm McGladrey, in Minneapolis next fall.



Explore, Dream, Discover by Jeffrey Nestrud

(Continued from page 1) This wasn't just a vacation to Europe, but rather a truly unique experience that dove deep into German history and culture in a very real way. It's one thing to read about the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989; it's an entirely different sensation to actually walk the bricks through *Alexanderplatz* that mark where it once divided a city, country, and the world. I will never forget the first time I stepped across it. The feeling was impossible to fully comprehend.

The Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato strives to nurture global citizenship, along with leadership and research, in all students. A combination of language, communication, and cultural understanding is the cornerstone that this program uses to better prepare future leaders to not only live, but thrive in a global society. This study tour was a chance to think about my education, future, and self in a completely

different way than I ever had before. We learned about places and events in history, actually experienced them, and reflected afterwards, both as a large group and as individuals. It was by far the best learning environment I've experienced in my life.

The tour consisted of 8 weeks of classroom instruction and 10 days in Germany. Most of the classroom time was spent in group discussions, which was the perfect structure for this course. I was a part of the German Culture section, but we combined with the German Political History section once a week and traveled together. We spent three nights in Berlin, took the high-speed ICE (InnerCityExpress) to Nürnberg for a night, and traveled by motor coach to München (Munich) for two nights.

The Jewish Museum in Berlin was phenomenal, but a little overwhelming. The building

Continued on page 4...

(Page 3 Continued)

itself is an architectural masterpiece. In building this museum, architect Daniel Libeskind and the city of Berlin had to solve the daunting task of housing the memory of something no longer present—the Jewish people murdered during the Third Reich. Throughout the museum, there are many voids—places where it appears as though things should be present, but aren't. There were also exhibits that really caused me to stop and think, especially “Fallen Leaves,” where 10,000 metal faces line the floor. To experience the exhibit, we had to walk on top of the faces, causing them to shift and clank against one another. The faces all had crying mouths, so the crashes and clanks were their screams. It was an incredibly thought-provoking exhibit (see below).



In Nürnberg, we experienced the former Nazi Rally Grounds. When we visited, there was a weird feeling in the air, due in part to the fact that just 70-some years ago, one of history's cruelest and most evil regimes congregated there. In class, we talked about *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which is the term Germans use for “coming to terms with the past.” There was a question of what to do with all the old Nazi buildings. Demolishing them costs an incredible amount of money and destroys a part of history, no matter how evil the intentions for them were. Restoring them glorifies the ideals of a truly evil regime. The solution was unclear for quite some time, but what eventually resulted was ingenious. The term *deseccration* usually carries a negative, religious connotation. But in this instance, it works in a really good way. The *Große Straße*, the massive central road connecting most parts of the grounds, today serves as the city's largest parking lot. The *Kongresshalle* is used for municipal storage, and the *Zeppelfeld* has hosted several rock concerts and auto races. This really is the perfect solution.

I really don't think there is anything anyone can do to truly prepare to visit a Concentration Camp. The weather on the day we visited Dachau was eerily appropriate for our visit—cold and rainy. Walking through the exhibits was hard; walking through the gas chamber and crematorium was almost impossible. I don't know if there are words to describe the feeling of knowing that hundreds of thousands of people were imprisoned and tens of thousands were killed there. Flashes of images and the sounds of screams of a time not all that long ago overtook my mind. Time helps heal, but the horror and terror will never be forgotten.

The independent exploration days allowed everyone the opportunity to go out and do whatever we found passion or excitement for. In München, I took the opportunity to experience the complete BMW brand experience at *BMW Welt* (BMW World). As a Marketing student, it was a really interesting look into the lengths the luxury car company goes to ensure their customers feel special and that their products are portrayed as “the ultimate driving machines.” New potential customers were fully immersed in the complete brand experience.

Continued on page 6...

Honors Program Student Council

Lauren Bach: Honors Program President



My name is Lauren Bach and I am a second year psychology major and sociology minor from New York Mills, MN. This year, I am involved in presidential scholars, student ambassadors, AΛΔ, and other student organizations. However, the Honors Program has been the most influential aspect of my college experience. Through Honors, I have been challenged to become a more effective leader, practice individual research in my major, learn American Sign Language and interact with other cultures. Most importantly, Honors has given me a family of driven students with whom I share my aspirations. This year I hope to benefit the program and its students as much as Honors has impacted me.

Alex Mozey: Honors Program Vice President

My name is Alex Mozey and I am the Vice President for the Honors Student Council this year. I am a junior from Crystal, MN (a northwest suburb of Minneapolis) and am studying Accounting in my time at MNSU. I enjoy the Honors program because of the opportunities it has presented to make new friends; they have become a vital part of my college career and will continue to be important after college. The program also allowed me to meet new people and grow in my leadership skills through my work as the Honors Learning Community Coordinator.



Marin Beck: Honors Program Secretary



I'm Marin Beck, your HSC Secretary for this year. I am currently a sophomore and am pursuing a degree in Elementary Education, with a possible minor in Scandinavian Studies. I grew up in Chaska, MN, a suburb of Minneapolis, and spent most of my childhood exploring outdoors in the country. To this day, I spend my free time hunting, golfing, or doing pretty much any other outdoor activity. Some of my other favorite things include singing, playing the guitar, and DIY projects. The Honors Program has helped make a large university feel comfortable, and has presented innumerable opportunities for me to grow as a leader, a scholar, and a well-rounded member of the Mankato community.

(Continued from page 4) This study tour was incredible, and one of the greatest experiences of my time here at MSU. I stepped out of my comfort level and experienced and thought in ways that I hadn't ever had the opportunity to do before. It was truly life changing, and I strongly encourage anyone interested in taking their education and their life to the next level to explore the option of studying abroad. Long or short-term, the benefits are immeasurable. This Germany Study Tour will continue for the next few years, so future Honors students can share in this fantastic experience.

For me, though, this tour was just the beginning. The future is bright and building the skills to communicate with and understand different cultures will help create opportunities to better myself and those around me. There is also still so much to see, do, and learn. I will be back!

UCI Reflection by Kurtis Malecha

This past summer in Irvine, California was nothing short of a very positive learning experience. While there, I learned more about Chemistry and cultural aspects of another part of the country. I was the recipient of an NSF (National Science Foundation)-funded fellowship to the University of California, Irvine (UCI), which is located close to Newport Beach in Orange County. My basic goal there was to better understand clathrates, which are ice-like clusters that trap gases and/or halogens (bromine, fluorine, etc.). Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of these clathrates is that if they are made with natural gas, one can experience "burning ice." This research was conducted under the supervision of Dean Kenneth Janda with four other undergraduates from UCI and one graduate student.

My work was not all laboratory work; I frequently had weekends at some of "SoCal's" best beaches and met phenomenal people. One of the best parts of the program was that we lived in a "house" with individual dormitory style rooms. A large kitchen was downstairs, so the 11 other fellows and UCI students gathered in the evening for a very supportive environment. We even managed to go camping together one weekend in 100 degree weather.

Other than a slight bit of culture shock, the entire experience made me more confident to attend graduate school next fall. Last summer's Germany experience was phenomenal, and now I was able to experience an American version of top-notch research in no better place than California.

Class Representatives

Freshman Class

Ashley Madson

Sophomore Class:

Kristi Paulsen

Junior Class:

Lindsey Lancette

Senior Class:

Erika Koenig

Honorable Mentions

Debra Strandlie spent her summer with the Air Force Reserve in Texas. She graduated with Honors from Basic Training and was awarded ACE and Top Grad at Tech school.

Nicholas Laxen spent his summer in the Advanced Individual Training for the National Guard at the Army Financial Management School at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He graduated as the Distinguished Honor Graduate and drills with the 247th Finance Detachment in Roseville, MN.

The Honors Program collected 1,235 pounds of food for The Echo Food Shelf for our annual Trick-or-Treat So Kids Can Eat event! Thanks to all who contributed to this tremendous success.

An Adventure in California by Christina Mangan



In summer 2012, I worked as a Research Fellow for the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research in Escondido, CA. It is part of San Diego Zoo Global, which includes the San Diego Zoo, San Diego Zoo Safari Park, and San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research. The Institute for Conservation Research includes 7 divisions that engage in scientific research to conserve animals, plants, and environmental surroundings for the survival and reproduction of endangered species.

I worked in the Wildlife Disease Laboratory, which is devoted to the health and well-being of species through disease studies. I worked on a project in which we extracted DNA from insects in and around the Safari Park, tested the samples for Avian Malaria, and determined what hosts species the insects were feeding upon. The purpose was to determine whether the collection animals were at risk for Avian Malaria and other vector transmitted diseases. We also collected insects using UV and CO₂ traps around the Safari Park, which gave me an understanding of the connection of field and laboratory research. At the end of the summer all the Research Fellows presented the projects we had been working on to the Research community at the Institute. It was amazing to learn the research projects in each of the 7 divisions and how they are applied



to conservation research. Having gained laboratory and research skills through undergraduate research at MSU, I felt well prepared for the laboratory research procedures I conducted in the Wildlife Disease Laboratory this past summer.

I also developed independence by stepping out of my comfort zone. I knew this was a once in a lifetime experience. Although I was nervous being away from family and friends for 3 months, I was excited to be a part of this research community. I quickly settled into the new environment and engaged with the community of interns and research fellows. This community was one of the most important parts of the trip in that we were able to connect on a professional level in the research community and on a social level by spending time exploring southern California through various activities. Spending an entire summer away from home was a personal growing experience that demonstrated my confidence and independence needed to explore my future career in the professional world.

Working for the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research has opened my eyes to a new type of research and improved my knowledge and understanding of the application of conservation research to the survival and reproduction of endangered species. I was also opened to the idea of zoological veterinary medicine through my job shadowing encounters with zoological veterinarians, which I had never thought about prior to this summer.

This summer spent in California was a lifetime experience that allowed me to engage in a field research I greatly enjoy, gain confidence and independence, experience life on my own, and learn more about myself and my future career. I will never forget the experience of learning to surf, the many days spent on the California beaches, the many times visiting the zoo animals at the San Diego Zoo and Safari Park, and the lifetime friends I met this past summer. I now understand why many people who come to California don't want to leave and end up coming back.

Honors in Pictures

by Myra Colakovic



(Above): Honors students at the annual Honors Fall Welcome Back BBQ



(Above): Honors students prepare to scare at the CSU Haunted House



(Above): Honors students watching the Maverick hockey game in the Presidential Suite; (Right): Honors students discuss Common Read author Craig Mullaney's autobiography "The Unforgiving Minute"



A Summer in Ecuador by Jacob Ball



Over the summer I went to Ecuador for 8 weeks as part of a Spanish study abroad program. While there, I took upper-level Spanish credits ranging from advanced conversation to Latin-American literature.

After class, we had optional activities offered through our school such as salsa dancing lessons and cooking classes where we made (and, more importantly, devoured) traditional dishes of Ecuador.

I also traveled the geographically diverse country as I went on trips to the Pacific Coast, the Andes Mountains, and the Amazon. My Spanish skills, especially speaking, improved incredibly quickly, but I think I gained the most out of the interpersonal interactions with Ecuadorians and classmates from other countries.

Something that Ecuadorian friends and family taught me is the importance of greeting. They tend to greet everyone individually, even in a group, and actually catching up with someone is more important than being on time to class or a meeting. Hospitality is an important value for many people in Ecuador, something I hope I can emulate. In one day, I made a friend, was invited to go on a trip with them, invited back home with them for dinner and was told that I could stay with them for free the next time I came to Ecuador. I was amazed with their kindness and generosity. These are things I hope to use as an example for my life.

Understanding what it is like to be an international student was also beneficial to me. Since I was learning a new language, practice was very important. However, it was great to take breaks once in a while and speak English with some of my fellow students when we did activities outside of class. While speaking English, I was always respectful to those around me. Sometimes, people in America assume that foreigners speaking their native tongue are doing so out of disrespect, but I learned differently. I just wanted the comfort of speaking in my own language like I might if I were at home. Thanks to studying abroad, I have a greater respect for the international students here at Minnesota State University, Mankato and I completely understand why sometimes they like to speak in their native language.

—

Honors Professor Interviews

by Tatiana Soboleva and Ryan Colakovic

Professor Keith Luebke will be teaching Introduction to Visual Culture as an Honors course spring 2013.

Professor Luebke, what do you expect to receive from this experience?

For years I taught a wide variety of courses in three different departments. More recently, I focused on Art 160, a large lecture course. I miss the smaller, face-to-face classes of my earlier teaching career. I'd like to teach in a smaller class setting (less than 40 students).

Visual culture is dominating our lives in new ways - computer games, the internet, and even on the small screens of our cell phones. I'm interested in getting a better sense of how to connect students with the visual culture of the past in the midst of our media saturated present. So I hope the smaller class size will be a better setting for interaction and conversations.

Why is this Honors class different?

I expect more writing from my students (not too much!), and more time on my part for reading student assignments. I'll do more "reaction" papers - brief student reactions to specific works of art, short videos, and exhibits. I'll be very careful to provide structure to the course content, but remain flexible within that structure. I'm very interested in how the arts interact with other fields of study, and I think we can construct a path of study that feels purposeful and coherent while still allowing spontaneity and unexpected discoveries...

Dr. John Paul will be teaching the Honors seminar: Exploring London and Paris with Dr. Corley for the spring semester of 2013.

What is your degree; how did you end up at MSU?

I used to live here. My undergraduate degree was in psychology and Phys. Ed. I then switched fields and got my MFA degree at the U of M in Technical Theatre and Design. Afterwards, I went to California and other places to work on projects. This included individual projects, theme parks, and film. Then I wanted to start teaching. I did adjunct teaching in California. Then I moved to Iowa to teach. When my predecessor left, I applied for the job and got it. This is my 6th year at MSU.

Why London and Paris?

Professor Corley and I have both studied and have had previous experiences in these two cities. He is familiar with Paris while I am familiar with London. Also, London and Paris are more recognizable cities in Europe compared to other ones. Both have had more of an impact in history and theatre.

Why would students want to take this course?

This course is for those interested in art, the history of how cities or urban areas developed, theatre, and studying abroad for short-term. Studying abroad is a real eye-opener. It gives a whole different sense of other places. Also, the course serves as a connection to Europe.

A Lincoln Community Center Round of Applause by Erika Magnusson

Well done! The Mankato Area Community and its affiliations deserve a round of applause for its establishment of the Lincoln Community Center. Open your eyes to the introspection of Mankato area communities' mission to provide for all of its peoples, specifically focusing on one wing within the Lincoln Community Center located on the second floor, the English as a Second Language Department.

The ESL is designed to offer classes to adults whose native language is not English and give them the opportunity to receive basic English education. The ESL facilitates classes for ELL's (English Language Learners) in the Mankato area. How does this affect you as a community? The Lincoln Community Center and its ESL does much more than just teach students English. ESL's teachers' goals include, but are not limited to, teaching students to teach English, instructing students to live as respected U.S. citizens, and assimilating students into the Mankato community via the Lincoln Community Center's EFF (Equipped for the Future) program to strengthen the community employment rate and to provide family based education.

As a volunteer at the Lincoln Community Center in ESL classrooms, I witnessed the need and fulfillment for immigrant education in the Mankato community. Mankato Adult Basic Education (ABE) prioritizes the goal of assisting students in gaining skills to obtain meaningful employment. Mankato ABE sees the priority of employment training as the "most effective means of assisting our students in all areas of their lives." Moments of introspection I, as a volunteer, have experienced demonstrate the Mankato ABE's mission statement- one that serves mostly adult students in the Lincoln Community Center ESL classes.

I hope the following examples of volunteering provide insight into my introspection. One particular married couple exemplifies the ELL program at the Lincoln Community Center in Mankato, MN. Jesús is married to Elizabeth and they have a young son. Their earnest will to learn is not only for their hopes of citizenship, but also for the betterment of their son's life through education. The Lincoln Community Center's mission hopes to see Jesús' son someday help his own son with homework.

Another example that demonstrates my gratefulness for moments of introspection is one evening, class started late and the students' patience for their teacher was unlike anything I had ever observed. The ELL students did not respond to the late start like most American university students would, where tension and demand for service whenever a professor is late. As an American college student, I cannot recall a time when a class has started late and the room of students was quiet by any means. There is always talk amongst students of if they should leave, how flustered they are that they came at all or even in some cases demanding the service they have paid for. It is all about patience and gratefulness. Maybe as an average American, I have something to learn from the ELL students' example.

The program has the same primary responsibility as a university institution: to facilitate the progress of the students to have resources necessary to become a U.S. citizen if they so choose. The ESL program is more involved than a university would be for the well-being of each individual. A university would not find individual student housing, transportation and employment, but ESL does. The Mankato area community has collaborated with ESL to make sure its students have the opportunity to achieve basic needs – and in turn this should decrease the drop rate of ELL students because their basic needs are met, therefore, hopefully reducing the unemployment and illiteracy in the Mankato area community. The ESL program and its mission statement tailor to the overall needs of immigrants in the Mankato area community.

Honors Fun Corner: Word Search

By Grace Webb

Clues:

1. During spring break, Jeff studied in _____ .
2. Marin is considering minoring in _____ studies.
3. Lauren is a _____ major.
4. Alex is studying _____ .
5. While in California, Kurtis studied _____ .
6. While working at the San Diego Zoo, Cristina conducted a project to see which animals were at risk for Avian _____ .
7. Jacob spent his summer visiting _____ .
8. Erika volunteered teaching ESL at the _____ Community Center.

N	Y	M	I	N	M	N	M	Q	H	T	S	L	Z	R
E	C	U	A	D	O	R	T	V	Q	C	E	I	G	X
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A	T	U	D	Z	A	Q	E	N	C	G	A	C	R	R
Y	Y	G	F	P	U	R	D	M	J	V	R	O	I	U
D	S	G	N	J	M	I	I	T	I	Y	H	L	T	B
E	F	O	H	I	N	Y	Y	A	T	M	T	N	U	P
N	O	B	V	A	T	N	B	L	F	G	A	M	I	B
N	N	U	V	C	A	N	D	P	C	B	L	D	L	L
J	C	I	Y	M	Z	F	U	S	Z	K	C	M	E	V
M	A	L	R	Z	R	I	B	O	E	I	B	C	N	F
N	Y	E	E	E	Q	M	G	M	C	N	T	B	B	T
Y	G	O	L	O	H	C	Y	S	P	C	K	I	C	P
H	N	Y	T	Y	Q	A	X	U	L	S	A	N	A	T
Y	U	O	G	N	B	B	C	C	D	P	L	G	E	G

(Answers will be published in the spring 2013 issue)

Answers for last issue: intercultural, Amazon, open door, Indonesia, professor, Steele of Hammurabi, chemistry

Happy Holidays &
Have a safe New Year!



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