

THE HONORS RHAPSODY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018



From the Editors:

We're excited to bring you the very first issue of the Honors Rhapsody Newsletter! In this debut issue, dedicated to the memory of Prof. Javedd Khan who suddenly passed just before the publication of this newsletter and was a former coordinator of the Honors Program, you'll find a running theme of identity. Knowing yourself and what you believe has never been more important than it is in today's age, where we're often bombarded with images and ideas of what to say or think. Take a look inside for some thought-provoking ideas about being you.

Whether you've just completed your first semester at HCCC or you only have one class left to graduate, we hope that the Fall semester gave you some poignant current events to think about (i.e. midterm elections), challenging courses that made you question, and opportunities to engage in thoughtful debates. Wind down with Rhapsody Fall and gear up for spring.

Happy Holidays!



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In memory of Prof. Javedd Khan

Letter from the Honors Coordinator

What's New in Honors? & The Honors Lounge Reboot

Greetings, Honors students and friends of the Honors Program! As the new coordinator, I'm excited to update you on the innovations that have taken place within the program. I'm happy to be working in such an ever-evolving environment that focuses on tapping into students' greatest potential.

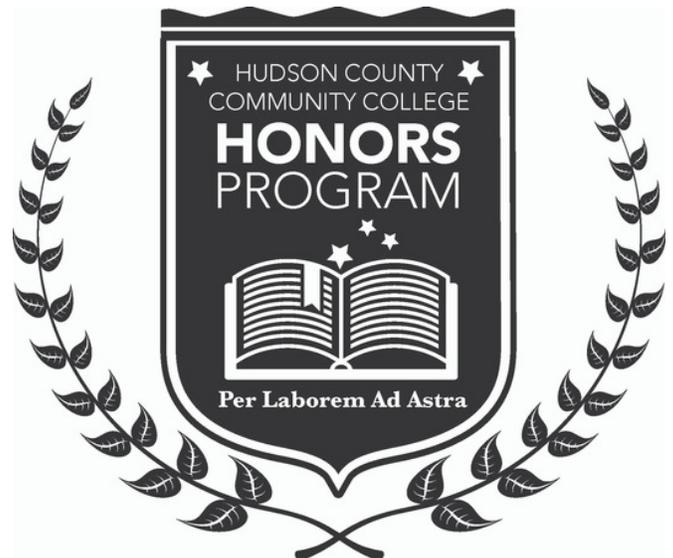
This semester, we had 51 students enroll in at least one Honors course. With funding from the HCCC Foundation, we were able to award a \$2,000 scholarship to one of our Humanities majors during the Fall semester. Lisandra Lopez was the recipient of the Glen Gabert Scholarship, awarded to exceptional students majoring in a Humanities discipline and, this year, enrolled in the Honors Program. The Student Activities Department was also very generous in providing the \$100 gift card prize for Outstanding Poster won by Emily Brown for her poster "Teaching Ethics and Social Activism With Environmental Education". We are thankful to have so much support across the College.

One of the perks in the Honors Program is access to the Honors Lounge, located on the third floor of Gabert Library. Having a dedicated space where students can socialize with other Honors peers and a focal point for Honors activities is essential to the program. With that in mind, two computers were placed inside the lounge as well as a mini library with books selected from the Library of Congress Book Surplus Program. In addition to these commodities, a tutor is available in the lounge three days a week for tutoring on a walk-in basis. Pantry Mondays, providing snacks and lunch bowls for refueling the mind, takes place every other Monday. And finally, our most engaging activity connected to the Honors Lounge, the monthly Honors Salon happens in this intimate space reminiscent of salon origins. In the Fall, Kenny Fabara, Writing Center Coordinator, and Dr. Eric Friedman, Executive Vice President and Provost, each hosted a salon on philosophical topics, in celebration of an Honors Intro. to Philosophy course being brought back for Spring 2019. Both events were well-attended by both Honors and non-Honors students and elicited timely and thoughtful discussion on a multitude of current issues.

And we've only just begun.

I look forward to next semester and the many valuable opportunities and partnerships that will be made available to the benefit of our Honors students. I wish you a happy and restful Winter Break and hope to see you as well as some new faces throughout the spring!

Jenny E. Bobea
Honors Program Lecturer & Coordinator



Misfit Proud *by Rebecca Richardson*

Identity defines who we are as individuals. It's based on our character, our actions, our names, race, ethnicity, sexuality, talent, and religion to name a few. Finding our own identity can be challenging. In the film, *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018) Freddie Mercury, the lead singer of the rock band Queen, portrayed by Rami Malek, faced obstacles with his identity before transitioning into the rock star the world grew to love. The film takes us into his family life and struggles off stage. Born Farrokh Bulsara, in Zanzibar, now known as Tanzania, Mercury grew up in a Parsi household before going to boarding school in Mumbai, India where he developed his talent for music. It wasn't until his late teens did he join the band Smile that led to Queen. Freddie was eccentric and flamboyant with a charismatic personality on stage and off. On the way to reaching fame, suspicion about his sexuality began to rise despite the singer keeping his personal life behind closed doors, even after his diagnosis with AIDS. Though *Bohemian Rhapsody* faced much backlash for watering down the singer's sexual identity, it successfully portrayed Mercury as a true performer who was dedicated to his craft, leaving songs such as *Bohemian Rhapsody* as his legacy. Mercury valued his identity as an artist and did not want to be labeled as anything else. Through music and his stage persona, he evolved into somebody other than Farrokh Bulsara: he became Freddie Mercury. You see, identity is ever changing and evolving. Nobody has the power to shape your own identity except for you.



Steve Jennings/WireImage

You're Asking the Wrong Question *by Mario Perales*

Jane Austen once wrote, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." It is an equally acknowledged truth that an audience in possession of a conclusion must be in want of closure. This very principle has guided writers for generations, defining the structure of nearly every essay, article, novel, and film of the modern age. However, despite this fact, in Christopher Nolan's film, "Inception," he intentionally defies this mandate in order to illustrate the ways in which society's imposition of commonly accepted perspectives onto each of its members can be detrimental to individuality.

The film "Inception" follows Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio), a thief who specializes in entering and stealing an individual's dreams which he can shape to his own will using technology originally developed for military training. Cobb is recruited by Saito (Ken Watanabe) for a seemingly impossible mission and tasked with implanting an idea into the mind of a prestigious CEO's son (Cillian Murphy) that will lead him to dissolve his father's company. Director Nolan later reveals that Cobb knows this feat is possible because he has accomplished it once before using his wife (Marion Cotillard) as the subject. Years prior, Cobb resided within the dream world along-side his wife, who is symbolically named Mal. However, complications arise when Cobb wishes to return to their children in the real world, and Mal wishes to remain in the dream world which she has adopted as her own reality. Cobb concludes that the only way to return with his wife to the real world is to plant a seed in her mind, convincing her that the world in which they live is not real, and does so, knowing that to wake up would require them both to die within the dream world. What Cobb does not know at the time is that the seed he plants in Mal's mind would ultimately grow to define her perception of reality, leading her to tragically commit suicide once awake. Still believing that her world is not real, Mal frames Cobb for her death to convince him to follow suit; which instead forces him to flee. This fact later motivates Cobb to accept the mission from Saito after being promised his name will be cleared of any wrongdoing and allowed to return home to his children. However, things take a turn for the worse when, in the midst of the mission, Saito becomes trapped within the dream world and is unable to differentiate between the dream and reality. Cobb is left with two options, somehow convince Saito to return to the real world and uphold his promise or remain in the dream accepting it as his new reality. The film ends without revealing whether Cobb was able to convince Saito to return and simply shows Cobb celebrating as he greets his children for the first time in years.

This inconclusive ending has left many audiences puzzled as they debate, to no end, whether Cobb is now with his children in the real world or if they are simply constructs of his dream. As much as we'd all like to believe that there is a deleted scene somewhere revealing the answers to everyone's questions, it simply isn't the case. Instead Nolan's intentional non-ending serves to further illustrate his point that our incessant need to impose our own perspective on others is detrimental to individuality. After illustrating how Cobb's attempt to force Mal to conform to his view and wishes literally kills her, Nolan

then issues a test to the audience, which an overwhelming majority fail. The question is not whether Cobb is dreaming or awake; it is instead: What right do we have to define Cobb's reality and dictate his life? The entirety of Nolan's film is then a representation and observation of our society. Mal is the individual wishing to be free to shape her own life and follow her dreams. Cobb is the representation of a society unwilling to accept that Mal has strayed from his view of the world until circumstances force him to adapt his own view entirely. Nolan is thus trying to convince the audience to abandon their black and white view of the world and embrace the greys in between by holding a mirror to our society and revealing its parallels to Cobb and his flaws.

This flawed mindset is not specific to our generation but has been true of society throughout history. The issue has even inspired enlightened minds such as Transcendentalist founder Ralph Waldo Emerson to plead with society to embrace individuality in his essay, "Self Reliance" writing,

"No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferrable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions."

Nolan's observations parallel Emerson's in that Mal's perspective is considered wrong as it goes against what is right by Cobb's standards, though not by her own. The question of Cobb's potential conformity to Mal's perspective by the end of the film only drives Nolan's point home: what right is owned by society to define what is right for all within it by its own arbitrary standards— especially when they may not be what is best for each single individual. It is an issue that, like Nolan's "Inception," we may never see an end to.





Honors Salons

Picture a cozy space, comfort food, a warm fireplace, and room full of individuals with minds that cannot be contained full of ideas. You've stepped into an 18th century salon, and also--the HCCC Honors Lounge, minus the fireplace.

This semester, the Honors Lounge hosted two Honors Salons hosted by Kenny Fabara, Writing Center Coordinator, and Dr. Eric Friedman, HCCC Executive Vice President & Provost. Both of the salons had a philosophy theme and included themes and readings from works by Renè Descartes and Jeremy Bentham.

The Honors Program looks forward to the coming Honors Salons which will encompass a variety of subjects including current affairs, politics, topics in STEM, and much more. If you have a suggestion for an Honors Salon topic, please send it to honors@hccc.edu and we will do our best to make it happen.

Honors Salon readings and the semester calendar are usually posted under the Honors Lounge Activities link under the Honors Portal link.



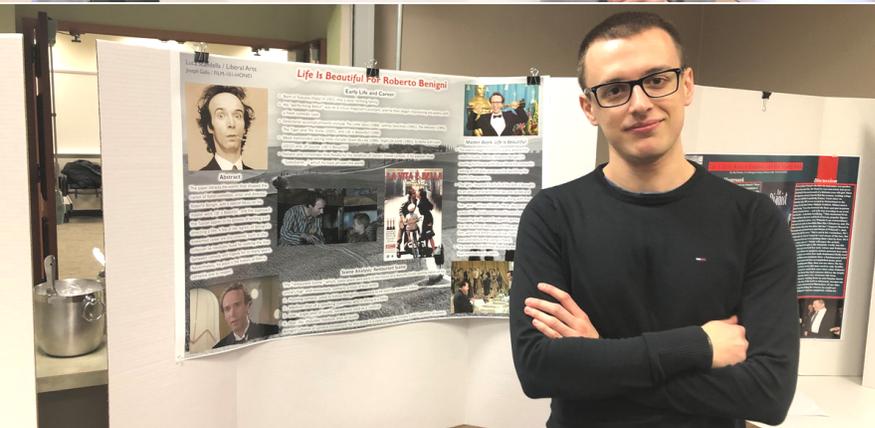
THE 12TH HONORS POSTER SHOWCASE

DEC. 5-6, 2018

Honors students present their semester projects for each Honors course taken in the Fall 2018 semester.



Every semester, Honors students put on a grand display of scholarship and innovation by completing a capstone project for each individual Honors course. Beginning with the Paper Presentations Panel on Dec. 5th, the two-day event culminated with the poster displays on Dec. 6th. This semester, Emily Brown, Octavia Davila, Rebecca Richardson, and Luca Scandella were selected to present their papers at the Paper Presentations Panel and discussed topics ranging from maternal nutrition to transgressing perceived boundaries through comedy. The event affords writers of outstanding research to present their work in an environment similar to that of an academic conference. Students present their papers to an audience of faculty, administrators, as well as other HCCC students, and then field questions about their work during a Q & A session. At the poster displays, all students arrive earlier in the day to set up their projects and remain close to their displays to also field discussion from faculty, administrators, and other students as they walk through the event.



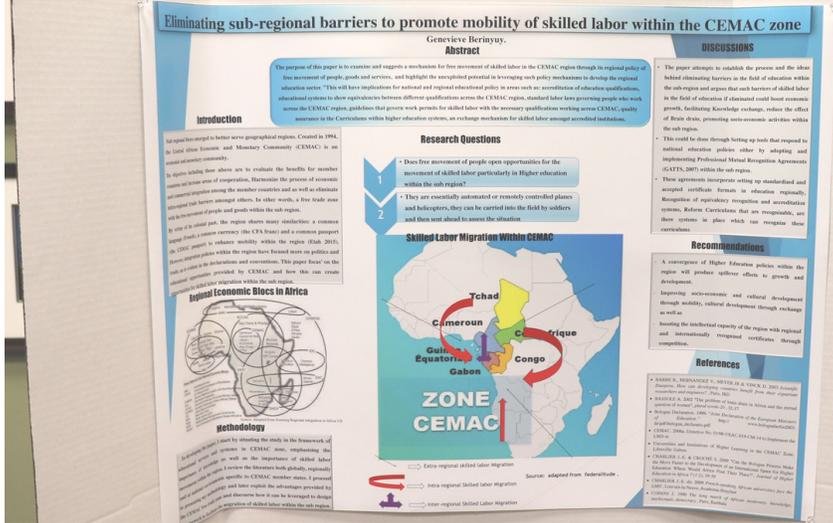
This year, Dr. Chris Reber, HCCC President, and Dr. Eric Friedman both attended and gave some welcoming remarks to the students. They, along with the Honors Program Coordinator, Prof. Jenny Bobea, praised the work done by

The showcase also surprised all attendees with an award for best poster, won by Emily Brown for her poster "Teaching Ethics & Social Activism With Environmental Education". Ms. Brown received a \$100 gift card for use at the HCCC Bookstore. Other honorable mentions were Max Perelson's "The Life of Roman Polanski and His Master Work" and Genevieve Berinyuy for "Eliminating Subregional Barriers to Promote Mobility of Skilled Labor Within the CEMAC Zone".

"...the showcase illustrates your motivation, creativity, and willingness to accept challenge."

The topics of the posters ranged from subjects in the Humanities through STEM and generated a great deal of interest from all attendees present.

We look forward to the Spring showcase, which will include an Honors Dinner following the poster display.

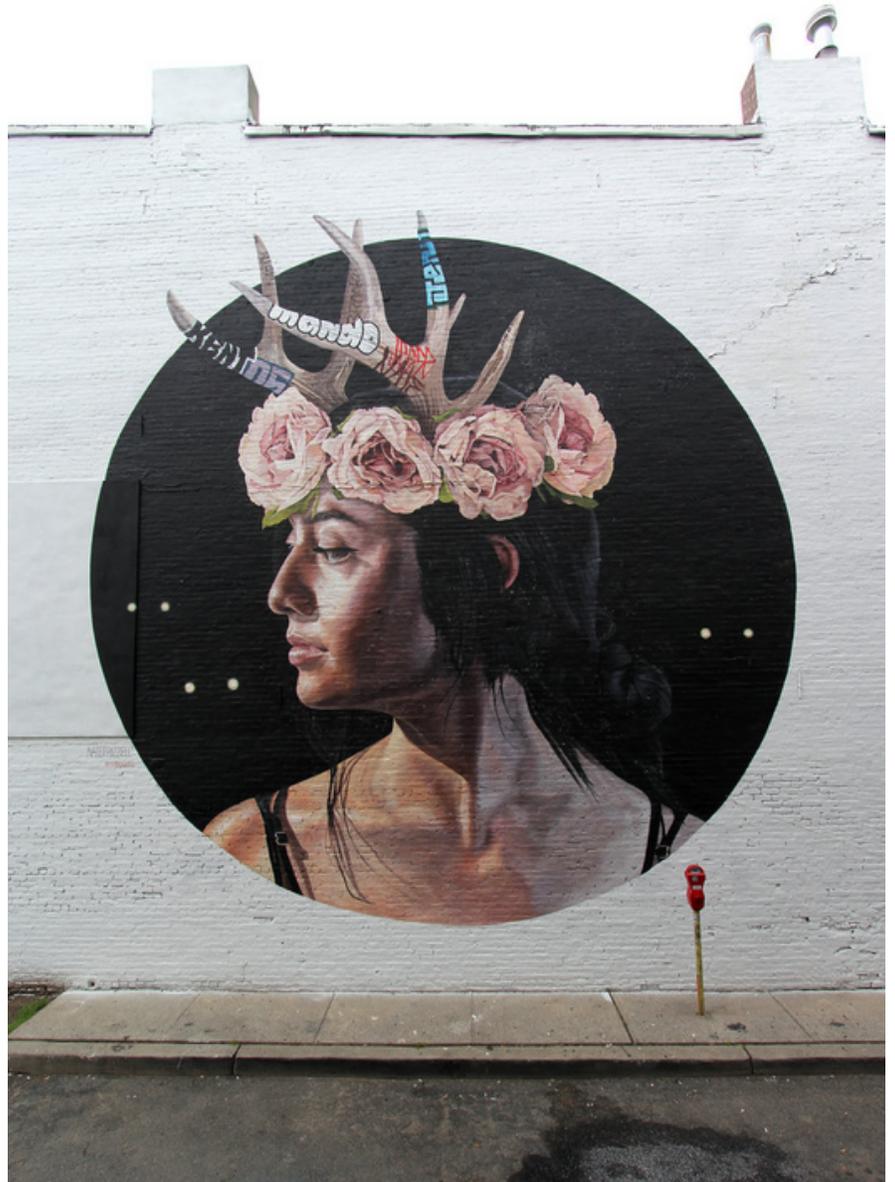


BAZAAR

Your cultural digest covering Jersey City and anywhere the wind blows.

Out of Many, One *by Rebecca Richardson*

E pluribus Unum, or “out of many, one”, is the official motto of the United States of America. Our founding fathers adopted this Latin phrase to unite the first thirteen states as one country. Today, this motto can take on a new universal meaning. In the current political climate, you might ask yourself what does being American mean? What does a true American look like? Well, America is not a monochromatic grisaille. It is an indestructible glass mosaic. We are fortunate to be based in Jersey City, one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse cities in the country, where cultural influences cover the walls, streets, and alleys we walk through every day. Murals like these, painted by Nate Frizzell, are landmarks of Downtown Jersey City. When walking on Grove Street, down from the Path Train Station, you come across a narrow alley way where this mural sits on a tall white brick wall. It adds a unique element of ambiance to Grove Street’s melting pot of restaurants from Italy to Mexico and Japan. All these influences reflect our city’s people. Whether born here, or from lands far away—if your parents raised you in a household immersed with the traditions of their homeland, or whether you, yourself carry your culture, language, and religion into your living rooms, you contribute to this beautiful mosaic called America.



Sonder. Nate Frizzell, 2015. 364 Ogden Ave. (Holland St. & Paterson Plank Rd.)

Spotlights

Get to know inspiring HCCC current Honors students, alumni, and faculty.

Alumni Spotlight: Ariana Estremera

by *Kailyn Segovia Vazquez*

A wise man once said, "Every individual has his/her own identity and beauty, to find it, you have to stay true to yourself". This piece was born out of the need to address a pertinent question many individuals have failed to ask themselves throughout their lives. I recently conducted an interview with Ariana Estremera, an alumni from HCCC who is now a student at Columbia University's School of General Studies.

When asked how she coped with the change in environment, she identified one of the basic elements needed by someone who is trying to learn about themselves: the need to surround oneself with people who share the same ideologies. She advises, "Surround yourself with like-minded people, this way, your identity begins to unravel itself in a community where you are comfortable and not where you are constantly in a struggle to be yourself. Being surrounded with like-minded people helps you get things done better because you have similar goals to them—it challenges you."

Ariana confirms the fact that people may not hand things over to you, you need to find stuff yourself and make things happen, never letting situations define you. On the journey to self-discovery, you need to leave room for development. When I asked Ariana how she compares herself now to when she was in high school, her thoughtful reply was that in high school, she was a black canvas. College exposed her to quite a number of circumstances that not only toughened her but

"...find things that interest you and always take care of yourself."

exposed her to how best she could deal with situations. To discover oneself, one should recognize situations and proffer proper responses and reactions to situations. Her reactions are largely based on what the situation is because there can never be a one size fits all response to all situations.

She also reminisces about her first semester in college. She had taken a year off from school, and she had virtually no idea what she wanted to pursue. Now, she has priorities. She's strong, a compassionate person who has different amazing facets. To be a great student, she had to find like-minded people, change her thought process and how best to address situations, plan ahead, and address people properly. Ariana also had to do away with a lot of things that threatened to define her. For instance, she had a rocky road to college, her family's

financial struggle, and her hearing loss. On knowing your identity, Ariana admits that even she doesn't know who she is, but what she does know is that she is strong and she is very hard to define, an original version of herself and of course, a goal-getter. On advising other students, Ariana is of the opinion that you need to set time apart for yourself. Find things that interest you and always take care of yourself. Take a break when necessary. Don't be afraid to speak out, ask questions when you need to!



This will take you to your goals faster. Finding your identity is a process, and just like every other person, Ariana divulges that she is also in the process of learning! Life can throw us a lot of obstacles and our reactions show our character. Learning about yourself cannot be completed like a college course. It takes some people their whole lifetime to discover who they really are, and it is a gradual process. Don't let other people's thought processes define you, value yourself, and engage in processes that show you that you love you. In Ariana's words, "If you fall, rise again, and that is exactly how you know who you are!"

Spotlights *(cont'd)*

Get to know inspiring HCCC current Honors students, alumni, and faculty.

Faculty Spotlight: Prof. Joe Gallo

by Prof. Jenny Bobea

Meet Prof. Joseph Gallo, film and theater instructor here at HCCC and professor of our Intro. to Film Honors course.

Prof. Gallo grew up in Linden and Jersey City and received an MFA in play-writing from Ohio University and in his own words, "I don't like to slow down!". He not only shares his talents in the form of teaching as a full-time instructor, but is a play-writing fellow for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and has received an Incubation Grant from the New Jersey Council of the Humanities for his current project, a stage adaptation of "Yuppies Invade My House at Dinnertime", about the gentrification of Hoboken in the 80s.

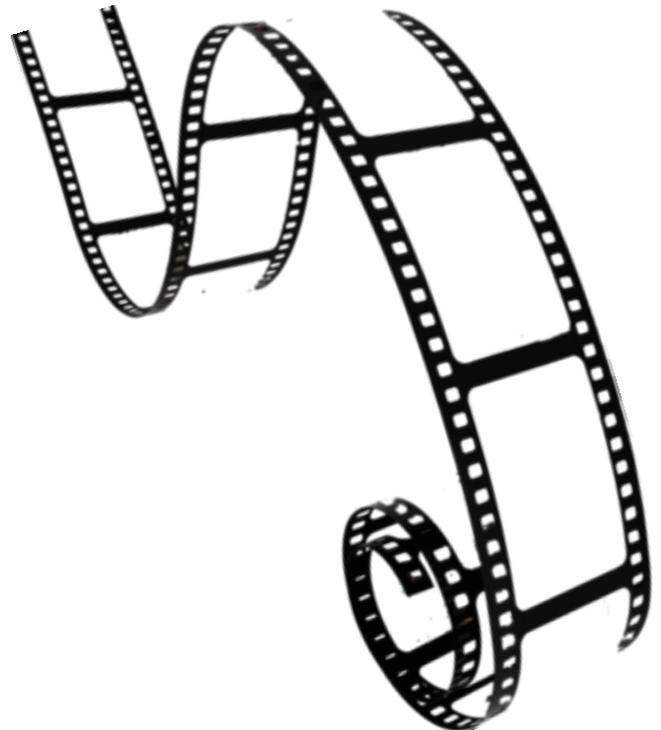
When asked what he enjoys most about teaching his Introduction to Film course, he mentions the thrill of "introducing students to films they would have never seen otherwise" and enjoying the diversity of majors that he comes across in his courses. The subject seems to capture an incredibly broad spectrum of majors, and there is a sense of joy in being able to share his passion with such a diverse audience.

"I don't like to slow down!"

One of his favorite aspects of teaching the honors version of Intro. to Film is scaffolding the Honors poster and the paper on which it is based together, and in particular, the Paper Presentations segment of the Honors Showcase. His ever popular course consistently contributes at least half of student panel with engaging presentations on films they have studied in his course. This semester, the chosen films for the course have a female protagonist theme and the final film is actually a surprise which I've sworn to not give away.

When he does have any free time, he enjoys reading, yoga, seeing live music, and is an avid sports fan.

Any words of advice for our students? JG: "Take Honors Film!"



Meet the 2018-2019 Editors



Mario Perales ('20), History

Mario Perales is a 24-year-old Californian who moved to Jersey City at the age of 21 and is now attending HCCC as a History major. His educational aspirations include: furthering his education at a four-year university and attaining a Bachelor's degree in Political Science while minoring in Journalism, and then continuing on to study Constitutional Law. Interests include, politics, music, comedy, swimming, hiking, exercising, computers, technology, gaming, science-fiction, comic books and anything else society has deemed "nerdy".



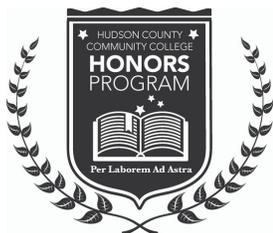
Kailyn Segovia-Vazquez ('20), History

Kailyn Segovia is a Bayonne and currently a second year Theatre student at HCCC. Besides being a writer for the Rhapsody newsletter, Kailyn is also, Treasurer of Phi Theta Kappa, and the new President of Theatre Club. During her free time, she enjoys auditioning, volunteering in her local community, singing, songwriting, dancing, playing her instruments, swimming, researching, watching documentaries on marine life and especially writing in her blog which advocates for mental health stigma and practicing mindfulness. After graduation, Ms. Segovia intends on transferring to a four year university and double major in Theatre and Marine Biology and from then on continue being surrounded by the people and aspects of life that make her fulfilled.



Rebecca Richardson, ('20), English

Rebecca Richardson is a 20-year-old aspiring English Teacher. She was born and raised in North Bergen, NJ and is currently attending Hudson County Community College as an English major. She looks forward to transferring into a four-year university to complete a Bachelor's degree in English-Secondary Education. Rebecca believes in the power of creativity in the classroom and anticipates creating a creativity-friendly learning environment for her future students. Her interests include traveling, writing, reading, painting, and let's not forget, cats!



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