

HONORS NEWSLETTER

University of South Carolina Aiken

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Dr. Jordan with some of the spring 2019 Honors Program graduates

Message from the Director

Greetings! We wrapped up another outstanding year in the Honors Program, and I am very excited for the 2019-2020 year. There were many highlights over the past year, but seeing the continued success of our students, and the amazing futures that await our recent graduates, is a source of pride and excitement. This year we had numerous Honors Program students receive awards and research grants. For the second year in a row, the outstanding USC Aiken senior was an Honors Program graduate. Our graduating seniors have impressive and exciting plans,

including a stint in China for the Peace Corps, and acceptances to graduate schools around the country. Their success is yet another reminder of the value and benefit of the Honors Program to our students. We capped off our year with a special celebration for our graduating seniors hosted by Chancellor Jordan. After a private showing at the Planetarium, we enjoyed a rooftop reception complete with a telescope viewing. It was truly a memorable ending to an outstanding year. This coming year is already shaping up to be memorable as well. First, we have the largest incoming cohort of students in the history of the program. We welcome 40 exceptional students to the USC Aiken Honors program. They are coming in with diverse interests including Engineering, Computer Science, Nursing, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, Early Childhood Education, and Political Science. Second, I am very excited by our Honors course offerings. For the first time ever, we are offering a study abroad honors course. Dr. Drew Geyer, Professor and Chair of the English Department, & Dr. Jeremy Culler of Visual and Performing Arts, will be offering a course that includes a Maymester visit to beautiful Orvieto, Italy. We are also offering new courses including News and Media Literacy, taught by Librarian Brandy Horne, and a unique course based on reacting to the past taught by History Professor Dr. Beth Georgian, where students get to “become” famous historical figures. We are also offering two courses that proved to be past student favorites. Chemistry Professor and Interim Chair of Chemistry and Physics, Dr. Gerard Rowe is offering the Molecular Gastronomy course where students learn about the chemistry of cooking while getting to enjoy delicious food. Dr. Frank Xie, in the School of Business Administration, is also offering the meditation course Falun Dafa Cultivation and Meditation. These creative, interdisciplinary, high impact learning opportunities are one of the things that makes the Honors Program at USC Aiken so unique. I am excited we can offer these opportunities for our students to grow both academically and personally. I invite you to read more about the accomplishments of our students including the Outstanding USC Aiken Senior Allison Swiecki, our course offerings, the 2019-2020 honors faculty, and our exceptional incoming cohort in this year’s newsletter. It continues to be a privilege to have the opportunity to work with the students and faculty that comprise our Honors Program.

Study Abroad in Orvieto, Italy!

By Dr. Andrew Geyer

Our Spring 2020 course, AHONS 201 “Western Representation and Grand Tour of Creativity in Italy,” will include a fully immersive, cultural, and field experience centered on Orvieto, Italy (and including Rome and Florence) during the 2020 Maymester. To stand in Uffizi and look up at The Birth of Venus, then go and sit in the Piazzale Michelangelo and draft a poem about that experience, and then return to Orvieto and workshop that poem with other members of your study group—that is the kind of perspective we hope to give the students who take this course. And that kind of perspective changes lives.



In order to help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own, the first part of the course will give students broad historical and cultural contexts for the various works of art and literature we will study. Class discussion will center on the historical and cultural elements of the particular region and period depicted in each target work. Each work will also be discussed in connection with others with an eye toward charting the historical/cultural/social changes in the respective regions we will visit during Maymester. Students will write/produce the first of a pair of assignments that may be analytical, creative, or a combination of the two. However, regardless of the students' choice(s) of approach, research will be required in order to ground the paired projects in their historical/cultural/social milieu. Creative projects must be ekphrastic (a reaction in some form to another work of art or literature). All of the works of art/literature studied will address issues of human rights, freedom, and power through the eyes of the artists/writers who lived and worked in the regions of Tuscany and Umbria from the Etruscan Period to the present day.

Integrative cultural studies (the heart of the “common intellectual experiences” practice) offers opportunities for student engagement in the creative arts which have all too frequently been limited to analysis created by others and manifested as lecture-based courses confined to a classroom. This proposed study abroad and experiential learning opportunity combines broad themes such as violence, religion, family relationships, the rule

of law, race relations, courtship and romance, and expectations versus reality. In order to give students firsthand experience (rather than try to capture these themes through a “core” curriculum), the next application of our study abroad will be an experiential, field-based excursion with Honors and non-Honors students across all academic disciplines to Orvieto, Florence, and Rome during the 2020 Maymester. During this high-impact learning opportunity, students will directly experience the works of art/literature they studied in class while they work on the second of their paired projects. The primary focus of this second project (which will build on the first) will be on capturing place and/or voice, but at least one of the major thematic elements mentioned above will play a key role. This is where the students will really learn the meaning of the word “perspective”. This second project will be collaborative in nature, as students who are working on creative assignments will be placed into

one learning group and students whose projects are more research-oriented will be placed into another group. Students in both groups will use a workshop approach, collaborating on both the “vision” and “revision” elements of their respective assignments. This feature of the course is essential as it will provide a more transformative and high-impact element to the experience than is available in a traditional classroom—especially when the course topics address spaces of creative practice, historical heritage and legacy, and on-going cultural shifts.

The final objective of the study abroad component (and one that will help pull the course material and experiential learning together) is the completion of a polished artifact/product that will be presented at Scholar Showcase, Discovery Day, and/or the COPLAC conference.



Allison Swiecki Receives Outstanding Senior Award, Heads to the University of Utah

Allison Swiecki was recognized as the Outstanding Senior at the Academic Awards Ceremony held in May. Allison was not only an outstanding student in the classroom, but she was also an exceptional leader on campus. Graduating with an almost perfect GPA, Allison was a Chancellor's Ambassador, a Biology Peer Mentor, and an Honors Program Ambassador. She served as a teaching assistant/student mentor for Critical Inquiry and Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy, and she served in leadership roles in the Horticulture Club, Student Government Association, and Tri-Beta National Biological Honor Society. Allison was equally successful in research winning numerous grants and presenting her research across the South. She was accepted to many graduate schools and will be starting her Ph.D. in Molecular Biology this fall at the University of Utah (Go Utes). Congratulations, Allison!



Honors Ambassadors Named



Dr. Jordan with the Honors Ambassadors

Honors ambassadors assist the Honors Program Director with a variety of duties including the open house events, the Chancellor's reception with new students (seen here), and the spring reception. I would like to thank our **graduating ambassadors Lindsey Calhoun, Morgan Bookstaver, and Allison Swiecki**. While we graduated a truly excellent group of ambassadors, we welcome four new ambassadors! *We currently have openings for four new Ambassadors. We will solicit nominations in August!*

The 2019-2020 Ambassadors:

Ashlyn Freeman (Nursing)

Madison (Maddy) Carelock (Biology)

Melanie Howe (Physics)

Drake Jones (Math and Computer Science)

Congratulations 2018-2019 Graduates!

Lily B. Anzuoni

Joanna M. Mackey

Brittany L. Berry

Carlee L. McClary

Morgan Bookstaver

Sarah A. Moore

Lindsey T. Calhoun

Kevin J. Stogner

Bethany C. Fordham

Allison E. Swiecki

Gabrielle L. Gray



Brittany Berry, Nursing, has accepted a position at Augusta University Medical Center

Lindsey Calhoun, Early Childhood Education, is serving in the Peace Corps in China

Bethany Fordham, Nursing, has accepted a position at a hospital in her home state of Massachusetts

Kevin Stogner, Nursing, has accepted a position at Emory University Hospital

Morgan Bookstaver, Exercise and Sports Science, is starting her PhD at the U of SC Columbia

Joanna Mackey, Exercise and Sports Science, is starting her PhD at Wingate University

Sarah Moore, Education, has accepted a position at While Knoll High School

Allison Swiecki, Biology, is starting her PhD at the University of Utah

Welcome New Honors Pacers!

Kayley Ayer	Georgia Guest	Emily Luna	Isabella Pyle
Anissa Baksh	James Hale	Marcus Mastellone	Nathan Russo
Stephen Barwick	Mary Huang	McKenna Miller	Madison Smith
Thomas Cartledge	Katelyn Hutto	Sara Frances Miller	Wilson Steinmeyer
Lauren Connelly	Rebecca Jarvis	Manuel Molina	Ashlyn Sweat
Mark Daniels	Joseph Johnson	Gabby Nagorite	Gracie Taylor
Amanda DeLuca	Rebekah Jollie	Faith Oladejo	Chloe Towne
Caroline Dorn	Adam Kimsey	Romi Onessi	Aaron Towner
Breanna Florido	Taylor Kuykendall	Abigail Owings	Kylei Walker
Jourdan Gruber	Anna Grace Langley	Bailey Parr	Emily Williams

Honors Course Offerings 2019-2020

HONS 101.001 "Oral History: Theory and practice" (Professor D. Higbee)

Students will learn the aims and methods of oral history by preparing for, conducting, editing, and then archiving interviews with local military veterans, especially USCA student veterans. Oral History is itself a multi-disciplinary field that shares in the methods of folklore, journalism, cultural studies, the psychology of memory, and literary narrative. In short, from a methodological standpoint, the goal of oral history is to elucidate the experiences of a select group of people, and these experiences are comprised of subjective feelings and memories. At the same time, these experiences are detailed and narrated by historians who look for trends or points of agreement between interviewees, which then become something we might call facts. Offered Fall and Spring.

HONS 201.001 "Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, 1775-1776" (Professor B. Georgian)

Depending on the class size, this course will center around the "playing" of a game, Patriots, Loyalists, and Revolution in New York City, 1775-1776, part of the Reacting to the Past series. Students are assigned a (real) historical character to research and play. Students read relevant secondary and primary source material, develop strategies, and make both impromptu and prepared speeches. Reacting is not re-enacting but reacting: through emersion in an actual historical context, students confront how group identity shapes people's opportunities and engagement with the world around them, how people access and wield power, the limits on individual human agency, and why historical events turn out the way they do. Fall.

HONS 201.300 "Falun Dafa Cultivation and Meditation" (Professor F. Xie)

This honors course covers the basic concept and practice of cultivation, meditation, and self-improvement culture of the East. The emphasis is to introduce Falun Dafa (aka Falun Gong), an ancient meditation and cultivation practice based on the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. The students will learn systematically all five (5) sets of exercises including sitting meditation during the classes. The students will experience first-hand the health benefit of meditation and ways to improve concentration and moral character. Fall.

HONS 201.001 "Molecular Gastronomy" (Professor G. Rowe)

Cooking is chemistry you can eat! There are many different chemical reactions that we carry out every day in the kitchen. After applying the fundamental chemistry concepts taught in this course to everyday cooking techniques, you will have a better appreciation for the science of ordinary life. Why does bread go stale? Why do onions turn brown as you cook them? Does searing meat really lock the juices in? In addition, by applying chemistry knowledge, renowned chefs around the world have begun to invent new cooking techniques, some of which we will practice in this class. Find out if ice cream tastes better when it's made in 30 seconds with liquid nitrogen. No prior chemistry or culinary training is required to take this class. Spring.

HONS 201.002 “Western Representation and Grand Tour of Creativity in Italy” (Professor A. Geyer and Professor J. Culler)

This course includes a fully immersive, cultural, and field experience centered on Orvieto, Italy during the 2020 Maymester. In order to help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own, the first part of the course will give students broad historical and cultural contexts for the various works of art and literature we will study. Class discussion will center on the historical and cultural elements of the particular region and period depicted in each target work. Each work will be discussed in connection with others with an eye toward charting the historical/cultural/social changes in the respective regions we will visit during Maymester. All of the works of art/literature studied will address issues of human rights, freedom, and power through the eyes of the artists/writers who lived and worked in the regions of Tuscany and Umbria from the Etruscan Period to the present day. Students will engage in an original research project to related to the historical/cultural/social milieu. Offered Spring.

HONS 201.003 “An Informed Citizenry: News Literacy in the Digital Age” (Professor B. Horne)

This course emphasizes critical thinking in the consumption and analysis of news. In this class, students will explore how we interact with information in a digital environment, and how new models of information consumption affect civil engagement and discourse. Since news consumption is such an important part of our overall information consumption, it makes sense to equip students with the skills necessary to monitor and manage that consumption. In the age of digital news, it is increasingly important for citizens to be able to differentiate between facts, biases, rumors, promotion, and opinions. Students will identify and distinguish between different models of information-seeking behavior, such as information foraging and sensemaking, as well as describe the impact that information need and search motivation have on that behavior. The class will also explore the psychological and technological factors that influence a person’s information consumption and access to information in a digital environment. Offered Spring.

Spotlight on Honors Course Faculty

Dr. Douglas Higbee

Dr. Higbee last taught for the Honors Program in the fall of 2017, and we are pleased to welcome him back for both the fall and spring semesters. Dr. Higbee teaches courses in 20th century British literature, literary criticism, non-western literature, and composition. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Irvine, and B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Higbee edits *The Oswald Review*, an international journal of undergraduate literary criticism. Dr. Higbee's publications include co-editing three books: *Teaching Representations of the First World War* (Modern Language Association), *Hunting and Academic Identity* (OU Press) and the forthcoming *In Their Own Words: Augusta and Aiken Veterans Remember World War II* (Augusta-Richmond County Historical Society). He is also the editor of *Military Culture and Education* (Ashgate Press). Dr. Higbee has also published in journals including *South Atlantic Review*, and *The Space Between: Literature and Culture*, and is a contributor to the *Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*.

Dr. Jeremy Culler



Dr. Jeremy Culler started teaching at the University of South Carolina Aiken in 2014. He earned a MA in Art History from the University of Florida and a PhD in the History and Theory of Art and Architecture from Binghamton University. At USC Aiken, he teaches a wide range of courses on the history of art and architecture. His most recent work includes *Livio Orazio Valentini: Orvieto Heritage and Aiken Legacy* and three book chapters published in *The Emergence of Video Processing Tools*, the first comprehensive book that examines the early development of electronic tools and video systems used to make art. He is presently completing *An Artistic Journey from Italy to South Carolina: The Cultural Heritage and Artistic Legacy of Livio Orazio Valentini*. Dr. Culler is also an experimental filmmaker and recently performed with orchestras in Aiken and Columbia. His films *Polka Paraguaya* (2017) and *Apis Conga* (2018), which were scored for two music compositions by Dr. Richard Maltz, were performed at the Dupre Center, Columbia, South Carolina with the orchestral Ensemble Eceletica. He was the 2019 recipient of the University of South Carolina Aiken Excellence in Advisement Award and just finished leading a study abroad program with USC Aiken students in Assisi, Florence, Orvieto, and Rome.

Dr. Andrew Geyer

Dr. Geyer has directed Honors Capstones, worked with many students on Honors enrichments, served on the Honors Steering Committee since 2009, and taught a section of Honors 201. He has been teaching at USCA since 2008 and has been Chair of the English Department since 2015. A native Texan, he received B.A.s in English and Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin. He earned his M.F.A. in Creative Writing at USC-Columbia and completed his Ph.D. in American Literature at Texas Tech. Geyer has published nine books of fiction, the latest of which is the story cycle *Lesser Mountains*. In 2014, he was the recipient of the Scholarly Activity Award from USCA. A resident of Aiken, Geyer has traveled extensively in Latin America, Europe, and North Africa. In his spare time, he enjoys distance-running and canoeing.

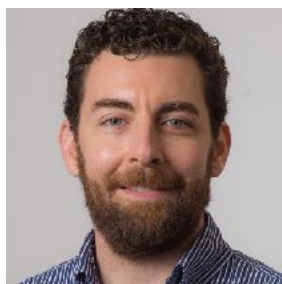
Dr. Elizabeth Georgian

Dr. Elizabeth Georgian is an associate professor of history at the University of South Carolina Aiken and has taught there since 2012. She has a B.A. in history from Hamilton College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in history from the University of Delaware. She is a specialist in American religious history, with teaching interests in religion, the history of illness and medicine, women's history, family history, and constitutional history. Her work has been published in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, the *Maryland Historical Society Magazine*, and the *Wesley and Methodist Studies* journal. She is currently writing a biography of Methodist itinerant Lorenzo Dow and *Reacting to the Past Game* about the Cold War relocation of Ellenton, SC. Dr. Georgian last taught for the Honors Program in 2016, and we are thrilled to have her teaching this fall.

Professor Brandy Horne

Brandy Horne joined the USC Aiken faculty in 2012 as a Reference and Instruction Librarian in the Gregg-Graniteville Library, and she is currently an Associate Professor of Library Science. She received her Bachelor's degree from Georgia College and State University and her M.L.I.S. from Valdosta State University. Her research interests include information seeking behavior in a digital environment and how our online information consumption impacts society, specifically civil discourse. She is actively involved in the freshman Critical Inquiry program, and we are excited to have Professor Horne teach her first Honors class this spring. She lives in Aiken with her husband and two dogs.

Dr. Gerard Rowe



In his 9 years at USC Aiken, Dr. Rowe has mentored several Honors students in his chemistry research lab, enriched classes, and has offered his Honors Molecular Gastronomy class twice before. He is very excited to get back in the kitchen with students, and to make them eat food for a grade. Dr. Rowe obtained his BS in Chemistry from Stony Brook University and his Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry from Boston University. After enduring 10 years of Northern winters, Dr. Rowe happily migrated to South Carolina, and has no idea where his heavy jackets are anymore. His current research interests lie in the field of computational chemistry, where the behavior of molecules or proteins can be modeled inside computers. In his free time, Dr. Rowe enjoys running, cooking, and playing Dungeons & Dragons.

Dr. Frank Xie



Dr. Frank Tian Xie is Professor of Marketing at the University of South Carolina Aiken. Professor Xie obtained his Ph.D. in marketing and MBA in finance from Georgia State University in Atlanta, and B.S. in science from Peking University in Beijing, China. A native of China and an expert on Chinese business, society, & economy, Dr. Xie is a columnist on business for New Epoch Weekly, a global Chinese language magazine. His research interest includes Chinese business and economy, marketing strategy, business-to-business marketing, international marketing, and research methodology. His research appears in journals such as *Journal of Business Market Management*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, *Journal of Education for Business*, *Journal of Southeast Case Research Association*, and *Journal of Marketing Channels*. His book on Chinese economy, *The Dragon's Vault*, was published in Taiwan in 2013. Another book by Dr. Xie and others on the Trump presidency and future of America-China relations was published in Taiwan in July of 2017. Dr. Xie has served on many editorial boards, and he has been a speaker at numerous seminars and panel discussions around the world. We are very happy to have him return this fall to teach his popular Honors class on Falun Dafa Meditation.

Honors Steering Committee Welcomes Dr. Jeremy Culler and Dr. Gerard Rowe

Dr. Jeremy Culler of Visual Performing Arts, and Dr. Gerard Rowe, Interim Chair and Associate Professor of Chemistry, join the Honors Steering Committee. We would like to thank Dr Michael Fowler and Dr. Chad Leveret for their outstanding service and contributions to the Honors Program and the Steering Committee.

KUDOS! Academic Awards & More

Outstanding Student Awards

Allison Swiecki, Biology

Lindsey Calhoun, Early Childhood Education

South Carolina Academy of Sciences Presentations

Optimizing Tol2 Transposition In Zebrafish

Allison Swiecki and C. Nathan Hancock

Creating A Reporter Plasmid To Allow Testing Of Anti-Hiv Rev Sirnas **Kylie Tager**
and William H. Jackson, Jr.

Cloning An Anti-Vif Shrna To Target Hiv Infection

Madison Carelock and William H. Jackson, Jr

Sequence Analysis Of A Mirna-Induced Arabidopsis Thaliana Mutant **Karah**
Moulton and C. Nathan Hancock

MAGELLAN SCHOLAR

Discovery for every discipline

Morgan Bookstaver

Gabielle Connor

Gabrielle Gray

Melanie Howe

Sara Annie McCommon

Allison Swiecki

Carol Ann Web



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