

BALDWIN HONORS NEWSLETTER



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QUOTE OF THE SEMESTER

*“Success is a function of persistence and doggedness and the willingness to work hard for twenty-two minutes to make sense of something that most people would give up on after thirty seconds” – Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers*, p. 246*

HONORS SCHOLARS MEET BARBARA WALTERS

Written by: Saif Yasin ('17)

On March 17th, 2014 a group of Baldwin Honors students had the fortunate opportunity to attend a question and answer session with Barbara Walters before her lecture that evening as a part of Drew’s reputable Lecture Series. Students questioned Ms. Walters about her political opinions, her views of the media, and her legacy. She gave the group insight into who she is as an individual, and described her unique experience as a woman in the media atmosphere.

Barbara Walters is someone who was, and still is, at the forefront of the broadcasting industry. She worked as an American broadcast journalist, author, and television personality for ABC news. She has hosted a variety of popular shows including *The View*, *Today*, and the television news magazine *20/20*. Recently, she announced her retirement from the media industry; however her legacy will still be remembered. Against all social stigmas opposing women in the industry, she was one of the first women to become a host of a major broadcasting company, becoming a role model for several women pursuing a career in broadcasting.

“Follow your bliss. Most people don’t. It takes a long time to find your bliss.”
–Barbara Walters



Barbara Walters fashionably wearing the Baldwin Honors T-shirt while signing a book for a first year student (Alex Slotkin)

Despite the obstacles placed upon Ms. Walters, she was still able to become a face on ABC. She was praised for her interview skills that gave viewers a unique perspective of the guest. She had the opportunity to interview world leaders, dictators, presidents, and celebrities. Ms. Walters also moderated presidential debates and presented pressing stories such as the coverage of 9/11. Through her visit, Baldwin Honors students were able to gain insight on these experiences.

One of the most interesting questions revolved around Ms. Walters’s interview of Fidel Castro. She described him as a complex individual who had a great personality, which is markedly different from his political depiction as a Latin American dictator. In addition to stories about her interviews she told the group the secret to the perfect interview, which is simply to always listen. Throughout this experience with Ms. Walters she inserted her sarcasm, humor, and questioning skills to entertain the group. Now realizing the

variety of experiences of Ms. Walters added with her joyful personality, as she leaves, the question remains: what is the future of the media?

HONORS SEMINARS

Written by: Christiana Tenuto ('17)

This year's spring semester offered an abundant selection of academically notable seminar courses. Ranging from "Dante: Heaven, Hell and Florence" to "Monsters of Modernity", there was a bountiful and rich variety that could appeal to any Baldwin Honors student. Among these options was the "War and Violence through a Cultural Perspective" seminar, a course that some students found particularly thought provoking. As the course is based on anthropology, it asks fundamental questions about human nature, which lead to discussions about the duality of human beings. Can we simultaneously be pro-social animals as well as violent aggressors?

Baldwin Honors student Ilianna Anise found the course as an incentive to, "expand her knowledge on the effects violence has on humanity". Anise found the course material to be applicable to everyday life since there was a discussion on "the media's impact on war and national morale" towards combat with American involvement. Furthermore, the discussion created suspicions for her as it noted that some opinions of Americans are formed through media portrayals. And in some instances, the government has direct influence on the media (particularly when the media disclosed information about the Iraqi war, information that was communicated only through government officials). Additionally, Anise was intrigued by the, "argument about the myth of male testosterone being inherently linked to violence".

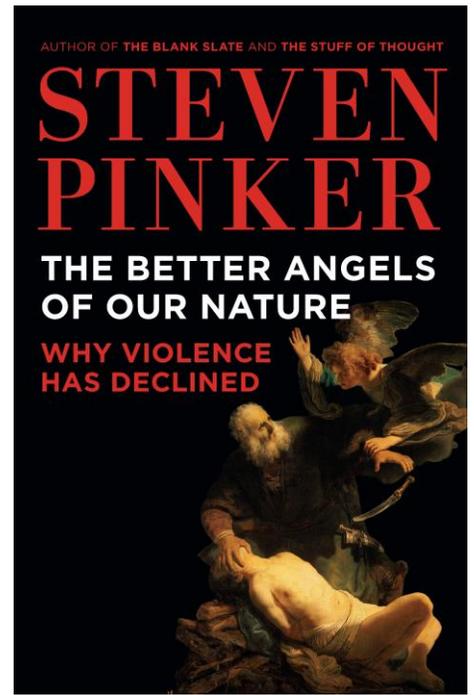
When asked about the benefits this course has given to its students, Emma Barakat believed that, "[the course] had helped [her] think critically as well as independently, forcing [her] to think outside the box and not take someone's word as law." Such skepticism of someone else's word, despite the integrity of their credentials, especially rings true when the legitimacy of Steven Pinker's *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* was questioned in class discussion. As students read other anthropological works that debunked Pinker's argument, they began to realize that the data for Pinker's argument had been biasedly cherry-picked and that Pinker did not fully consider all possibilities of what seemed to be violent events of early humans.

From the experiences of Anise and Barakat, it is apparent that Honors courses not only provide meaning to a Baldwin Honors student's academic learning, but also add the direction of purpose for one's life and prepare one for the logical skills needed to discern a world full of infinite inclinations towards issues that might have no clear solution.

SUCCESS BEYOND DREW

Written by: Silvia Ramirez ('17)

Students always wonder the extent to which a liberal arts university such as Drew will prepare them for their future career. The purpose of a liberal arts college is to help students develop certain indispensable skills and strengths that will be used in the future years such as writing, critical thinking, and problem solving. Yet, the Baldwin Honors Program goes even further to open the students' minds to the possibilities of the real world. From the Honors Colloquium and the honors seminars, to the process of writing an honors thesis, students learn to be more independent, to be dedicated to their work,



Steven Pinker's "The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined"

and most importantly, to open their minds to areas and disciplines outside of their comfort zone. They not only leave the Honors program with a sense of accomplishment, but also a desire to meet the next challenge and think more philosophically and critically about life and world situations.

Maeve Olney ('13) is one of those students who has benefitted from the Baldwin Honors Program's goal to push students to the limit. Her Honors thesis titled "An Exploratory Study of the Legal and Non-Legal factors Associated with Exoneration for Wrongful Conviction: The Power of DNA Evidence" was published in the *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, a prestigious peer-reviewed journal. Her thesis deals with the relationship between DNA evidence as a legal factor in exoneration and race as a non-legal factor that increase the possibility of wrongful conviction. She conducted a quantitative study using 997 cases from the National Registry of Exonerations, ultimately concluding that DNA evidence plays an important role in exoneration. Additionally, race may be linked to wrongful conviction, although further study is needed.

Olney, with the help of Honors Program, made her four years at Drew successful. There is no doubt that the skills developed within the program will allow her to be even more successful in the future and strive for only the best. It is possible that her research will make a difference in the future and create change in the United States' legal system, but it is important to take it one step at a time. No matter what the future holds, however, the Baldwin Honors Program undoubtedly sets students up for success through the program's apt goals, professors, and supporters.

Maeve's published article can be found online: <http://cjp.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/02/13/0887403414521461>



Criminal Justice Policy Review, the journal that published Maeve's Thesis

WISDOM FROM A DREW ALUMN

Written by: Taylor Tracey ('17)

Every Baldwin Scholar has to write one: the Honor's thesis.

While intimidating, the writing of this eighty-page paper in one's senior year is an invaluable experience to any rising Baldwin Scholar, teaching them about time-management, research, writing skills, and the value of revision.

Khemani Gibson ('14) is finishing up his Honor's thesis on West-Indian immigrants who worked on the construction of the Panama Canal. About how this topic came to him, Gibson said, "I came up with my honors thesis during my sophomore year. I found the documents of Thomas Nealy at the Methodist library. He was writing about Jamaican immigrants working on the Panama Canal."

This topic instantly struck a personal chord for Gibson, for his own great-grandfather had worked and died working on the Panama Canal. He comments, "my thesis was a way to reconnect with my great-grandfather and reconstruct his history." He added, "I've written papers before that I was close to, but this was my baby. As a naturalized Jamaican immigrant, this was an identity piece for me. ."

One of the best parts of the process of researching thesis came as the result of a fellowship awarded to Gibson through the history department allowing him to go to Washington D.C. to conduct research. He said, "I was able to find out the name of my great-grandfather. IT was amazing that I was able to find it."

Gibson's story demonstrates how personal the honor's thesis can be, but it is not an assignment that comes without challenge. Since he wrote his thesis over three years, Gibson had to assemble three different sections of his essay, proving

to be the most difficult part of the process. He said, “It was making it a finished document. I had to frame things, fix things. The framing was definitely hard.”

Another challenge Gibson faced in the thesis-writing process was the editing and revision process. About editing his thesis, he said, “I know the importance of editing. It’s sometimes harder than the writing.” He added, “It’s really crucial and it’s constant.” While framing and editing were challenges in the process, Gibson described how his defense was his favorite part of writing his Honors thesis. Describing the defense, Gibson said, “A committee asks you questions and you stand by what you wrote. You get to show people what you’ve been working on.” He added, “For me, it was my favorite part. I loved that part of it.”

Gibson also discussed the value in writing the Honors thesis when he said, “It gives you an idea of how to do an extended research project.” He added, “I think it’s helpful. It shows the diversity of topics that still need to be studied.” He also highlighted the fact that the Honors thesis is a great preparation for students who plan to go on to graduate school.

About how to select a graduate school program, Gibson, who is going to NYU next year, said, “I looked for faculty members at the school that do what I want to do.”

Gibson found support in finding the right graduate school program in his advisers, who were supportive of his ambitions and writing an Honors thesis gave him a competitive edge. He also found that his time at Drew prepared him to compete for spots in graduate programs among students from Ivy League schools like Yale and Princeton. About this, he said, “I had a better-rounded mindset looking at the world. It was nice to see I was in there with those students.”

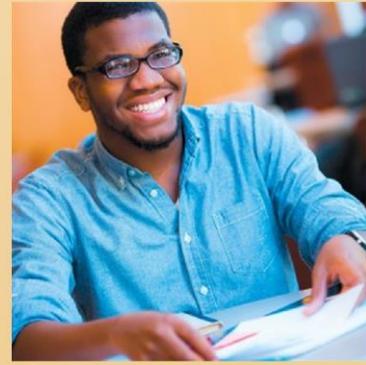
Overall, Gibson reflected positively on his Honors thesis experience. He explained, “It encourages an academic community. Even if people don’t go in to academia, it teaches you to think. Don’t be afraid to think or question something.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: HOW DO WE GAIN KNOWLEDGE?

Written by: Richa Patel (17)

Since every fragment of knowledge, according to Plato, can be extracted from anamnesis, the very ideologies of any education must be a series of questions probing the memory.

The style of these questions is less open-ended and more intrusive. For instance, in Plato’s *Meno*, instead of asking the peasant boy to define a square, Socrates asks the boy if he knows what a square looks like by describing its qualities (39-40). The nature of Socrates’ questions from this point onward follows that of a Socratic professor: never directly giving the answer, but getting so asymptotically close to it that the student may answer for himself (44). In doing so, Plato proves the belief that, rather than instructing, teachers serve to facilitate, or bring forth, knowledge that is already known.



Khemani Gibson, Senior (14) in the Baldwin Honors Program

Khemani, a triple major in history, Pan-African studies, and spanish, graduated from Drew this past May. In his four years here, he spent his time becoming the ideal student and a caring leader of the Drew community. Starting this fall, he will be attending a graduate program at New York University.

Moreover, the most valuable aspect of this theory is its liquidity. If all souls are immortal, and all souls were brought onto this planet with every piece of knowledge, then, in theory, all souls have an innate professor-like ability preinstalled in them to guide other souls toward knowledge. However, the problem with this is that it is impossible to recall something when one does not know its characteristics. For example, if one is trying to identify color, and his soul is not able to describe its attributes, then he will go his entire existence without being able to identify color. Therefore, until there is another soul able to probe remembrance, knowledge is idle, and there is no opportunity for growth.

LIFE AFTER GRADUATION: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Here's a list of some of the places where Baldwin Honors Scholars ('14) are now:

- ✦ Master's of Music in Early Music at Longy School of Music of Bard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts
- ✦ Harvard Law to a JD, concentrating in Law and Social Change
- ✦ Greater Oaks Charter School in Newark, NJ
- ✦ Teaching English in China
- ✦ Weill Cornell graduate school to pursue a PhD in biochemistry and molecular biology
- ✦ MAT, Drew University, with a focus in secondary school English literature
- ✦ Teach For America
- ✦ Medical school : NYCOM
- ✦ Jefferson Medical College
- ✦ Princeton University to receive a PhD in Molecular Biology
- ✦ Programmer, employed by Google

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out the Baldwin's Honors Events page for the most up-to-date information on the 2013-2014 honors programs:

<http://www.drew.edu/baldwinhonors/baldwin-honors-events-2013-14-check-regularly-for-updates>

INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED?

Contact Professor Louis Hamilton at lhamilto@drew.edu or Editor-in-chief Richa Patel at rpatel3@drew.edu to learn more about what you can do!