DePaul's Honors Program’s newsletter has won an award from the National Collegiate Honors Council* for the fifth year in a row. Honorable Mentions was recognized for excellence by NCHC in their national newsletter contest. Our newsletter won second place in the Student Produced-Electronic Division of the competition. Theresa Bailey and Taylor Marcel were the co-editors for last year’s newsletter; Honorable Mentions advisor Jennifer Kosco accepted the award on their behalf at the recent NCHC annual conference in Seattle in October. Congratulations to the editors and all the contributors! Stop by the Honors Loop office in 1620 Lewis to see the winning plaques!

*The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) is the professional association of undergraduate honors programs and colleges, honors directors and deans, and honors faculty, staff and students. NCHC is a national organization with over 900 affiliated honors programs and honors colleges from across the country.
Words from the HSG President

By Tom Rietz

Over the past two years, I have been given amazing opportunities to make a substantive impact on our campus. I’ve helped enact reforms to our campus dining health, organized a speak-out to protest homophobic rhetoric used by organizations on our campus, and have been an active voice in our campus’ community of Residence Halls. Being the President of the Honors Student Government has opened my eyes to the possibilities that DePaul University offers.

I have enjoyed my time in this position because of the dedicated student leaders I am privileged to work with on a daily basis. I’d like to take this chance to thank them for their continued diligence in the face of tough classes, and for their willingness to work as a team. I have especially enjoyed events the Honors Program has put on as an opportunity to learn about topics such as the 2016 election and issues surrounding foster care. These events have been intentional, inspired by the Honors theme of “what must be done?”

It has also been said that it is not enough to do good, but that it must be done well. At times, it seem that in our craze to be perfect students in perfect majors and in the best internships, we often forget that perfection is sometimes insultingly infeasible. We are told that practice makes perfect; that our lives will one day meet excellence. As an Honors student, I’ve come into conflict with this idea, as I realize that the perfection we are asked to achieve is non-existant. The pursuit of excellence, however, is always an option to those willing to sacrifice their now for their future possibilities.

Those who pursue this excellence are those who truly show perfection in service to themselves. By being in this Honors program, you all are pursuing that excellence. In service to our community, I have realized that my position on our board is also an opportunity to pursue excellence, and indeed to try to “do it well.” However, that entails a long, long process of repeated failure, and a diligence shown toward improvement.

I hope to show our board and indeed all of our Honors students that the Honors program is also an opportunity to “do it well.” With a growth mindset and a few free pizzas at our HSG meetings, we will grow together to meet this pursuit of excellence.

Never forget that you are a part of a vibrant community of thinkers and creators who are in this with you, going through the same challenges and tribulations you face every day.
On Saturday, October 1st, at 8:00 p.m., the musicians of the DePaul Symphony Orchestra stopped warming up, the audience lights dimmed, and Ronald Caltabiano, the new dean of the School of Music appeared onstage to introduce the first concert of the 2016-2017 academic year. He recalled a memory from the previous spring when he’d heard this orchestra for the first time, and assured the audience that a treat was in store for them this evening. He finished speaking and left the stage.

The concertmaster, Alina Kobialka, tuned the orchestra. We, the musicians, were all excited and a little nervous, as we’d had just four short weeks to prepare the two works which we were about to perform: Inscription/Transformation for violin and orchestra, by British composer Kenneth Hesketh, and Claude Debussy’s La Mer. Mr. Hesketh was in the audience, as this performance was the premiere of his work in the United States.

After we tuned, the violin soloist, Professor Janet Sung, emerged from backstage, followed by our conductor, Professor Cliff Colnot. She bowed alone, as is traditional for a soloist. The orchestra remained seated. Once the applause died down, we began playing.

Mr. Hesketh’s piece varies in difficulty throughout the sections of the orchestra. Apart from a few short sections, the cello part isn’t very hard technically, but the intricate rhythms require total concentration. It was from this intensely focused state that we were momentarily jolted when the music stand containing Professor Sung’s music fell offstage with a crash!

At first, my stand partner and I, who were sitting at the back of the cello section on the opposite side of the stage from Professor Sung, thought that the crash was additional percussion. Then Professor Colnot stopped the orchestra and, with the help of an audience member, set the music stand on its feet again. Professor Sung made a little joke, diffusing the slightly tense situation, and the audience laughed with a palpable sense of relief. When Professor Colnot gave us a measure to start from, we finished the piece as best we could after that hiccup.

We took no intermission between Mr. Hesketh’s piece and the Debussy, but the violins’ chairs needed to be rearranged, and some of the woodwinds and brass needed to swap seats. In the orchestras at DePaul, the string sections are always the same size, but the woodwind and brass sections vary according to how many parts the score calls for, and often completely different musicians will play on different pieces. In some cases, instrumentation varies between the different movements of a piece; the third and last movement of La Mer calls for two cornets in addition to all of the other instruments that have been playing since the first movement.

Once the setup changes were complete, we tuned again, and Professor Colnot returned to the stage. La Mer opens quietly and mysteriously, but all I could think about was the moment later in the first movement where the cello section has a very exposed melodic line. In rehearsals, the quality of this section had varied; several times Professor Colnot made us play it over and over again until either it improved, or he told us to practice more and moved on to a different part. Fortunately, in the concert, the cellos played, moved, and breathed as a unit; and we sounded great!

The rest of the piece flowed by almost too quickly. I usually find orchestra concerts bittersweet because they’re the last time I’ll get to play those particular pieces for a long while. The bottom of the penultimate page is usually where a lump begins to form in my throat and my eyes become suspiciously shiny. This time was no different, with an extra dash of weariness thrown in because of the physically and emotionally taxing nature of both Inscription/Transformation and La Mer. As we played the final chords and stood to the applause that rang through the concert hall, I was glad that the concert was over and simultaneously wished that it could never end.
Depressing Depression

By Mandy Bryant

Sometimes I hold the mirror so close
I saw these flaws, as sharp as claws
Digging in my skin, tugging at my heart
I wonder if anyone knows?
This deep pain in my soul
But, I don’t want anyone to know
I smile and try to brighten everyone’s day
But it hurts when you can’t do it for yourself.
Sometimes I don’t want to look in the mirror
Sometimes I don’t see the importance of my existence
Other days I am happy and optimistic
Other days I am crying and in despair
Will it ever go away, can it be repaired?
Will I look in the mirror and say
I am beautiful
Instead of standing there listening
To you, tell me I’m nothing
I may not be much worth to you
But that doesn’t make me invaluable
Maybe I am ugly, maybe I’m beautiful
But why do you hate me so?
Because of the way I smile at other depressed souls
Because of the way I laugh to hide my silent cries
Because of the way, I am happy to cheer for others
Because of the way I walk proud to hide my fears
Because of the way I try and try to show love
When I feel you hate
I know you wonder when I’m going to break
I refuse to break
Yes, your words make me ache
And there are days, I can’t brace my smile long
So I hold my head down and try not to frown
Days I stress about work, and you come visit
You always press my head down
You always bring that mirror
You always take that picture
You always compare me to others
You always tell me about the others
The others who join you
The others who end it
The others who find an outlet
In violence, and self-harm
The others who are no longer here
The others who tried and failed
But I am not the others
I have insecurities
Sometimes I hate them and others days I love them
I have pain, but I know it won’t last always
I love you, not for the things you do
But for reminding me why I have to live
I have to live
I deserve to live
If my smile can cure the sick
If my smile can help others
If my smile can reduce tears
If my laugh can make others join
If my singing can make others rejoice
Then I will do it for you too
I will smile to depress depression
I will laugh to depress depression
I will sing to depress depression
I will remember that
Those other days,
Don’t last always
She, desperate for guidance, carved a third eye into the deer’s skull.
“You are my new god.” She proclaimed. “Help me, your first follower.”
That night, her new god appeared to her, a silhouette among her dreams.
“Do you seek an afterlife?” it asked.
“No,” she replied, “I want to live.”
“I’m afraid I cannot give you life, as none has ever been given to me. I have received no sacrifices, no burnt offerings. I have nothing worldly to grant—only advice.”

A contrast: the playground at midnight. In January Snow is on the ground, blank. The swings are empty. It’s midnight. The streetlights stretch our shadows to terrifying lengths, Grant them terrifying blackness. The contrast of the snow and The darkness, its somehow poetic. Meaningful As our kind words and gentle touches. Alone.
Honors Program Essay Contest Results

During the summer months, all incoming fall 2016 Honors Program freshmen were invited to participate in the Honors Program’s annual Essay Contest. Students were required to read Dead Man Walking, by Sister Helen Prejean. Students were invited to submit essays based on the following prompt: How has the experience of reading Dead Man Walking influenced your views of the American legal system and your current understanding of ‘What must be done?’

The winning essay was submitted by Sydney Begerowski, a Management major from New Baltimore, MI. Results of the essay contest were announced at the Honors Retreat on Tuesday, September 6th. Sydney’s essay is below, along with excerpts from the second place winner, Jenna Cole, and two students who received honorable mentions: Paige Dotson and Annaliese Ruhe.

From “One Voice, Much to Be Done” (2nd Place)

By Jenna Cole

Dead Man Walking had a greater effect on changing my view of the death penalty mostly because it provided a large amount of information on the injustice of today’s legal system, both towards the convicted, as well as injustice towards families of victims. It’s clear that our system is in need of reform, especially with the racial and class biases that allow for differing sentences between cases. It’s also necessary that families of victims receive compensation and access to services that will allow for them to move on and cope with the tragedies they experience.
While politics drives legislation, politics itself is often driven by money and ethical sentiment; therefore, both are the basis of legislation. Sister Helen Prejean illustrates the role of both in her memoir, Dead Man Walking, in which she recounts her personal experience with capital punishment and its surrounding legislation. Even though she augments the injustice that stems from economics being rather influential, it was her illustration of ethical sentiment that fostered my own inquisition of the current legal system of the United States. She depicted three entities - Victims, the Government, and Nonaligned Individuals - yet brought them together by demonstrating their similar societal responsibility of respecting the fundamental human rights. Through the use of a morally poignant tone, Prejean demonstrates the harsh reality of the death penalty and its consequences, thus permeating my own views into a revelation: Every individual has a sense of moral dignity that must be not only acknowledged but also respected within the legal system and throughout society.

To begin, Prejean addresses the victims of murder, including those of the death penalty. As Prejean recounts the brutal killings of “a lovers’ lane teenage couple, David LeBlanc and Loretta Bourque” (Prejean 4), my feelings of remorse are overwhelming for the two innocent young adults. Their alleged murderer, Patrick Sonnier, falls victim to the death penalty thus fostering the concept that those killed by the government should also be identified as victims of murder. Prejean expresses that despite his wretched crimes, he is still “a human being and deserves to be treated with dignity” (Prejean 122). Furthermore, she continues to bolster this concept when asserting “killing a man who can’t defend himself… is just as wrong as what he did” (Prejean 181). It was Prejean’s implementation of such heavily connoted words like dignity and defense to develop a morally poignant tone in conjunction with her beliefs that Patrick should live that transformed my own personal views on the death penalty. My immediate sense of
anger and frustration towards a cold-blooded murder became feelings of sympathy in the realization that he, too, is a human being and killing him would only create yet another victim of murder. Thus, in reading Prejean’s portrayal of the victims, I found that each person, regardless of their history, has a moral dignity that should be respected and treated equally among others and implementing capital punishment merely defies this.

Similar to the victims of murder and capital punishment, the government also plays a large role in the implementation of the death penalty, which Prejean demonstrates through the irony of death as punishment for the crime of killing. She begins by openly stating “for me… killing by anyone… cannot be tolerated. And that includes the government” (Prejean 31). This exact belief becomes present again when she explicitly argues that “If we are to have a society which protects its citizens… no one… may be permitted to torture and kill - and that includes the government” (Prejean 124). The repetition of the concept of including the government through fragmented syntax emphasizes that the government should be held equally responsible for killing a man as though a murderer would. While this augments her argument against the death penalty, it was ultimately her transition from personal to inclusive pronouns that shifted my own thought. By transforming “me” to “we,” the confidence and power behind her words grew immensely, furthering her morally poignant tone and therefore evoking the same attitude in myself. I believe that the American legal system must recognize and respect that each person is a human being and in the failure to do so, must be held equally responsible as any other who would fail to do so.

As previously demonstrated, the murderers, the victims, and the government are all involved in the issuing of capital punishment; however, Prejean presents a third, lesser known perpetrator who is justly responsible: Nonaligned Individuals. While many people of the general public are not directly involved in death penalty cases, a “claim to be apolitical or neutral… would be… to uphold the status quo - a very political position to take and on the side of the oppressors” (Prejean 6). In the midst of being a spiritual advisor, Prejean herself realizes that “If [she] does not speak out and resist, [she] is an accomplice [to murder]” (Prejean 115). This motif of nonaligned individuals and her personal revelation develops a sense of responsibility in myself.

In conclusion, Dead Man Walking by Sister Helen Prejean presents a moral and judicial conflict as men who kill are faced with being killed themselves. Her illustration of ethical sentiment from the perspectives of the victims, the government, and nonaligned individuals through a morally poignant tone demonstrates that every person, even murderers, are human beings who have a sense of dignity that deserves to be respected. While the actions of the murderers are never condoned, no human being deserves to be killed; killing is an unlawful act even when executed by the government. In personal regards, this memoir has illustrated to me that these concepts expand far beyond capital punishment. If the American legal system is to be successfully reformed on any premise, not only must citizens recognize that every human has inalienable rights but they also must voice these rights so they are heard, or they are responsible for the unjust acts that presently remain in society today.
Many—including myself, some days—would argue that pursuing a collegiate education in theatre is impractical and useless. Jacob Broschart, a student in the Theatre Management program at The Theatre School at DePaul University, defends his choice by saying that, “[his] overwhelming passion for the arts would not allow [him] to study anything else.” People who consider themselves artists tend to agree that the visceral need to create art is a stronger source of motivation than any other. I would also contend that this pull towards art often comes across as selfish; but it isn’t.

Theatre influences the changes in culture over long periods of time, rather than providing immediate, direct contributions to society. Humankind has developed as a species because of its ability to tell stories, to learn from mistakes and successes, and to progress generations to come with the knowledge of the past. With the technological advances of today, the bar for storytelling ability is set high, and it feels as though there has been a general decline in society’s acknowledgment of the importance of theatre. Is a $40 play at the Goodman more entertaining, educational, or politically stimulating than the free live-streaming of the Presidential Debates? Too often the answer is no.

But theatre is still used as a platform for therapy, education, celebration, and expression. Why? Because it is innately human. Theatre has a stronger capability to heal, to enlighten, and “to transform” as Broschart so eloquently put it. It’s for these reasons I was drawn to theatre, and I continue to pursue it.

The next questions to consider are: What is the use of theatre at the college-level? How can something so physical be intellectually stimulating enough to be worth years of study? I used to ask myself these questions all the time, especially as I was debating whether or not to come to The Theatre School to study Theatre Arts with a concentration in directing. So far it seems to me that the only difference between my education and a generalized Liberal Arts education is that the content I’m working with is theatre-specific. The skills I’ve begun to hone are that of critical analysis, research-based writing, and organized, productive conversation. I’ve come to learn that in terms of how rigorous my theatrical education is, my major is no different from any other; it’s exactly as intellectual as I’m willing to make it.

A typical hour-and-a-half in the class of Rachel Shteir, the acclaimed dramaturg/author/theatre critic and professor at The Theatre School, consists of discussing the 750 word journals we wrote prior. These journals cover the reading due that day, an overview of the facts of the play, time period, dramaturg, or playwright we’re focused on, and conversation. Shteir agrees that theatre is fundamentally interesting because “it provides an opportunity for conversation.” This conversation consists of anything and everything, from how applicable a specific adaptation is for the predicted audience of the theatre it’s being produced in, to the impact and effectiveness of a stage direction within a given play. Jacob Broschart loves this intellectual side of theatre and offers that “theatrical scripts allow for ambiguity that makes discussing them at time infuriating, at times intoxicating, but always rewarding”, and that “good productions tend to leave things up to interpretation and allow for discussion and engagement.”

This is the kind of thinking that I have taken on, and Broschart and I are both only Sophomores. My understanding is that Junior and Senior year in our
conservatory program, the conversations will shift from small and specific, to big picture. I hope to begin to answer the questions: What is the best way to communicate to an audience? Is it a theatre’s job to be entertaining, political, educational, or healing? Does a theatre company have a responsibility to its community? I haven’t answered these questions yet. I am not yet able to justify adding to the long-term culture of humanity, when there is so much important, short-term work to be done. Shteir believes that theatre is sometimes capable of more directly benefitting communities via outreach work and the like, but she also believes that “doing any kind of artist work in this culture is enough.” While I’m not yet able to agree with Rachel, I am confident that as I continue to ask these questions in my theatrical education, the process will provide me with the skillsets I need to thoughtfully and intellectually impact the world in some way or another.
QUARTER IN REVIEW

The Honors Program has had a busy fall quarter. Here are some event photos.

Honors Retreat

Understanding, Inequality Panel

Wayne Steger Election Lecture

1st HSG Meeting

Honors Program Heart Walk team on the lakefront

Steve Pemberton Event
Friday, January 6th  
Honors Student Government Meeting, 
Rm. 1404, 990 W. Fullerton - 3:30pm

Friday, January 20th  
Honors Student Government, Rm. 1404, 990 W. Fullerton - 3:30 p.m.

Friday, January 27th  
Internship Workshop – Details to be announced

Friday, February 3rd  
Honors Student Government Meeting, 
Rm. 1404, 990 W. Fullerton – 3:30 p.m.

Lecture/Discussion: Father Ed Udovic presents on the Vincentian question: “What Must Be Done?” – Details to be announced

Wednesday, February 8th  
Theatre Outing – Details to be announced

Wednesday, February 15th  
Student-Faculty Dinner – Details to be announced

Friday, February 17th  
Honors Student Government Meeting, 
Rm. 1404, 990 W. Fullerton – 3:30 p.m.

Honors Alumni Panel – Details to be announced

Friday, March 3rd  
Honors Student Government Meeting, 
Rm. 1404, 990 W. Fullerton – 3:30 p.m.
Plenty of honors program students are natural leaders and joiners, as evinced by the existence of Honors Student Government. But plenty, myself included, aren’t. We’d rather labor over verb conjugations alone in the library than get involved. I didn’t think I’d get anything out of an HSG meeting. I read the emails. What else was there to hear or do?

I immediately discovered a frivolous reason to show up to the meetings: free food. By this point in the quarter, I was skeptical of those words. In my experience, they usually meant a paltry supply of half-baked appetizers. But let me reassure you; at HSG meetings, “free food” means free pizza.

But the meetings provided more than pizza. They were, I realized, a look beyond the weekly announcement emails. I learned of events with dates yet to be set: ice skating winter quarter! A “Friendsgiving” potluck in November! I got an in-person introduction to the people who made such events happen. I learned what different groups within HSG had in the works. The advocacy team, for example, was working on rewriting the HSG mission statement. Meeting attendees got the chance to watch their progress over the quarter. They announced the rewrite on October 7th and introduced two drafts on October 21st.

Attendees learned about ways to get involved in the Honors Program. The words “getting involved” strike fear into the hearts of people like me. But there was something for everybody (That’s a cliche, but cliches exist for a reason). On October 21st, HSG members announced a new position, that of a social chair.

There’s also something to be said for mingling with fellow Honors students. October 7th was the Honors Floor representatives’ first meeting in their new positions. Honors freshmen like me heard from the specific representatives for our dorm. Meetings begin with ice-breakers. They end with “personal and professional victories” led by HSG President Tom Rietz.

I was a little skeptical at first. But spending time with other honors students was actually affirming, inspiring and even fun. After all, isn’t a community of likewise motivated students why we have the Honors Program?
As much as I initially cringed at the idea of a play described as a “modern retelling of Shakespeare’s classic”, the DePaul Theater School’s production of Romeo and Juliet was actually enjoyable, largely through its beautiful set design and lighting, its vivid characters, and the overt and in-your-face gayness. The radiant, shining Sapphic nature of the love story completely outweighed the cliché of “modern Shakespeare” and gave the play a pleasant relevance.

The plot of Romeo and Juliet is well-known to most: Romeo meets Juliet immediately after breaking up with his previous girlfriend and decides that they have to get married within days of knowing each other, despite the fact that their families are feuding. The couple gets married, Romeo experiences some legal trouble, there’s a misunderstanding, and both lovers commit suicide. The Romeo and Juliet story structure has become a staple of storytelling, repeated again and again, and mirrored in works like Warm Bodies and West Side Story.

For the most part, the play was well staged. Scene changes went smoothly and the characters’ movements around the stage felt natural and organic. Characters interacted in a way that felt believable and genuine. The combat choreography, on the other hand, felt unhearsed and awkward, with distinctly strained pacing. The play also felt somewhat lengthy and drawn out, overall (that’s mostly Shakespeare’s fault, but it seemed like it could have been hurried along). The individual actors ran from mediocre to fantastic. Friar Lawrence and Mercutio, portrayed by JJ McGlone and Elsa Guenther, respectively, were particularly exceptional. Guenther’s comedic depiction of Mercutio in many ways carried the performance and was one of the best things about the whole production. McGlone’s acting was fantastic and some of the most believable I’ve seen in a student production. At the same time, some of the death scenes seemed forced and were uncomfortable for audience members.

The technical design of the play was extremely well done. All the props and set pieces were moved around the stage effectively and the lighting was skillfully used to create subtle shifts between scenes and locations. The costumes seemed true to each character. Some of the settings, such as the morgue/crypt and Romeo’s temporary hideout beneath the subway were works of art in and of themselves, to the point that I was disappointed that they were only used for individual scenes. Additionally, the political allegory of the Montagues and Capulets seemed only used in the beginning of the play, and was not addressed later in the story, which felt like a strange choice.

On the whole, the play was an entertaining production of what should have been a trope and I would recommend seeing it to anyone who’s interested. I give it a 6.5/10.
On Friday, October 21st, Political Science Professor Wayne Steger spoke to Honors Program students about the upcoming presidential election. Early in his talk, he didn’t mince words and stated, with great certainty that “Donald Trump is going to lose this race.” Saying that Trump has “fundamentally demonstrated that he can’t do the job,” Steger continued to cite a number of statistics and rationales as to why he predicts that Hillary Clinton will win the election. Stating that “partisanship trumps gender,” Steger said that Clinton has put together a “winning and traditional Democratic coalition.” He also spent the time talking about what this election means for American politics beyond this election. Stating that “right-wing populism is on the rise, with its anti-cultural biases again Muslims, gay citizens, etc.,” Steger also stated that many GOP voters are also “anti-Washington.” They feel betrayed by Republican party leaders currently in Washington. However, Republicans have a large pool of experience politicians across the country to vote in to various offices, while the Democrats have a “weak farm team” throughout the United States.

What makes Trump such an interesting and provocative candidate is that he really isn’t aligned with many of the mainstream ideologies of the GOP. The Republican party, at large, isn’t as anti-immigration as Trump and his supporters. Trump also has a different view of welfare programs and free trade than most of the GOP. He says he will protect social welfare programs, but only for “deserving people.” Ultimately, Trump’s political agenda doesn’t match up with the politics of most of the GOP members. This raises the question: why did he still become the candidate?

The reason is about more than simply supporting Trump or supporting Clinton. Surveys that Steger showed made it clear that a majority of Trump’s support base states that their sole goal is to stop Clinton from being in office. The idea of having another Democrat take office after the Obama administration is more of a pressing issue than some of the claims made by Trump that Republicans disagree with.

Beyond the presidency, Trump also will likely make an impact on the Senate and on Congress. Steger pointed out that of the 34 Senate seats up for election, 24 are currently held by Republicans. There were two reasons that this could easily change. First, most of those Republicans were voted in during the midterm elections of 2010. The voter turnout was much smaller than it will be now in 2016, a major Presidential election. Furthermore, many of the senators up for reelection have endorsed Trump as a candidate. However, some (but not all) of that support was shaken when damaging audio of Trump was released on October 14th.

Steger ended by talking about how the future of America’s politics is looking based on the election. Steger asserts that “Trump is systematically biasing the election against himself by saying the election will be rigged,” and he challenges his supporters to protest the outcome if he doesn’t win. Steger also warns of “trouble on the horizon” and “massive acts of civil disobedience” no matter which candidate wins. He concluded that America is facing a very delicate situation ahead; one that will serve to create more distrust between the government and the people of this country.

Professor Steger shares data on the election
When he fired his ghostwriter, Steve Pemberton was many things. Pemberton was Chief Diversity Officer of Monster.com. He was a father of three and proud alumnus of Boston College. But, as his publisher protested, he wasn’t an author. Yet.

“Don’t wait for somebody’s approval or permission to start your dream,” he told DePaul students at the first event of the 2016-2017 Honors Program speaker series. “You’re here. That’s sufficient.”

Determined to tell his story as he lived it, Pemberton wrote *A Chance in the World* without a ghostwriter. Upon its publication in 2012, the book became a bestseller. It is now being turned into a movie. Along with serving as the Chief Diversity Officer for Walgreens, Pemberton now travels the country speaking and working on behalf of his foundation, which aims to help children aging out of the foster care system.

This cause is personal for Pemberton, who grew up in a series of abusive foster homes. His childhood is the subject of *A Chance in the World*: “I was inspired to write the book by my six-year-old son,” he said. “He asked me if I had a daddy.”

So Pemberton wrote his story, one so heartwrenching it almost seems unreal. But Pemberton’s storytelling never falls into self-pity. “I didn’t live it as a tragedy,” he said. “I lived it as a triumph. I wrote it how I lived it.”

Pemberton’s triumph serves as a font of wisdom he shared with the DePaul Honors community. He spoke of overcoming adversity as a response to the Vincentian question: “‘I refuse to accept it’ as just another way of saying, ‘What must be done?’” he said.

Pemberton spoke of the empathy he gained toward his parents in writing his story. He spoke of the universality in his story that its reception drew to his attention. Four years after publishing *A Chance in the World*, he said, every week something reminds him of how universal his story is. His insight was as universal as his story. He advised students to look for strengths and for opportunities to serve others in the midst of their own struggles. “To be the answer to the question ‘What must be done?’ That’s a whisper that you cannot ignore.”

Steve Pemberton with his wife Tonya at the book discussion after his talk
The hajj is a mandatory religious journey to Mecca for all Muslims who are physically and financially able. After spending ten years on the waitlist lovingly maintained by my home country’s national hajj organization, I was blessed with the chance to embark on the pilgrimage. In total, I spent 45 days in the holy cities of Medina and Mecca. This is a chronicle of a few noteworthy moments.

**Rooftop of the Grand Mosque, between the Maghrib and Isha’ prayers.**

Four Tajik ladies asked me to photograph them against the Makkah Royal Clock Tower. I snapped away and didn’t try to engage in conversation with them – the language barrier was near-oppressive – but after deciding that my work was satisfactory, they each reached up to kiss the top of my head, repeating the word “rahmah” with a sense of gratefulness so unexpectedly familiar and affectionate. I was touched. Never mind linguistics; this was the best exercise in intercultural communication they could have given me.

**Jabal Thur, 7:30 a.m.**

I lifted the hem of my dress robe as I made my way up the mountain, wondering why I agreed to put myself through this early morning agony. At its peak of 4,610 feet, Mount Thur houses the cave in which Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companion Abu Bakr sought refuge from the Quraysh as they migrated to Medina. The hike is voluntary for those wishing to better understand the struggle of the Prophet in the early growth stage of the faith and to get a glimpse of the historic cave itself. I traded exhausted smiles with all who passed me and was surprised to note that most hikers were at least three times my age (and far more sprightly than I was). The steps were slippery and uneven, and during my descent, I had slipped on a particularly sandy step when a Chinese lady in her sixties beside me clicked her tongue disapprovingly and grabbed my arm to help guide me down. I bowed my head in deep gratitude (and something closely resembling shame), and we made our way down the mountainside together, bound by wordless solidarity and determination. Humility is a curious thing.

**Arafah, 1:00 a.m.**

I looked up at the tiny sliver of midnight sky from my mat in the corner of the tent I shared with ten other people. Arafah - the desert plain where Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) delivered his final sermon - is the site where Muslims are required to perform the essential hajj ritual of spending several hours in prayer and deep contemplation. The choice between praying in congregation or in solitary quietude is left open to pilgrims, but this is a time explicitly carved out for a
conversation with God like no other, a lesson in baring one’s soul to the ever-attentive divine. The atmosphere was hushed, the air permeated by a heaviness I still find hard to describe. I felt more spiritually conscious than I ever had before. Then I turned over and promptly fell asleep.

**Mina, 11:30 p.m.**

I found myself taking a walk through Mina with a friend on our final night in the famed tent city. Pilgrims from across the world were neatly sorted by geographical region, and our little adventure took us through a microcosm of the Muslim world we had never gotten to see up close. Shafiq and I strolled past the Nigerian camps and exchanged curious looks with the pilgrims there. We treated ourselves to some ice cream, where he conversed in basic Arabic with an Egyptian who thought he was Russian. Just a regular day during the hajj.

After agreeing to search for a better vantage point, we trekked up tarred roads together until we finally reached a high point deep within the South Asian campsite. Looking out at the landscape of white tents lined up against each other stretching out into the distance, I was stunned. This is it, I thought. The essence of this spiritual event. A visual representation of equality in the eyes of God, that all notions of superiority and inferiority are based on the fickleness of human prejudice. After all, isn’t the hajj essentially a mandated social experiment in global harmony? Muslims are instructed to come together from every corner of the world and be kind and just and respectful to one another, to realize that this congregation is so diverse in upbringing and culture yet so united in worship. I took a step back, closed my eyes, and burned the scene into the archives of my memory.

Synthesizing the breathtaking moments I experienced during my journey into a coherent narrative is a feat I fear I will never achieve. It took me a full three weeks after returning from the hajj to fully settle back into collegiate life at DePaul and to realize that perhaps I would never truly comprehend the meaning of this new collection of experiences gifted to me.

Talking about this experience still sends me back to an almost unreal fragment of space-time, but the action of putting words to my experience has helped me crystallize a remarkable, indefinable set of emotions into something more digestible. Our capacity to process and make sense of life-changing events is an ever-growing thing; perhaps we are meant to linger in the emotional pandemonium of memory banks for much longer than we think. Perhaps that is okay.
FY@broad Offers Short-Term Experiences of a Lifetime

By Madeline Crozier

You might feel sick during one of DePaul’s FY@broad experiences, whether it be from air-sickness, altitude sickness, or homesickness (or all three). But the global sights, lasting lessons, and rare adventures just might make up for it.

The FY@broad program gives students the unique opportunity to participate in a short-term study abroad program, lasting up to ten days, paired with a class taken the quarter before the trip. The shorter length of the programs, when compared to quarter-long experiences, means students can leap into diverse programs with little commitment, except to immerse themselves in international study.

This university truly believes in the power of global citizenship and sophistication, as evidenced by its’ desire to connect students with the world. We, as students, reap this benefit as much as we take advantage of it. For first year students looking to “acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare them for lives and careers in our increasingly globalized world,” then FY@broad offers one of the best opportunities. Not only can you participate in a culturally focused course where you learn about a country’s deep history, its’ current issues, the people who make the culture what it is, along with travel tips and tricks, but you can also take this knowledge into the field in the most literal and awe-inspiring way.

Last spring, I participated in FY@broad Peru, which involved taking the focal point seminar called LSP 112: Chocolate, Coffee, Gold: Ethical Sourcing of Food In a Global Marketplace (honors students receive credit for HON 102: History in Global Contexts) in the spring and then taking a ten-day immersive trip across Peru at the start of summer. My trip to Peru contextualized my love for Spanish-speaking culture in a way only such an in-depth, complete, and earnest program could.

The class itself explored relevant issues such as the negative impacts of consumption in the global marketplace and how ethical sourcing and fair trade work to counter these undesirable social and environmental outcomes. It connected these practices to small businesses in Peru who have found prosperity through fair trade, including those who make ceramics, jewelry, textiles, and handicrafts. Because of the course’s compelling and critical subject matter on corporations so crookedly at work against forces for good across the world, and oppositely, those who do that good so persistently, I personally felt a drive to help others across the world.

All of this knowledge from class led to application during our trip through Peru in which we stayed in four different hostels over ten days. But more important than the constant travel by plane, train, bus, taxi, or foot were the human moments in between. We met beekeepers, chocolate makers, ceramics producers, weavers, tour guides, jewelry makers, and peruanos all across the country who were sincere and willing to share their personal experiences with us, and welcome us into their culture, all while we experienced native Peruvian food and drink.

During the trip we interacted with a fair trade organization called Manos Amigas, which provides
fair trade opportunities for small producers in Peru, like the men and women who welcomed us into their workshops. *Manos Amigas* exports producer’s products to the United States, where they can be sold for higher margins, alleviating the producers from poverty and strengthening their businesses. Ten Thousand Villages, the largest and oldest nonprofit fair trade gift store in North America, sells handicrafts from Manos Amigas in its stores. The closest location to DePaul’s Lincoln Park campus is off Armitage, at 840 W. Armitage Ave. Their mission statement is reason enough to shop there: “Ten Thousand Villages creates opportunities for artisans in developing countries to earn income by bringing their products and stories to our markets through long-term, fair trading relationships.” It sure beats buying the majority of holiday or birthday gifts from large corporations.

The trip and the experiences were one of those things where you just had to be there. One of the most memorable experiences for me was hiking across the landscape and ruins at Machu Picchu, where I felt nostalgia for a world I never knew. On the last day of the trip before an overnight flight from Lima, Peru, we visited *El lugar de la memoria, la tolerancia y la inclusión social*, or what is also called the Museum of Memories. The museum honors victims of over two decades of tragedy and terror, and through this recognition is a process of healing.

FY@broad programs are a great way to see if a long-term program would be right for you, all while taking an interactive and immersive class on a global topic, and getting to travel too. This year there are programs to China, France, Germany, Ireland, Jerusalem and Jordan. The Jordan, France, and China programs depart over spring break, so the application deadline was November 1. However, the Jerusalem, Ireland, and Germany programs leave right after the end of the spring quarter, so the application deadline is February 1. If this opportunity is possible for you, you should definitely apply. It’s one of those things where you just have to be there.
Heading into the entrance of the Victory Gardens Theater, the soft yellow lights and faded red carpeting introduce a cozy, casual atmosphere. No one would ever expect, entering Zacek-McVay Main Stage Theater off the lobby, hearing loud rock music and, as Michael Paulson (see footnote) reports, a play that has “the can-puppets-really-do-that raunchiness of ‘Avenue Q’ and can-people-really-say-that outrageousness of ‘The Book of Mormon’.”

Hand to God is the new dark comedy, directed by Gary Griffin, of the Victory Gardens Theater by the DePaul Lincoln Park campus, complete with a meek grief-stricken adolescent and his satanical hand puppet, with focuses on satirical snippets of reality and general ideas on the impact of religion and grief.

Poignant and “flat-out hilarious”, this show, written in 2011 by Robert Askins, and first performed on Broadway in 2015, has now moved to Chicago. One can see that its’ in-your-face comedy, its’ wit and double-personality theme seems to please the Chicagoan audience!

As actress Geneva Carr, who inspired Askins for Jason’s mother and played the character in the Broadway production, says, “The way he [Askins] writes about how visceral and sexual we are – I feel like it’s really who we are at our core, but we spend so much time denying it […] yet it’s universal – it’s dark, messed-up material, but he writes it in such a deep way, it’s very cathartic.”

Largely based on the childhood and adolescence of its playwright, Robert Askins, the play’s jokes and outbursts are amusing to all, but the reason for them slowly becomes darker and more serious, albeit the comedy covering it all.

The audience’s reaction to this dark comedy can vary, and so no two performances have the same feeling. Actor Alex Weisman, who plays Jason/Tyrone, says that he and his “stagemates” modify their performance in accordance to the audience’s show of amusement: do the spectators respond more to the text or the action? Should we wait for the laughter to subside, say something softly, loudly, or move more forcefully? And these variances bring the characters and their story to life in a colorful array of “whip smart and wickedly funny satire.”

Already, a few changes have been made – most significantly changed is the very last scene before the epilogue, when at last Jason himself confronts Margery with his grief and bloody hand. Literally – he tries to “kill” Tyrone, the ruthless evildoer, by hammering his hand, but it lives on by the cloth he uses to mop the blood. And then, Weisman says, he decided to have Jason/Tyrone “talk” through just his hand, showing how much of Tyrone is really Jason. This last scene, at first with Jason yelling at his despairing mother over the nearly-fatal table, now presents the young man talking tearfully, quietly, on the floor to his mother.

In fact, though – or rather because – he is made of a sock, some felt, and fake hair, Tyrone, says Rachel Christianson of Puppet Mechanics, “is great at telling stories [and therefore] accessible to everyone,” which we notice in the prologue. Indeed, in this scene Tyrone briefly covers the mechanics of society and its’ rules. In his own satirical and vulgar way, he counts how the same people who created the notions of “good” and “bad” through rules, created the figures signifying these values. Hence the excuse so many could use: “the devil made me do it.”

This opens for discussion one of the main questions of the play: “What is good or bad?” “Which one are we?” “Do we ‘think devilish thoughts’?” Tyrone might snarl at us in his snarky voice, pushing in his impish temptations.

Yet puppets, Christianson says, “are able to get away with anything in the world they want,” hence the more graphic and gory parts of the play, as opposed to the reflective. These graphic-and-gory scenes are both heartily amusing and deeply disturbing, causing the audience to “shift in their seats at their own discomfort for laughing at circumstances that otherwise are far from comedic” (Yew). It is in these moments
where the puppet seems so far apart from the meek demeanor of Jason, and seems to set itself as either his outspoken id, or the devil himself.

If Tyrone were not a puppet, these “far from comedic” instances would not be laughable. Indeed, the combination of weighty themes and witty comedy make for an altogether engaging and thoughtful heart of comedy.

Eric Grode presents this “unlikely duo” perfectly: “Jason’s idea of a fun Saturday night is rehearsing the old “Who’s on First?” vaudeville routine, while Tyrone prefers demolishing as many commandments as possible. The two Texas churchgoers make for an unlikely duo, but […] they are joined at the hip. Or, rather, at the wrist.”

The characters’ reactions are questionable (Margery becomes “riotously” sexually engaged with the hormone-boiling Timothy, abandoning all propriety), especially considering their deep-set Texan faith, yet their state of grief is poignant and relatable. There is so much pain and violence, anger and conflicting values, but there is also love and reconciliation, communal sympathy and a family coping with loss.

And so we must ask ourselves questions of faith and morality, including: where do we look for the devil? Centuries ago a community would symbolically lay all its sins on a livestock – usually a lamb – and slay it, saying that the devilish spirits died with it. Yet, no longer being able to do this, we can still ask ourselves, “Where are our saints?” Maybe, says the impish Tyrone, it is where we last saw the devil.

Please explore the sources in the bibliography below for more information! Charles Isherwood’s “An Alter Ego With Attitude” is an especially riveting read.

7 The Flip Wilson Show. NBC. N.d. Television. Transcript.
“Fear not; calm will follow the storm, and perhaps soon.”

Vincent DePaul