

# Honorable Mention

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## Meet the Honors Class of 2026

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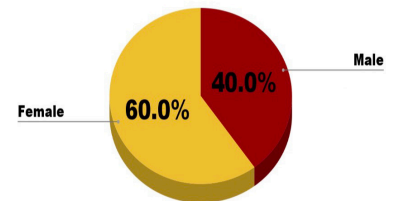
Dr. Nina Rytwinski  
Faculty Advisor

There are 42 Honors Freshmen.



### Most Common Majors:

- Nursing
- Exercise Science
- Computer Science
- Education
- Management



### Where are our freshmen from?

- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Michigan
- Indiana
- Connecticut
- Texas
- and
- Ethiopia!



Over 40% of the Honors freshmen are student athletes!

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# Letter from the Directors

Dear Walsh Community,

We would like to congratulate and welcome the forty-two first-year students admitted into the Honors Program this fall. In their brief time at the university, they have already proven to be an intelligent, hardworking, and service-oriented cohort of students. They have thrived in their first Honors courses, actively engaged in Honors activities, and enthusiastically volunteered for service events including the Nimishiillen River clean-up and our Spooky Science booth at Beech Creek Botanical Gardens and Nature Preserve. We are delighted to have them in the Honors Program and look forward to continuing to support their growth during their time at Walsh University.

The upper-class Honors students also continue to impress us with their commitment to learning, leadership, and service. They have demonstrated true intellectual curiosity in their classes which have included the topics of Philosophical Rhetoric, Western Literature, and Victorian London. In addition to being excellent scholars, they have volunteered to be mentors for our first-year students and to serve in the local community. They are a kind, cohesive group of students. We love seeing them on campus working together and supporting each other.

The Honors Program culminates with a thesis project that is completed during the last two years in the program. We currently have sixty-three students at various stages of their thesis. We are excited for all these students. They have designed innovative studies that will contribute to their fields of study. However, at this time, we would particularly like to congratulate the five students who are about to submit their final theses and will be graduating this December: **Austin Fantin, Haili Kendall, Briar Lehman, Martin Nadowadney, and Madeline Weisburn** (please see pages 8 and 9 for more information about these students). We are so proud of all that they have accomplished during their time at Walsh. We wish them the absolute best in the future. We know that they will do great things!

Furthermore, we are sincerely appreciative of all the people who support the program and ensure that it continues to grow and thrive. In particular, we are thankful for the individuals who design and teach innovative Honors courses, the faculty who serve as thesis advisors and readers, the Honors Committee, our Honors Student Mentor, Kaitlyn Bryant, the Dean of Arts and Sciences and Education, Dr. Jackie Novak, and our administrative assistant, Lisa McLaughlin.

We wish you all a successful end of your semester and a safe and restful winter break.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jennifer Clevinger and Dr. Nina Rytwinski  
Co-Directors of the Honors Program



# Letter from the Honors Mentor

Dear Colleagues,

My name is Kaitlyn Bryant, and I have served as the Honors Mentor for two years now. I want to introduce myself to the larger Walsh community to depict the importance of the Honors Program and what impact it has had on my life.

Being a senior this year, I will graduate in May, 2023 with a double major in community clinical psychology and sociology of applied family studies. I will also obtain a minor in theology. This would not be so without my having been a part of the Honors Program. I owe much to this community. My academic progress, introduction to new ideas and ways of thinking, my organizational skills, professional relations, and my closest of friends: these are things that I will always cherish and carry with me throughout my future endeavors.

My motivation for attaining this job was to ensure that I could improve the mentoring experience for current students. I wanted to do my part in giving back to the community which has provided so much for me. One of my goals, as stated in my interview, was to provide service projects geared towards helping those outside of campus itself. Many Honors students spend so much time involving themselves in clubs and extra-curricular activities on campus. Even so, intentionality about spending time outside of campus is good for the soul, and provides perspective as to what kind of world and individuals reside outside of Walsh.

Looking back on my time, I can honestly say that my favorite Walsh Honors moments have for the most part involved service related circumstances. Of course, riding go karts at the GreenFamily Fun Zone and going to the fall corn maze was so much fun and provided a nice refresher from school. However, the most impactful moments for me came about when I worked closely with my peers to improve our community. Being your Honors mentor provides me with numerous opportunities to continue doing so.



Honors student mentoring event organized by Kaitlyn Bryant



Honors students volunteering at the Spooky Science event at Beech Creek Gardens

Being ushered into this program remains to be one of my proudest accomplishments. My internships, the research I have conducted, my thesis project, and many other responsibilities are what will carry me into my next adventure- graduate school. Before this venture officially takes place though, I will continue to focus on ways I can improve your Honors experience at Walsh! While I have greatly benefited from this position professionally and personally, I fundamentally do it for current and future Honors students. I hope that through my role, I continue to create an atmosphere and culture that our students can be proud of, because I know that I am.

God Bless,  
Kaitlyn Bryant  
Honors Mentor

## Professor Spotlight: Christopher Seeman

By: Ashli Snider

Dr. Christopher Seeman is a Professor of Theology and the Chair of the Division of Humanities at Walsh University. He has been with the university since 2011 and is regularly involved with the Honors Program. Dr. Seeman enjoys teaching within the Honors Program, especially when students are invested in the class and offer interesting perspectives on the information he provides.

Dr. Seeman received his B.A. from the University of San Francisco, his M.A. from the Graduate Theological Union, and his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Religions from the University of California at Berkeley. His dissertation focused on the diplomatic relations between the Roman Republic and Judea, especially relating to the use of power and exploitation on both sides. Dr. Seeman commented that his approach to research has led to interesting findings in both secular and religious literature because he began his college career with a history focus rather than a theological one.

His current personal project, aside from being a Walsh professor, involves translating the writings of Josephus, a prolific writer and Jewish priest from the 1st Century. This is the first English language commentary of Josephus's works, and is actively being compiled by an international team. Dr. Seeman also enjoys researching Ancient and Mediterranean history and archeology.

Dr. Seeman has published several works including the first book of the translation and commentary of Josephus and "A Parabolic Analysis of the Trial of Jesus in Mark's Gospel: How a Literary Form Shapes the Description of a Historical Event". In his free time, Dr. Seeman enjoys spending time with his son, who is now in high school. He also enjoys playing tabletop role-playing games and other board games with friends.



## Student Spotlight: Shruti Gupta

By: Briar Lehman



Shruti Gupta is a Walsh senior from Kathmandu, Nepal, majoring in both mathematics and computer science. Being naturally inclined to solve puzzles, Shruti had originally planned to only major in mathematics, however, she discovered her love of solving problems and puzzles via computer science after learning Python programming during her sophomore year at Walsh. In addition to the coursework in her major, Shruti is completing her senior Honors thesis, regarding building a full-stack web application prototype. It will be designed with young girls from under-developed and developing countries in mind, with a goal to encourage their participation in computer science and other technology-related fields.

Her favorite part of being an Honors student at Walsh has been the classes that she has taken. "They are very interesting, and the professors are brilliant," Shruti says, "They have helped me bring out the creative sides that I never thought I had. These classes have helped me grow and become an all-rounded individual." Shruti can be seen around campus outside the classroom in a variety of settings, as both a resident assistant and as president of the World Student Organization.

# Course Feature: Interdisciplinary Research & Writing

## By: Sara Scavuzzo

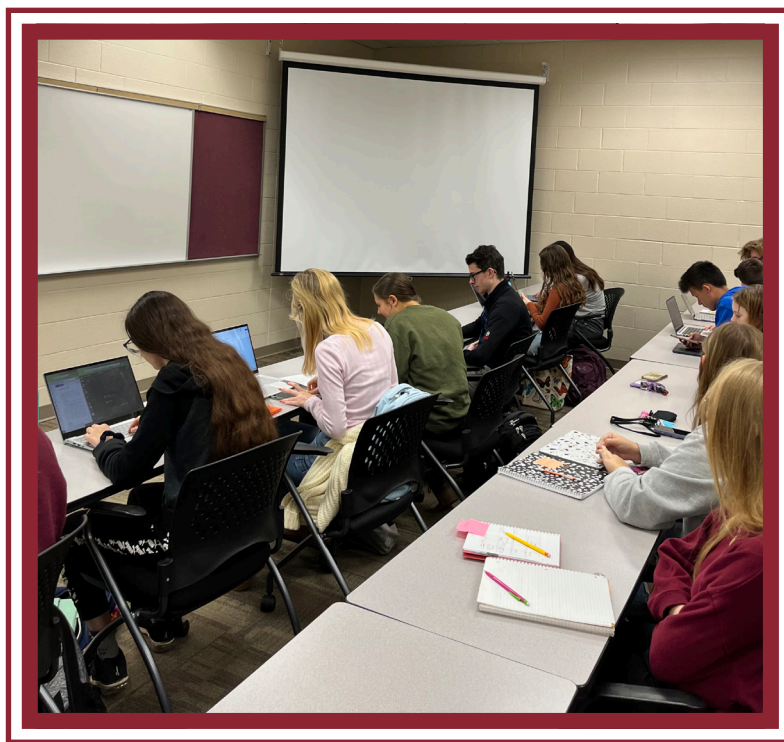
If you walked up to any student in the Honors Program here at Walsh University and asked them what the hardest Honors class is, I can guarantee almost 100% of those students would say Honors 120 - Interdisciplinary Research and Writing. This class is taught by Dr. Seth Hepner and is required for all Honors students in their first semester of their freshman year. Most Honors students are warned about the class by other students before they even step foot in the classroom. It is a wakeup call for incoming freshman, however, there is a method to the madness. This method builds a strong foundation for the four years to come.

The difficulty of this class is no mystery, as even Dr. Hepner knows the challenge he is giving first year students. Dr. Hepner states, "Honors 120 challenges first-year Honors students in multiple ways; the course is often considered one of the most difficult in the entire Honors Program. When students complete the course and reflect on what they've learned, their confidence increases." As a junior in the Honors Program who is beginning the Junior Honors Project, I can attest that Honors 120 does exactly what Dr. Hepner says it is supposed to do. It builds confidence in the skills that each student comes to college with and helps each student become a significantly stronger writer.

Throughout the eight weeks of the course, students are assigned six papers. Each of these papers requires the student to write differently, with each assignment asking for something unique. Dr. Hepner asks his students to think outside of the basic structure that was drilled into most of us – introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. He looks for creativity, imaginative thinking, and a deeper analysis of the world around us. It is obvious that he wants his students to succeed and grow and this can be seen in the multiple conferences he holds with each student to provide meaningful feedback on their work.

It is a rigorous eight weeks: there is no doubt about that. However, what is gained from Honors 120 lasts significantly longer than those tough few weeks. The curriculum of this course builds strong skills that are not only applicable to each student's thesis, but also to their future careers. It also gives incoming Honors freshman a space to bond over late night writing and stressful deadlines, which immediately creates a sense of community that will continue over four years. So, the secret is out... Honors 120 is tough but the growth that comes from this course makes it a necessary part of the Honors curriculum.

"When students complete the course and reflect on what they've learned, their confidence increases." - Dr. Hepner



Honors 120 students hard at work in class

# Honors Cavaliers Take on the Kartause

By: Katie Flickinger

It can be easy to assume that Honors students typically experience rather routine daily schedules. Wake up, go to class, do homework, grab a bite to eat, head to the gym, say hello to friends, study, study some more, and finally, go to sleep. While days like these certainly exist once in a while, our Honors students tend to lead very exciting and enriching lives, no matter what their interests may be!

As of Spring 2022, several Honors students elected to go above and beyond in their personal quests for adventure (in conjunction with their academics, of course). Claire Campbell, Michael Sproull, and presently, Hannah Lesko, all took the journey across the Atlantic to Gaming, Austria, in order to take part in Walsh's joint study-abroad program with Franciscan University of Steubenville. Here, we hear their firsthand experiences as Honors students spending a semester in the foothills of the Austrian Alps.

**Tell us a little about where you stayed in Austria and the surrounding area.**

We stayed in the Kartause, a former 14th century Carthusian monastery in Gaming, a small town in the foothills of the Austrian Alps. Gaming is a cute little town with brightly colored cottages, a creek running through it, and beautiful green hills surrounding on all sides. There were many hiking trails around the area, a grocery store, which was a short walk from the Kartause, and a popular sandwich shop and bakery that students would often visit. - Claire Campbell

We stayed in the little town of Gaming, Austria. It is a very small town with a rich history. The neighboring town, Scheibbs, is much more well known in comparison. The town of Gaming boasts the Kartause. This is Deutsche, or German, for the Charterhouse of the Carthusian order. This white robed ancient order stresses silence, austerity, and a hermit way of living. Each brother receives a small house for his own use to stay and pray almost ceaselessly. The brothers were supported by a staff of laypersons who lived in the surrounding area. The Kartause of Gaming grew to one of the largest congregations of Carthusian monks in Europe before its oppression by the Austrian Emperors. - Michael Sproull



Claire Campbell and Michael Sproull in Volksgarten, a public park & garden in Vienna, Austria

**What was your favorite excursion, and why?**

It's very difficult to choose only one excursion! I would say my favorite place I visited was Vienna, which takes about three hours of buses and trains to get to from Gaming. Austrians are very environmentally conscious, so Vienna was very clean, cleaner than any other large city I've seen. It also has such a strong feel of art and class. There were several art and palace museums to go to, full of famous artwork, and there were also famous theater and opera houses in Vienna...The coffee shops were very classy, nothing like the to-go culture of the US. They were fancy, sit-down places where it is intended for you to sit for several hours with your friends to enjoy leisure and discussion. Leisure seemed to be a larger part of the culture in Austria...Very unlike the hustle-bustle feel of the US which is always go go go. - Claire Campbell

# Honors Cavaliers Take on the Kartause Continued

My favorite experience was my pilgrimage to The Holy Land. I renewed my baptism in the Jordan River, kissed the foot of the cross on Golgotha, meditated on the beach of the Sea of Galilee, and walked the road to Emmaus. Spiritually this was a period of great renewal and deeper understanding of God's word and reality in my life. -Michael Sproull.

**What would you consider to be your most personally impactful experience?**

Personally, it was probably going to the Holy Land over Holy Week! It was indescribable how it felt to be walking on the same ground of Jesus, hearing the stories of the Bible and then seeing the same places in person; it's not just a story anymore! Visiting the concentration camp, Auschwitz, in Poland was also very impactful. Again, I can't quite describe what it was like to be there, a significant place of history with incomprehensible horrors coming to life, no longer just words in a textbook. - Claire Campbell

Honestly, just being at the Kartause in Gaming is such an experience in itself. The day-to-day life is where we find all of the true joys and sorrows, but beauty too. Feel like you're drowning in homework, and need a little pick me up? Get up for a sunrise hike the next day, I guarantee you'll feel better. Do the creek jump! Even if it's a little too cold for comfort! Jumping off that ledge and feeling your heart pounding in your chest is one of the best feelings in the world... There's nights you'll be up late studying for a midterm and feel like you're dying, yet you somehow feel so alive and free... There have been so many special times at the Kartause – ones that I can genuinely say that in that moment, there's nowhere else I'd rather be in the world. - Hannah Lesko

**What would you say to another student who is considering studying abroad? Any advice?**

Go. Just go. No matter what, you should go. There are experiences for everyone and for any budget. As long as the person has the willingness to try something new, they will have a life-altering trip. - Michael Sproull

People often hold back due to money, class scheduling, or fear of homesickness. As far as class scheduling, I can see why this can be difficult, but if you are driven to go, Walsh will work with you. I had to take two classes online on top of my in-person classes, but I made it work and it was so worth it. For money, I can't sugar-coat it, it was really expensive. But I know that years from now, I'm not going to remember how much everything cost, but I will remember my experiences and I don't regret it. I know being homesick is a real struggle, but also it's only a few months out of your whole life. Franciscan also took care of us while we were over there, so I feel like it was good practice in learning how to grow in independence with that backup support when I needed it. - Claire Campbell

Do it. Even if you're just thinking about it, do it (but plan adequately too!). It is important to keep in mind how this semester will impact your future... Although I have not experienced the fullness of the Austria experience yet (work, planning & preparation before the semester, living the semester experience, post-semester adjustment & life/finances after)... I don't regret a single second. - Hannah Lesko



Hannah Lesko (second from left) frolicking by the Kartause with friends

# December Graduate Highlights

By: Claire Campbell

Five students have recently completed the Honors Program and will graduate this December. Below, they share some information about their thesis and future plans. They also wanted to offer some words of advice for the current freshmen class.

Graduates, congratulations on your hard work, and best of luck with your future endeavors!



## Austin Fantin

Major: Finance

Thesis Project: "I looked at whether different payment methods, specifically Venmo, influenced how much college students were willing to pay for items. It's common to hear people say that they would spend more using a mobile app, so I wanted to see if that was verifiable."

Future Plans: "Beginning in January, I will be an analyst at MarshBerry, which is a local investment bank."

Advice to Freshman: "1) Remember your faith, and never let it go. 2) The thesis is not that bad. I know that I stressed about it way too much going into it, but the process was not bad at all. For all those writing it in the next few years, you got this!"



## Haili Kendall

Major: Criminal Justice and Museum Studies

Minor: Forensic Studies and Community and Non-Profit Leadership

Thesis Project: For my thesis, I analyzed and compiled literature that showed how the use of religious literacy in law enforcement could help build trust between Communities of Color and law enforcement officers

Future Plans: After graduation I am continuing my education here at Walsh, finishing up my MBA in Data Analytics while working full-time as an admissions counselor. Ultimately, I plan to work as a lawyer for a few years before transitioning into federal law enforcement.

Advice to Freshman: "1) Get involved! 2) Never let the fear of failure hold you back from striving for excellence. 3) Let college be a time where you come to rest in beauty of God's love for you."



# December Graduate Highlights Continued



## Briar Lehman

Major: Adolescent to Young Adult Integrated Language Arts

Thesis Project: In this project, I analyzed information from several northeast Ohio high schools and determined what factors and information could have an impact on the presence of humanities courses in those high schools.

Future Plans: "I plan to get a full-time job teaching high school English"

Advice to Freshman: "Don't be afraid to put yourself out there. Make sure that you build relationships with your professors as well as your classmates."



## Martin Nadwodeny

Major: Biochemistry and History

Thesis Project: "I investigated the nature of GATA-2's possible contributions to chronic myeloid leukemia. There is a delicate balance between cell proliferation and cell differentiation in our bodies. Numerous interactions between proteins hold this balance in check, ensuring a steady supply of precursor cells are being created, which are transformed into specialized cells."

Future Plans: I believe that I will be going to a graduate school program, but I am not entirely certain where I will be going to yet. I also would like to combine my interests of both Biochemistry/Bioinformatics and History together concerning the history of biological and chemical warfare.

Advice to Freshman: "Resolve yourself to getting through the work legitimately without taking shortcuts, even if you suffer a bad grade when all is said and done."



## Madeline Weisburn

Major: Marketing

Minor: Corporate Communications and History

Thesis Project: "Evaluating formal undergraduate entrepreneurship programs in the United States to further understand the resources student entrepreneurs have available to them and what is being done to address the gender gap in formal entrepreneurship undergraduate education."

Future Plans: I plan to pursue a role in marketing analytics.

Advice to Freshman: "Protect your inner peace. If I can stand firm in my principles and protect what I know to be true for myself, then I have acquired the most awesome superpower."



## Mission

The Walsh University Honors Program provides an enhanced, values-based educational experience to intellectually curious, academically talented, and highly motivated undergraduate students. The program's curriculum is innovative, diverse, and interdisciplinary; it supports a community of scholars that is equally diverse and innovative, as well as collaborative. The Honors Program experience develops leaders who pursue academic excellence, think critically, research independently, communicate effectively, and provide service to others.



For more information about the Honors Program, please contact Dr. Jennifer Clevinger or Dr. Nina Rytwinski at [honorsdirector@walsh.edu](mailto:honorsdirector@walsh.edu).

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