

Fall 2022 Newsletter



THE HONORS PROGRAM CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Remembering Dean Paul Q. Beeching

Dr. Kristine Larsen, CCSU Honors Program Director

As I begin my second stint as Director of the Honors Program, I thought I would look back to my time as a student. In September 1982 I became a member of the very first class of Honors Students, 25 sophomores who took part in a year-long, light-speed survey of the great books of Western Culture, which met at 8 AM, 5 days a week, in the rare book room of the library. Although we had many guest lecturers along the way (the running joke was “if it’s Tuesday, it must be Dante”), there were four mainstays—the Quadrivium, if you will—Lee Creer, David Gerstein, George Muirhead, and Paul Beeching. Engaging college students in old books, in an old room, at an ungodly hour of the morning, without scholarships or any other tangible carrots, is a daunting task.

But I was hooked. I still have my class notes and handouts to prove it. One very big hook was the faculty, especially Beeching. Simply put, the man really was a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma, although I think he felt the same was true of me. Smarter than anyone I had ever met, Paul could go from a trademark disapproving scowl that threatened to melt lead to a beaming grin and raucous laugh in a nanosecond. His lectures, while fewer in number than some faculty, were riveting and always razor sharp in their intellectual stimulation.

On the days when he wasn’t leading the topic, he always sat among us, rapt with the material, never afraid to interject his own brilliant insights. In doing so, Paul epitomized what I have come to see as the central distinctiveness of the honors program: we are all scholars and we are all students, in our own way, learning from each other.

During that year, I tried my best to continue to live up to Paul’s high standards, but also found myriad ways to amuse him as well. My contributions to class discussions were commonly a curious mix of astronomical, literary, and pop culture references, and my distinctive wardrobe of faded jeans, hard rock concert shirts, and black leather biker jacket, elicited more than one raised eyebrow from Paul.

Near the end of our year together, the surviving students were asked to attend a recruitment breakfast for prospective honors students. We were warned by Paul to make sure we dressed to impress. For some odd reason Paul very obviously addressed that comment in my direction. When I arrived at the breakfast in a floor-length formal gown, Paul was visibly amused. But I

think he knew I’d more than rise to the challenge, if for no other reason than to amuse him.

When I returned to CCSU as a faculty member in 1989, Paul and Lee Creer quickly recruited me to do a guest lecture on the Copernican Revolution in their honors class. It was a privilege to be allowed into their

academic space, and I knew it. During the lecture I kept looking at Paul, sitting in the back of the room, leaning back against the wall with his arms crossed. Was that a tear of happiness and pride I saw in his eye? I think it was, because I strangely had something similar in my eye too.



PAUL Q. BEECHING
Assistant Professor
▲ from CCSC’s 1964
yearbook, the first after
Dr. Beeching began
teaching here.

The late, great, Paul Q. Beeching was one of my most important mentors during my undergraduate days at CCSU, and to this day, I try very hard to live up to the high standards of

academics, teaching, and service to students which Paul modeled for me all those years ago. But I’ve also tried to live up to my mischievous reputation, because I know Paul would expect nothing less. Somewhere, Paul is currently shaking his head at me, but certainly grinning as well.

Celebrating Faculty Scholarship and Leadership

Like the content of our program curriculum, the scholarly work of our faculty transcends boundaries in space, time, and discipline. Here is a small selection of their recent publications.

Carrie Andreoletti collaborated with Andrea June on the article “Using an age-friendly university lens to explore community member engagement during the pandemic” published in *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*.

Kimberly Meyer was a co-author on the article “Probation and parole professionals identify where they most need support,” appearing in the American Probation and Parole Association’s journal *Perspectives*.

Natsuko Takemae and her co-authors recently published the article “Addressing issues of equity using the cross-pollination of Universal Design for Learning and culturally responsive teaching” in *PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice*.

Karen Ritzenhoff published two co-edited volumes, *Mediated Terrorism in the 21st Century* (Palgrave) and *AfroFuturism in Black Panther: Gender, Identity and the Re-Making of Blackness* (Lexington Press).

Candace Barrington published two chapters in *Time Mechanics: Postmodern Poetry and Queer Medievalisms* (edited by David Hadbawnik; Medieval Institute Press), “*Feeld Notes: Jos Charles’s Chaucerian ‘anteseedynts’*” and “*Queer Times, Queer Forms: Noir Medievalism and Patience Agbabi’s Telling Tales*” (with Jonathan Hsy).

Aimee Pozorski published “Trauma Theory” in *Philip Roth in Context* (edited by Maggie McKinley; Cambridge University Press) and “Anne Frank, Figuration, and the Ethical Imperative” in *New Directions in Jewish American and Holocaust Literatures* (edited by Victoria Aarons and Holli Levitsky; SUNY Press).

Kristine Larsen contributed the chapter “‘Books! Best Weapons in the World’: How Libraries Save the World in Popular Culture” to *Lore-masters and Libraries in Fantasy and Science Fiction* (edited by Jason Fisher and Janet Brennan Croft; Mythopoeic Press) and the article “Seeing Double: Tolkien and the Indo-European Divine Twins,” which appeared in the journal *Mythlore*.

Focus on Faculty

Natsuko Takemae, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education and Interventions



My journey of life-long learning and teaching in the United States started when I was an undergraduate student in Tokyo, Japan. I majored in English at university and studied American cultures in my seminar. In my junior and senior year, the seminar professor inspired me to pursue my “Call of the

Wild” passion. Decades later, I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education and Interventions in the School of Education and Professional Studies at CCSU. In my second year at CCSU, I started co-teaching World Cultures I focusing on Japan with Dr. Mark Jones in the Honors Program. This course engages students in the study of the history and culture of modern Japan. Dr. Jones and I take students through a semester-long journey to think about the question, “What can the world learn from Japan?” with historical and cultural perspectives. There are many ingredients that make this course exciting. For example, the Honors students actively connect their own interests with the study of Japanese historical and cultural perspectives. Their undergraduate majors and areas of interests vary, so each student brings unique perspectives to the class discussions and projects. This opens ways individuals view and understand

world cultures through multi-dimensional interests and entry points of active discussions in the class. Another ingredient that the Honors students bring to our course that make their learning and our teaching exciting is that there is a wide variety of prior knowledge and experiences in terms of Japanese history and culture. Throughout the semester, each student demonstrates gains among breadth and depth of perspectives and understanding by synthesizing them to their own lives and world views. These ingredients elevate dimensions of learning experiences in our Honors course. My passion is to work with students as they co-construct learning experiences in the collaborative learning environment. Teaching in the Honors Program, it is my joy to be part of their learning journeys as they actively pursue and synthesize their own passions and work toward becoming expert learners in their fields of studies.

Program faculty also shared their expertise by serving as leaders in their respective professional organizations. Examples include:

Carrie Andreoletti serves as co-chair of the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) Academic Program Development Workgroup (APDW).

Kimberly Meyer is chair of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Section and Chair of the American Probation and Parole Association Research & Review Committee.

Natsuko Takemae serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship* (JOSEA).

Karen Ritzenhoff is co-chair of the Special Interest Group on War and Media Studies in the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS).

Kristine Larsen is co-leader of the Solar Observing Section of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO) and editor of the Astronomical League's *Reflector* magazine.

Christina Barmon served as chair of the Youth, Aging, and Life Course division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Candace Barrington is section co-editor for *Global Antiquity to Late Medieval*, *Literature Compass* journal, and Co-editor of the *New Chaucer Studies: Pedagogy and Profession* newsletter and blog.

Gil Gigliotti is President of the Classical Association of Connecticut.

Aimee Pozorski is co-executive editor of *Philip Roth Studies* journal.

Focus on Faculty

Dr. Gilbert Gigliotti, Professor, English and Latin

I came to CCSU in August of 1992, fresh from earning a PhD in Comparative Literature (English, Latin, and Greek) from The Catholic University of America. Given that my dissertation was on the Latin poetry of colonial and revolutionary America, I was hired by the English Department to teach early American lit and classical literature in translation and teach Latin for the World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Department, as well.

In addition to my teaching and research activities (which include a monograph, two edited volumes, and book chapters and articles on a variety of early American texts and pop music figures, not to mention conferences papers), I have hosted both "Frank, Gil, and Friends," a Frank Sinatra radio show on WFCS 107.7 The Edge, the campus station, since 1993, and Central Authors, the television program about books by CCSU faculty, staff, alumni, and students, since 2001. I often give public lectures on both pop

music and poets from across the millennia and have hosted several classic film series at CCSU, local libraries, and retirement communities.

But it was very early on in my thirty-year career (so far!) at CCSU that I was tapped to teach in the Honors Program, back when it was still a Great Books program ("If it's Tuesday, it must be Dante!") with the likes of Lee Creer (Philosophy) and George Muirhead (History), from whom the program originally sprang like Athena from Zeus' head.

Fairly soon after I joined the Honors faculty, curricular changes were afoot, and soon I was teaching with a wide array of faculty, mostly in different iterations of Western Culture I and II: Glenn Sunshine (History); Steve Morris, Don Adams, and David Blitz (Philosophy); Faith Hentschel and Ron Todd (Art); Jarek Strzemien (Theatre); Barry Westcott (Chemistry); and Kristine Larsen (Geological Sciences).



Whether they were classes in ancient and medieval literature, writing, or a "duet" pairing Frank Sinatra with Stephen Hawking or Bertrand Russell, we always attempted to share our expertise and passions with the students in enlightening, challenging, and unexpected ways.

And that, in the end, is what defines the CCSU Honors Program no matter the curriculum, faculty from different disciplines and students from every major coming together to create a community of scholars seeking to understand our multi-faceted world a little better than we had previously.

Alumni Reflections

April (Friel) Harris (Class of 2005)



I am Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Cybersecurity at Herkimer County Community College in Herkimer, NY. I am the Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics program lead, co-advisor for the Criminal Justice Club, and faculty member in the college in prison program.

My favorite Honors Program memory would be meeting one of my closest and dearest friends on the first day of class. She and I have remained the closest of friends, our husbands are friends, she was in my wedding, and I cherish that the Honors Program brought us together.

Sebastian Szpakowski (Class of 2004)

There were a lot of memorable “firsts” related to the Honors Program, including my first trip to a Japanese restaurant and my first trip to see an opera. I was given tools to spot conspiracy theories, and pick apart poorly crafted arguments. Back then it was a skeptical look at relatively innocuous ancient aliens theories; now, however, the ability to think, and separate nonsense, propaganda and inaccuracies from reality is of particular importance. In retrospect, the classes in the Honors Program helped to start and shape my scientific development later, and I’ve been profiting from that ever since, through grad school and now in “professional” adult life.

I’m still at my first job after all the schools, at Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research in Cambridge, MA. My role has evolved over time, and the responsibilities today are quite different from what I was doing in the beginning. What’s unchanged though is that I work adjacent to a big pharma company, at the interface of “we just cured cancer in mice” and “let’s see whether the new drug does the same in humans.” I help to shape the biomarker strategy of the first-in-human oncology clinical trials (i.e., what and when to collect, and which assays to run on



the collected specimens to best answer the clinical hypothesis of the clinical trials). Then, of course, I get to see all the data and help clinicians to interpret it, to formulate new hypotheses and, in the grand scheme of things, to come up with the best follow up strategy to help our patients. It’s extremely humbling. These clinical trials unfold as stories over many years; they require patience and quite a bit of restraint and factual objectivity when interpreting the data, given how small and statistically under-powered phase 1 trials can be. At the same time, I know that behind every data point and trend line there is a human life, and their own unique thread of this story.

Jeremy Anderson (Class of 2005)



Since graduation, I continued my education at ECSU earning a master’s in educational technology and then my doctorate in interdisciplinary leadership from Creighton University. I started my career as a high school teacher and have taken a few turns to my current role of Associate Vice Chancellor of Strategic Analytics at Dallas College. Anyone who knows me knows I love to argue, so my favorite memories are easy: the team debates! The best part about them was the camaraderie of working late in the dorms and library to prepare. Half to

three quarters of the time was spent making jokes and telling stories...and then we got down to business to have very serious discussions about very serious topics with some very cool people. What else could you ask for?

That, and all the awesome professors and the team teaching (what an awesome program!).

Brian Sorrell (Class of 1996)



I now live in New Zealand with my family where I am a professional writer. My favorite experience from the program was when Dr. Larsen got us tickets to see Motörhead in concert. That changed my life. For real. I remember so much of that show like it was yesterday. But seriously, I remember a massive debate that we organized on Affirmative Action, and we packed Founders Hall and even had media coverage. In general, there was so much energy among us, and so much fight in us, and I reckon we did good. And the Honors Program gave us space to do it. If it weren't for the program, we 1) would never have been so concentrated in one place; 2) wouldn't have been so inspired by authority figures who were so radical. The intellectual battles—we were all in awe. I also remember when the program invited me back, after getting my PhD, to do a talk in the Marcus White Living Room. That was epic. That was another of those moments that really left a mark. When I was teaching, both in California and here in New Zealand, I used so much of what you all gave me. The techniques -for example, leaving students open to exercise their creativity on exams and papers; the attitude -question everything and wonder why you think what you think; and, as I tell my kids, ALWAYS GIVE EVERYTHING. I think that's what got me through. And I keep living it always.

Sadie Boone (Class of 2018)



Sadie Boone has accepted an offer from Michigan State University for the MA in Rhetoric and Writing program with full funding. She received an Academic Achievement Graduate Assistantship, and will be a Graduate Writing Consultant in the writing center.

Dr. Kristine Larsen
(Class of 1985)



Dr. Larsen returned to the helm of the CCSU Honors Program, starting Summer 2022. She was previously Program Director from 2000-2009.

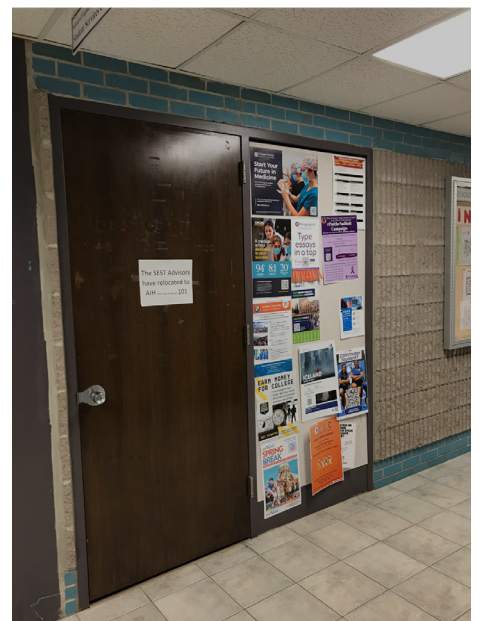
New Honors Study Lounge

Copernicus 241 is soon to be the site of the Honors Study Lounge. It's getting spiffed up as we speak, and we expect it to open in time for the Spring 2023 semester!

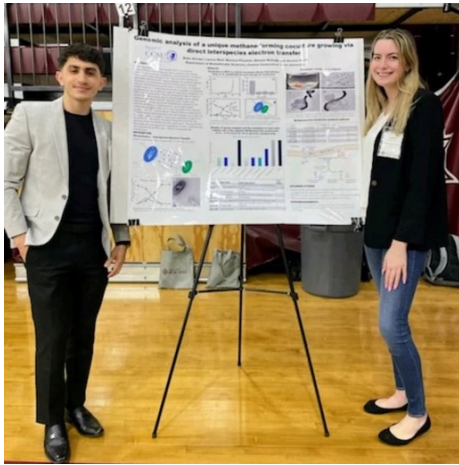
The Honors Study Lounge will be an inviting environment for Honors students to meet and study together. It is large enough to accommodate round-table meetings alongside informal student discussions and student workgroups.

Although we have plenty of plans—to use it for seminars and advising meetings, for example—we also expect students to make new and creative uses of the space.

Check back here for updates!



Recent achievements by Honors students



From March 20-23, 2022 Honors seniors **Adam Gwara** and **Kiernan Foster** (below) presented their research at the American Chemical Society 2022 Annual Meeting in San Diego, California. Both students graduated in May with degrees in Chemistry.

On Saturday April 2, 2022, rising seniors **Baha Alsaqri** and **Lauren Real** (above) presented their research at the 2022 Eastern Colleges Science Conference at Iona College in New York. They also won an excellence award for poster presentation in microbiology. Their research involved uncovering unique genome mutations in a laboratory-adapted bacterial and archaeal symbiont.



The CCSU Honors Program is on social media!

Please follow us on

Facebook: [ccsuhonors](#)

Instagram: [@ccsuhonorsporgram](#)

Twitter: [@ccsuhonors](#)



Christmas Opportunity

As a sophomore in college, it is hard not to feel like I cannot make an impact because of my limited finances and very limited time. I understand many college students struggle with this same scenario. That is one of the many reasons I love Operation Christmas Child, because it is a way to give back that is inexpensive but extremely important and impactful!

This semester, I am working with another student to collect donations for [Operation Christmas Child](#) through [Samaritan's Purse](#). Operation Christmas Child strives to serve children in underprivileged communities across the globe that will not be receiving gifts on Christmas morning. It is their goal to ensure every child gets a present through the form of a donated

shoebox full of gifts during the Christmas season. The boxes can contain a variety of items, similar to the ones on [this](#) list.

Samaritan's Purse, the organization that hosts Operation Christmas Child, is a charity organization that strives "to follow the example of Christ by helping those in need and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel," according to [their mission statement](#). I understand that not everyone believes in Christ or the Bible, but this is an opportunity to demonstrate to children that they are loved through a gift around Christmas morning. I believe it is a wonderful opportunity to give back to our communities and serve in a way that affects people beyond the borders of our state and nation.

If you are interested in filling a shoebox, I can provide you with any boxes that you would like to fill, and I can also provide you with labels for the boxes. The labels differentiate the age range and gender of the child for whom you are filling the box. The only resources you need to provide are the items to fill the box, and, if you are able, \$10 for shipping the box. Once filled, I will transport the boxes to a drop-off location so they can be distributed. (If you cannot fill a box but are still interested in helping in some way, please reach out! I would love to work with you.)

Thank you for your time in considering this opportunity,

Abigail Denison
adenison@my.ccsu.edu

Spring 2022 Graduates

Heather Good



Major: Marketing and Management

Favorite Honors memory: My favorite memory from the Honors Program was writing my thesis. Between choosing a topic I am passionate about and working with a great advisor, I really enjoyed the process of writing my thesis and I'm proud of how it turned out.

Future plans: After graduating, I plan to pursue a career in digital marketing. Specifically, I will be working in social media marketing where I will be responsible for marketing strategy and content creation.

Advice for future Honors students: Managing your time is important, especially as an Honors student. Planning and being intentional with your time will allow you to succeed academically while still making connections, having fun, and making the most out of your time in college.

We wanted to thank you for all your hard work. We hope you have a great time going forward.

— Abigail Helt, Charlotte Mascaro, Maura McCormick, Tyler Nadeau, Hallie Perrin, Isabella Salazar, Emily Telensky, Rachel Trezza, Kateryna Yurkevych.

Emily Telensky



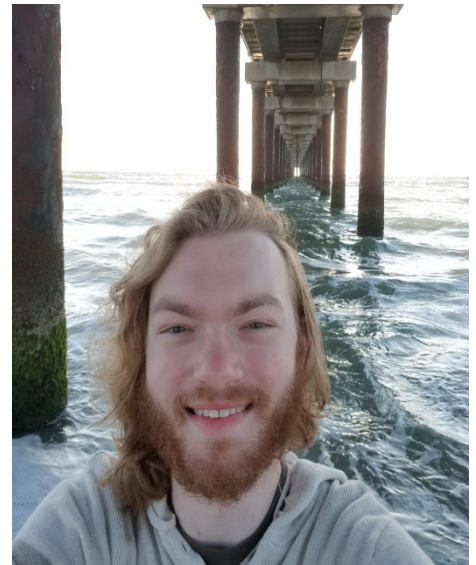
Major: Nursing

Favorite Honors memory/experience: Besides meeting such a great group of friends and a set of really awesome professors, my favorite memory was probably the day I finally finished and turned in my thesis!

Future plans: This summer I worked at Camp Horizons, a residential summer camp program for individuals with disabilities in South Windham, CT and in the fall, I started as a registered nurse in oncology at the Hospital of Central Connecticut!

Advice for future Honors students: Study hard but also have fun! Make connections with your professors and classmates, ask lots of questions, and enjoy the few short years in the program—they will fly by!

Adam Gwara



Major: Biochemistry, ACS Certified

Favorite Honors Experience: The book launch of *The Handmaid's Tale: Teaching Dystopia, Feminism, and Resistance Across Disciplines and Borders* with Dr. Ritzenhoff and Dr. Pozorski.

Future Plans: I will be attending the Northeastern Chemical Engineering PhD program starting this fall. I am hoping to do research in the field of synthetic biology and metabolic engineering.

Advice for future Honors Students: Get enough sleep; you can't study well, pay attention in class, have fun with your friends, spend quality time with your family, or enjoy your hobbies if you're too exhausted all the time.

Consider a donation to the Honors Program

Regardless of size, your donation to the program will be used to enhance students' experience in the Honors Program at CCSU.

Among the purposes to which your donation may be put are field trips and cultural events; teaching materials for Honors courses; community engagement programs; book vouchers; and

enhancements to the Honors study lounge.

tinyurl.com/2s25xne2

To donate, please click the tinyurl above, or visit <https://ccsu.network-for-god.com/causes/18774-ccsu-honors-program>. Thank you!

Fall Honors course offerings

As always, this semester we have a variety of section topics in our Honors courses.

First-year courses

HON 130: World Cultures I. Profs. Takemae (Special Education) and Jones (History) are teaching “What Can the World Learn from Japan?” students are considering this question from both a cultural perspective and a historical perspective.

Students of Prof. Jayasinghe (English) are exploring South Asian literary cultures alongside its geo-political, cultural, religious, and historical backgrounds. Other topics include nationhood, identity, and religion in pre-colonial, colonial, as well as post-colonial literary traditions.

HON 140: Writing & Research I remains our introductory writing and critical-thinking course. Sections are taught by Prof. Austin (English), and by Profs. Pozorski (English) and Foster (Tech Ed).

Sophomore courses

HON 210, Western Cultures II. Prof. Pozorski and Prof. Ritzenhoff (Communications) are teaching “Trauma and Identity in Film and Literature,” focusing on modern representations of terror, trauma, and identity. Authors and directors include James Baldwin, Spike Lee, Barry Jenkins, Ron Stallworth, Margaret Atwood, Mira Nair, Celeste Ng and Moshid Hamid.

“Frank Sinatra and the American Century,” taught by Prof. Gigliotti (English), studies Sinatra’s life and art, as well as related scholarship. Essential questions include the ways in which Sinatra embodied the 20th Century and the degree to which he changed the idea and the power of “Celebrity.”

HON 230, World Cultures II. Prof. Barrington (English) has a section tracing literatures produced between the 8th and 15th centuries. Readings

include Marco Polo’s Travels, The Travels of Ibn Battutah, The Book of Margery Kempe, Mandeville’s Book of Marvels and Travels, and Columbus’ Diario. Alongside these travel writings, students read the literature a traveler could have encountered, explore the libraries housing these works, and examine the various writing systems then in use.

Prof. El-Eid (Political Science) offers a section analyzing of the history, culture, and politics of the Middle East. Questions include: How was the map of the region drawn in the aftermath of WWI? What was the impact of the League of Nations Mandate System on the people of the Levant? What role did the major powers play in shaping the politics of the Middle East? Why did the Arab uprisings fail to bring democracy to Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Egypt? What are the major challenges facing the Middle East?



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