

HC Courses

3 of our many fall courses:
 -The World of Downton Abbey
 -The Science of Learning Math & Science
 -Freshmen Colloquium

Our Students

-Inspiration Awards
 -Study Abroad
 -HC Student Association
 -Michigan Honors Association (MHA)

Other News

-Our New Building
 - KOD
 -Alumni
 -Homecoming
 -Important Dates

Update from The Dean

Warm greetings! I know I should probably mention the impending move to our fabulous new building in August 2014, but I suspect you've heard me say it more than once already! Suffice it to say, all is on track for the move in six months. Honors College students will have access to what will be a miraculous and exciting space, full of opportunities to engage with advanced learning, social and learner networking, professors, visiting faculty, guests from all walks of life, and with the student body of Oakland University, those in the Honors College and others. The building will provide us with key elements of what we need to become a nationally top ten honors college.

Beyond that excitement, we have seen so many wonderful HC student successes these past several months. Three Honors College students have had their work accepted for presentation at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research at the University of Kentucky in April. To do so they had to complete with over 4,000 other undergraduate researchers, proving once again that students of The Honors College at Oakland are remarkable in their research abilities. Their research reaches heights many other Honors Colleges around the nation would envy. In addition, we recently saw the award of a



Keeper of the Dream Award to Honors College senior Paul Marvin. Paul is double majoring in biological sciences and Spanish language and literature. He is vice president of OU's Global Public Health Brigades chapter, Spanish Club, the Pre-Medical Society, the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society and Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society. In



2013 Inspiration Awards

2013 Inspiration Awards

Reece Scheuer won the “most inspiring essay” award for his nomination of Communications and Journalism Professor, Valerie Palmer-Mehta

~

Other Nominated OU Professors:

John Corso (Art & Art History)

Matthew Fails (Political Science)

Seth Howes (Modern Languages)

Barbara Oakley (Engineering)

Douglas Wendell (Biology)

Mary Wermuth (Honors College)

late 2013, Honors College graduate Nick Kristock, who was an Oakland University Student Leader of the Year and winner of the Human Relations Award, was awarded the national 2013 Senior CLASS Award for men’s soccer, the first student from a medium-sized (rather than large) university to win this award. I’m pleased to say the NCUR presenters, and Paul and Nick display some of the great achievements happening in The Honors College, but equally pleased to report that they represent examples that keep on happening!

222 students entered the Honors College as freshmen in Fall 2013. Almost all of this large group of enthusiastic, energetic and dedicated Honors College students joined us – me, Sandi Powell (who worked on the course with us this past Fall), Karen, 18 Cell Group Leaders (a role recently re-christened

“Undergraduate Teaching Assistant”) and 2 Student Assistants -- in the “Making Discoveries” freshmen colloquium course. The work they produced in Making Discoveries was outstanding, both in the “Tools of Discovery” paper in which they explored their ambitions and the resources they would need to achieve them, and in their exploration of the foundations of discovery and aspiration related to so many human endeavors and throughout history. There is more about the visiting speakers from beyond Oakland in last Fall’s “Making Discoveries” class included later in the newsletter.

We are now at the very point at which the future can be seen, both in terms of the future location of your Honors College, and in terms of the size and shape and, significantly, the aspirations of our Honors College student

body. Supporting and developing these excellent students, which is the sole purpose of my role, means we must now seek out those aspects of staffing and budgeting that will best support that important future. I look forward to working with the university to ensure we can make the most of the opportunity that is in front of us. I have said these past few years that our aim is to make this Honors College one of the nations best. With your blessing, and the university’s support, we will do exactly that.

[Graeme](#)

Graeme Harper BA MLitt DCA
Ph.D FRGS FRAI FRSA
Dean The Honors College



HC 202

Literature

The World of Downton Abbey

By Professor Randall Engle

The World of Downton Abbey explored all the facets of English aristocratic life at the turn of the 20th century. Understanding Edwardian England and events unfolding on the world stage during this era set the context for the course, and enriched the viewing of *Downton Abbey*. To experience the era more fully, the course met at Meadowbrook Hall—OU's very own "Downton Abbey."

Lectures and discussions filled the first two sessions of the week. But Fridays were proclaimed "Fun Friday." Docents led specially designed tours of both "upstairs" life and "downstairs" life in Meadowbrook in addition to a special lecture by Curator Madelyn Rzakowski on English country houses. The course ended with student presentations, first person narratives on a historical character of choice.

The class received quite a bit of media coverage from local newspapers, the *Detroit Free Press* and even *Vanity Fair*. But perhaps the biggest thrill was the class invitation from PBS to be their guests for a December preview of episode 1 of season IV of *Downton Abbey*, Masterpiece Theater's masterpiece.

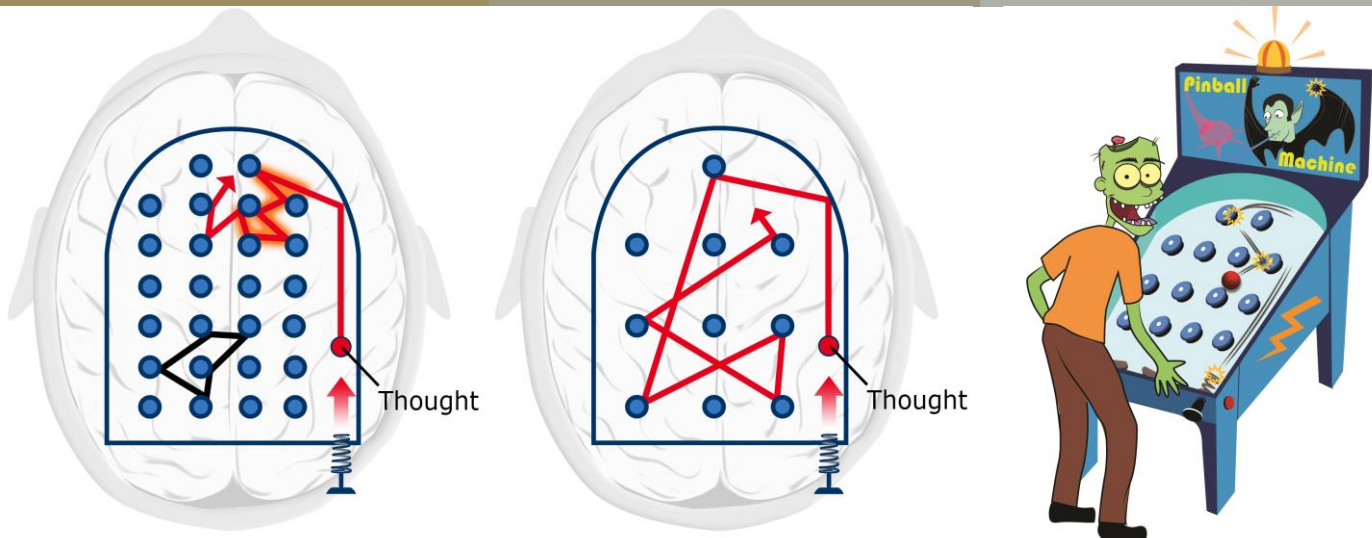
*Click here for [Vanity Fair](#) and [Detroit Free Press](#) Articles



Class Photo at Meadow Brook



Dr. Engle and student, Ali Dourra, at the PBS preview



HC 208 Natural Science

The Science of Learning Math & Science By Professor Barbara Oakley

The talented students in this fall's **The Science of Learning Math & Science (HC 208)** had a chance to take a unique trip through the world of learning. Students read and critiqued the upcoming book *A Mind for Numbers: How to Excel in Math and Science (Even if You Flunked Algebra)*, (Penguin, July, 2014), and learned what we know about cutting edge research related to how the brain learns—and how students themselves might most effectively leverage those learning abilities.

Students explored the two primary learning modes of the brain—focused and diffuse. The focused mode is the detail-oriented approach we often think of as the primary way we learn. But as students discovered, the diffuse mode, which preeminent surrealist painter Salvador Dalí termed “dreaming without dreaming,” is also an extraordinarily important part of learning. The diffuse mode is not directly under our command—we must often relax into it. It's important to alternate focused learning with relaxed “diffuse mode” thinking when we are learning something new.

We also learned of the importance of metaphor and analogy in math and science. A simple pinball machine, as it turns out, provides a wonderful analogy

for the focused and diffuse modes of learning. The focused approach is like a very fine-grained pinball machine, where you can control your thoughts to a very fine and high degree. Yet the focused mode isn't very good at casting your mind widely in order to grasp new approaches. The diffuse mode, on the other hand, easily allows for new approaches, although it doesn't allow for careful focus.

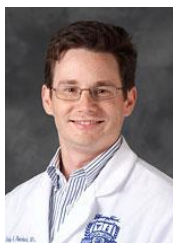
Students learned how and why procrastination occurs (it relates to our internal neural “zombie” circuits of habit), and they also learned practical means for combating our natural tendencies to procrastinate.

Students were surprised to realize that some of the most common ways they have used in the past to learn effectively—rereading and highlighting, for example—have actually been proven by research to be very ineffective. Other, far more valuable techniques include simply reading a page and then looking away to recall, and also mentally “chunking” the material. Students also learned about massive open online courses—MOOCs. Their thoughts on MOOCs were enormously beneficial for the Coursera MOOC currently being constructed by instructor Barbara Oakley. The Honors College is *the* place to go for great students and fascinating ideas!

Visitors Who Helped us “Make Discoveries” in HC 100, Our Freshmen Colloquium

Every year in the “Making Discoveries” freshmen colloquium class we welcome a range of faculty and speakers from the university. They bring to this exploratory and adventurous class group their experiences, their own aspirations and their success stories. This year we were pleased to host from Oakland both Dr Stacey Hahn (from the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures) and Dr Ken Mitton (from the Eye Research Institute), who gave engaged insights into their work and their ideas. To complement lively OU faculty speakers, we also extend invitations to those beyond Oakland. The following brought the Honors College freshmen a wealth of experience and some terrific ideas to consider:

Dr Craig Reickert is director of the 12,000-square-foot Center for Simulation, Education and Research at Henry Ford Hospital. He gave a wonderful talk about medical simulation and medicine generally. He showed students procedural simulation technologies using computerized mannequins and other mechanical devices. He also talked about competencies for physicians and other health care workers and about doctor-patient communication skills. During his talk students were able to explore how simulation was used to replicate work in an emergency department, an operating room and intensive care unit.



Dr Andrew Delbanco is Director of American Studies at Columbia University and the Julian Clarence Levi Professor in the Humanities. In 2001 he was named by *Time Magazine* as “America’s Best Social Critic” and in 2011 he was awarded the National Humanities Medal “for his writings on higher education and the place classic authors hold in history and contemporary life”. Dr. Delbanco’s book *College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be* (2012) was winner of the 2013 Philip E. Frandson Award for Literature in the Field of Continuing Education, the 2013 Gold Medal in Education II (Commentary/Theory) at the Independent Publisher Book Awards and the 2013 O.L. Davis, Jr. Book Award from the American Association for Teaching and Curriculum. Students in the “Making Discoveries” class read this book, and Dr. Delbanco visited to give a rousing talk about its themes - a talk that was also open to the public (around 200 people attended).



“Nomadic Matt” (Matt Kepnes) says he has been “traveling the world since 2006”. But he wasn’t always a traveler. He grew up in Boston, and didn’t travel much at all until after he completed his undergraduate degree. But then . . . Matt currently lives in New York, and runs a website (among other ventures) focused on travelling and the experiences gained through travel. He spends a lot of time doing the exact thing he writes, blogs, advises on: traveling! Matt explored in “Making Discoveries” the journeys he’s taken – in education, in creating a business, in life, across the planet. While having an MBA and a college background, he also explored experiences that happened well beyond the college, and he made some fabulous links to ideas and ideals of discovery, in so many ways.



Our “Making Discoveries” guest speakers bring to the Honors College freshmen a wonderful collection of aspirational possibilities. In return, the HC freshmen, who themselves are setting off on a period of educational, personal and adventurous discovery, engage with this course in inspiring ways. Needless to say, we are already planning our “Making Discoveries” freshmen colloquium for Fall 2014!

Sheilah P. Clay is the President and CEO of the Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO). The NSO is a \$28 million Detroit-based nonprofit human service organization providing youth leadership and workforce development and more in Wayne and Oakland counties. Sheilah is the leader of a \$52 million restoration of the former

historic Michigan Bell Building into permanent housing for homeless people. Her talk focused not only on her work on the Bell Building project but also on her work as a collaborator, an entrepreneur in the pursuit of social regeneration, community support and education. Many of the HC students made their way to the front of the class, after Sheilah’s talk to thank her and ask questions about her work.



Study Abroad – Beijing, China

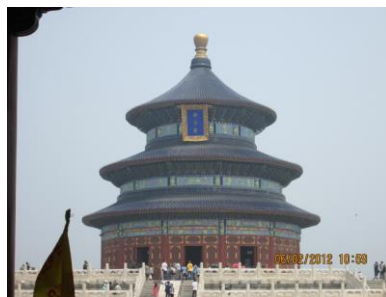
By Poe Lwin



Because of this trip, I got a chance to learn Chinese by talking to the native Chinese speakers, as well as experiencing the culture by learning about Chinese history, tasting authentic Chinese cuisine, and actually living in China. The first four week of the program were conducted in a classroom setting, with sightseeing on the weekends to places such as the Great Wall, Forbidden City, and the Temple of Heaven, etc. The last week involved the tour of different historic sites of China. One of my favorite parts of this trip was when I went to the Great Wall, where I got a chance to dress up in Chinese princess attire and take pictures.

Another special reason that I enjoyed this trip was because I got to see my grandma whom I hadn't seen in approximately five years. While my elder sister (who was also in the program) and I were in China, my grandmother was able to come and live with us. It was a wonderful blessing to be able to spend time with her.

In addition to all of this, I made life-long friends who became like family members to me, and my Chinese language skills improved tremendously. Thank you to The Honors College and Mr. and Mrs. Young (for their generous study abroad scholarship). None of the above great experiences would have been possible without their support and kindness, which enabled me to take this trip.



HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

By HCSA President: **Liz Lawer**



Apple Bobbing

Fall semester held many amazing opportunities for the HCSA. Rather than doing our regular Halloween party in the Honors College, the HCSA partnered with the Oakland University Student Council and the Student Programming Board to put on a school-wide Halloween party, complete with a haunted house and doughnut-eating contest!

In mid-November, we hosted a knitting party in the Honors College to knit scarves for the Baldwin Center. Novice and experienced knitters were welcome to attend, and we had over 30 people knitting scarves for the cause!

Whilst that party went on, we had a friendly canned food/sock drive competition with the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society. The HC made the most donations and we won a pizza party, while being able to feed and put socks on the feet of people in the Pontiac area.

We ended the semester with a Holiday party, co-hosted by the Vandenberg House Council, and enjoyed cookie decorating, ornament painting, and music provided by our own WXOU. We can't wait to see what 2014 holds for our Honors College students!



Knitting scarves for the homeless

MICHIGAN HONORS ASSOCIATION

By **Joe Grzywacz**

The Michigan Honors Association holds a conference each year at the scenic campgrounds of Higgins Lake. Dawn organizes and sends a group of students up north to represent Oakland University at this conference. As representatives the students show off just how great Oakland's Honors students and program truly are. Other colleges and their respective Honors programs are in attendance as well. This is a great opportunity for OU and other colleges to learn how each individual program operates. These schools come from all parts of the state, some even as far north as Escanaba in the UP!



The theme of the conference varies, this year was all about professionalism where students learned about dining etiquette, how to run a meeting and things of that nature. But what always holds true is that good times will be had. From roaring campfires to hiking wooded trails there is so much to experience and hey who doesn't like to learn a thing or two while you're at it. So if you can join us at next fall's meeting. It's guaranteed to be one of the most enjoyable trips of your time here at OU!



Student Housing Complex Honors College



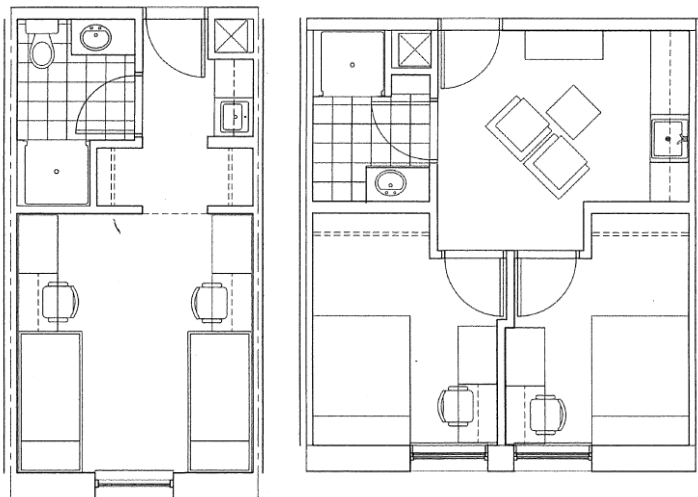
Eye level view looking west at the Main Street Lounge

Dawn and I went on a construction tour of our new building a couple of weeks ago and we can't wait to move in next August!

The Honors College has 2 classrooms, a new computer lab, 5 offices, a kitchenette and a 5,000 square foot lounge right outside our doors.

Freshmen rooms (below left) are 2 person suites and sophomores and above (below right) each have their own bedrooms with double beds. All the rooms have individual heating and air conditioning controls.

STUDENTS: If you haven't yet done so, please fill out the new housing interest [survey](#) ASAP! Thank you....Karen



CELEBRATION ~

2014 Keeper of the Dream



*Dr. Harper and Paul at
the Keeper of the Dream
Reception*

News at OU: "Now in its 22nd year, Oakland University's **Keeper of the Dream Scholarship** continues to celebrate and recognize student leaders who promote diversity, cultural understanding and community activism on campus."

***Paul Marvin** - from Howell, is an Honors College student doubling majoring in biological sciences and Spanish language and literature.

For the rest of the Keeper of the Dream [story](#)...

Fulbright Finalist



Steven Wynne, an HC senior, is a finalist for a 2014 **Fulbright Award**. Steven was also a 2013 Keeper of Dream award winner.

"This is such a competitive program. Thousands of students from across the United States apply for these awards. Very few get them. Steven represents the reason

students with aspirations to excel, come to Oakland University, said Dean Harper."

ALUMNI & FRIENDS



Recent Honors College graduate, Nick Kristock (W '13), was honored for achievements in classroom, community, character and competition. See [Press Release](#) for the rest of the story.



Stefanie Bohde (2007) won the first place Tomkins Award for Creative Non-Fiction for her essay "Sappho's Song" - an excerpt from a dementia memoir that she is working on for her Master's Thesis at Wayne State. The Tompkins Competition is the oldest writing competition at Wayne.



Amy Ring (2011) returned to her roots at OU this winter... "Working professionally at Oakland University has been a dream of mine ever since I decided to pursue a career in Higher Education. Words do not describe how absolutely elated I am to share that I have accepted the position of Residence Director for the University Student Apartments at OU. It is truly a dream come true, and so incredibly surreal. Feeling very blessed".

Join the "Honors College Alumni & Friends-Oakland University" Facebook page



HOMECOMING WINTER 2014



Meghan Daly helping Dr. Harper promote the HC donut and cookie selection at the "tent-gating" party.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 19 Google Glasses Demonstration

*1-2:30 pm in The Honors College

February 27-28 OU Hosting MASAL conference

February 22-March 2 Winter Break

March 3 Thesis Turn in Day!

March 24 Register for Classes

March 26 *Wizard of Oz* Screening

March 31 Research & Scholarship Day

*10:00-4:30pm - Open to the public

April 1 John Fricke Lecture

*Historian/Author/Expert on Judy Garland, The Wizard of Oz
and Frank L. Baum- Open to the public - 7-9 pm-Banquet
Room A

April 12 Graduate Reception

April 26 Commencement



FOR MORE **INFORMATION**: Explore The Honors College website <http://www.oakland.edu/hc/>

To **ARRANGE A VISIT**, **SEND AN UPDATE**, or **VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME**, you can contact us
by email hc@oakland.edu or phone (248-370-4450)

MAKE A DONATION to the Honors College, its programs and/or scholarships



Think “Spring”!

The Honors College Staff

Graeme Harper
Karen Conn
Dawn Deitsch