

HP NEWSLETTER

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Greetings Everyone,

My name is Arin Blake, the current secretary for the HPSAB. As we move further into this New Year, I would like to encourage everyone to keep that New Year drive fueled with energy and continue working hard on those resolutions. As the weeks pass by, it often becomes harder and harder to stay committed to the goals and aspirations we set for ourselves. With all the stressors and obstacles of the real world, however, I would like to encourage everyone to never stop working for what you want, despite what may stand in your way.

Making my transition to college, I knew I wanted to be in an Honors Program. I considered it a very high distinction and worked diligently everyday so that I could make my dream into a reality. With

disappointment that I was not admitted into Barry University's Honors Program when I was accepted into the university, I never gave up and accepted my fate. Instead, I decided to seek out the Honors Program Director and apply again. This time I was accepted immediately and welcomed with open arms. Now I serve on the Honors Program Student Advisory Board where I have made many new friends and connections.

I hope my story encourages you to go after your dreams and never let anything stop you from doing the things you want most. If you feel you deserve it, then stay committed, work hard for it, and take what is yours.

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HP ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

*Sumera Ackbarali entered the Honors Program in Fall 2004 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Pre-Professional Biology from Barry University in May 2007; her Senior Honors thesis title was **Demographic Analysis of HIV and Malaria Prevalence**. Sumera is now Assistant Professor, Clinical Biology Program and Assistant Director in the Medical Technology Specialization Program at Barry University. We thank Sumera for sending in her HP alumni news and wish her the best in life as she continues to make remarkable differences in her own students' lives!*



Dear Honors Program Students and Fellow Alumni,

I am very grateful to have the opportunity to write this letter to you. Twelve years ago, when I was exploring possible topics for my Honors thesis, I never imagined that Dr. Sirimangkala would one day ask me to contribute to the Honors Program newsletter. I was an international student from Trinidad and Tobago when I started my B.S. in Pre-Med Biology at Barry in 2004. When I first applied to the Honors program, I did not realize what an enriching experience I was about to embark upon. The program, and my thesis in particular, has continued to help shape my career.

I knew that the Honors thesis would need to be an investigation of a social issue related to the student's major, and this worried me because as a Biology major, I thought that the only research I would be able to conduct was in the lab. I was not quite sure how to find an intersection of science and society for my thesis, but the inspiration for my topic found me at the perfect time. The semester before I submitted my topic, I took the Biology program's Ecology course and one of our weekly assignments was to read and discuss a chapter in "State of the World". This is an annual Worldwatch Institute publication that addresses global issues, from peacemaking after natural disasters to water sustainability to nanotechnology, and the book is centered around the impact of these various issues on people. I realized then that the key to finding my topic would be to determine how a scientific issue impacted a community. My Microbiology course had already piqued a strong interest in infectious diseases, so by the end of the Ecology course, I realized that I wanted to focus on a global health issue.

Dr. Jeremy Montague taught the Ecology course and I went to him for help. I was certain that I wanted the following three things to be components of the study: 1) infectious disease prevalence, 2) global scale, and 3) social factors that correlate with disease prevalence. Dr. Montague listened to my ideas and graciously agreed to be my thesis advisor. Through his guidance, I was able to refine my research question to the demographic factors that affect global malaria and HIV prevalence.

Let me take this opportunity to emphasize how important it is to have a thesis advisor who can lead you firmly but patiently through the research process, while sharing your passion for the topic. I had very little research experience at that time, and Dr. Montague had a much better grasp of the type of study and data collection that would be possible in the timeframe that I had. After serving the Barry community for over thirty years, Dr. Montague will be retiring this summer and it seems only fitting to pay tribute here to a very quiet force in the Biology department who tirelessly mentors and grooms his students into the best they can be. Eventually, we built a database of over 200 countries that consisted of demographic data from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook and malaria and HIV data from the World Health Organization (WHO) Data Repository. The data was used to analyze disease prevalence rate trends according to demographic factors for HIV and malaria, and to compile Geographic Information System (GIS) maps that reflected these trends.

Completing the Honors thesis process was one of the most challenging but rewarding experiences of my undergraduate career. Although the research and writing process may seem intimidating at first, it is actually a privilege that not many undergraduate students have. At face value, research involves designing a study, collecting data, and analyzing that data. But it is much more than that; it is about being able to ask the right questions in the right way to find the answers that you seek. That skill is applicable to any discipline and every area of your life.

After graduating with my BS and MS degrees, I joined the Clinical Biology faculty at Barry in 2009 and have been teaching for the past nine years. I recently shared with Dr. Sirimangkala that my thesis topic has influenced my career, both through my research but more importantly in the knowledge I have been able to share with my students. I developed a Seminar course for the Clinical Biology program that is centered on infectious diseases, and have been able to guide students through mini research projects (similar to my thesis project) that have been presented at the annual STEM symposium held at Barry every Spring semester.

Before I end, I just want to share a few more thoughts. Firstly, I know that my fellow program alumni would join me in saying that the Honors program pushes you beyond just learning facts; it encourages you to be more analytical and open-minded about the global community in which we live and the interconnectedness of our experiences and perspectives. Learn as much as you can. Secondly, find those things that excite you and pursue it with all the passion that you can. Remember this especially when you are choosing a thesis topic, but also as you go through life. My passion for infectious diseases has now led me to pursue my PhD in Health Sciences. Thirdly, knowledge is invaluable because it enriches not just your life but the lives of those with whom you share it. Be a lifelong learner and share as much knowledge as you can with as many people as you can.

To the current students in the Honors program, I wish you the very best as you navigate your academic careers. Enjoy this phase, and the community that you form with your fellow classmates. To my fellow Honors program alums, I hope you are well wherever you are and wish you continued success in your life's pursuits. To Dr. Sirimangkala, the faculty of the Honors program, and my professors who guided me through my thesis, I am eternally grateful to you for shaping my life with the wisdom you have shared.

Yours Sincerely,
Sumera Ackbarali
Honors Program Class of 2007



HP ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Cont.

Cheyenne Head entered the Honors Program in Fall 2014 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Pre-Professional Biology from Barry University in May 2017; her Senior Honors thesis title was **Emergent Technologies and Factors Influencing the Success of In Vitro Fertilization in the United States**. Dr. Laura Mudd (thesis advisor), Dr. Christoph Hengartner (2nd reader), Dr. Victor Romano (Honors Program faculty), and Dr. Michael McKeon (external member) served on Cheyanne's thesis committee. We thank Cheyanne for sending in her HP alumni news and wish her the best in life. Cheyanne, good luck with your MCAT and thanks for keeping in touch!

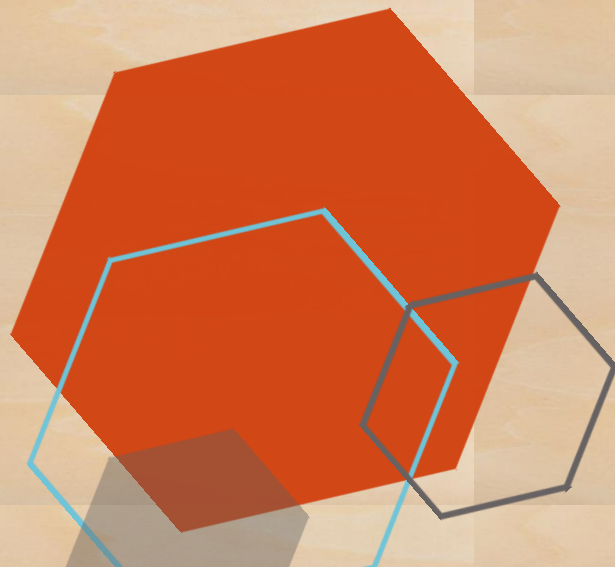


After graduation, I spent a month backpacking Peru. I'm so glad that I took the time to do this before I found a job, as it taught me so much about myself and I was able to immerse myself in a new culture. I then found a temporary job at an ophthalmology office, before I found my current job!

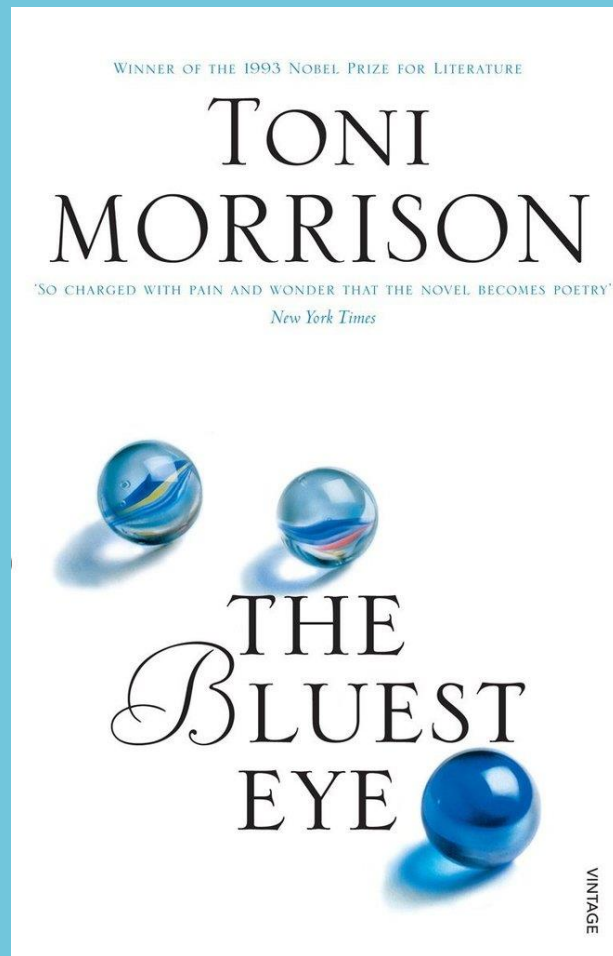
Right now, I work for the University of Miami doing medical research for the Department of Dermatology. I am surrounded by such intelligent, inspiring individuals and I am learning a tremendous amount every day. We work with human tissue and cell lines, investigating the cause and treatments for chronic wounds. Meanwhile, I am also studying for my MCAT in hopes to go start medical school back in Canada in 2019.

When I'm not working or studying, I try to take advantage of the beautiful city I now call home. Even though I've spent 4 years in Miami, I continue to enjoy the beach, explore new places and meet tons of interesting people.

I am extremely grateful for my time in the Honors Program, as it taught me valuable life skills and helped me in my job search. A special thank you to Dr. Sirimangkala for her continued support and encouragement through my time at Barry and since then. I am very proud to have been a part of such a wonderful community.



BOOK REVIEW: “The Bluest Eye” by Toni Morrison



Literary activism is among one of the most powerful and influential forms of protest. Authors deliberately implement social justice issues within fictional or nonfictional texts to become the voice of the oppressed. A prominent example of this is Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eyes", a personal favorite. As a child, Morrison was rarely exposed to the oppression African Americans had to face because she grew up in an integrated community with little to no racial division. She soon learned the truth when forced to face society on her own during her collegiate years. Knowing firsthand the intensity of oppression and discrimination that accompanies the identity of double minorities, she took it upon herself to protest -in literary form- the injustices African Americans knew all too well.

Morrison's "The Bluest Eyes" attacks issues such as beauty standards, emotional abuse and a lack of self-awareness, all of which are ways society chooses to oppress women. Pecola, the

protagonist, longs to have blue eyes in hopes to be accepted socially. Throughout the story, there is a constant emphasis of beauty through the depiction of the white-skinned, blue-eyed doll that Claudia (Pecola's friend) receives as a gift. Unlike Pecola, Claudia embraces her African American identity because she is raised by a stable family who teaches her the importance of self-awareness. Pecola's own mother rejects her identity by mimicking actress Jean Harlow (the sexualized symbol of beauty). Morrison takes readers on a morally ambiguous journey of self-discovery that reveals the detrimental effects of oppression.

Reviewed by Johania Charles, Service Coordinator

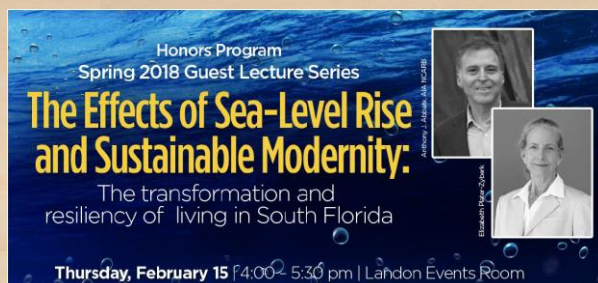
SPRING GUEST LECTURE SERIES RECAP



On February 15, 2018, the Honors Program presented its Spring Guest Lecture Series (GLS), titled: *The effects of sea-level rise and sustainable modernity: The transformation and resiliency of living in South Florida*. Professor Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk (Professor and former Dean, School of Architecture, University of Miami) and Professor Anthony Abbate (Associate Provost, Director, and Professor, School of Architecture, Florida Atlantic University) were the invited speakers. By all accounts, the Spring 2018 GLS was among the best guest lectures that the Honors Program and its student leaders have organized. Much of the success came from the speakers' wealth of knowledge on the topics, HPSAB's pre-programming questions submitted to the speakers, and the quality of questions from the audience.

Thirty people attended the GLS and learned about concepts related to the sea-level rise phenomenon. The lecture also changed how we should approach problems related to the phenomenon. Among other things, the speakers encouraged us to further educate ourselves and move from the side line to various forms of activism, at the individual, political, and societal levels. With this newly acquired knowledge, we hope that those in attendance and the society at large will begin approaching topics associated with sea-level rise wisely and find ways to adapt to this changing environment. Finally, the speakers asked that we think differently when making decisions on energy consumption (from food and water consumption to transportation), housing (where to rent or buy), and electing officials. At the end of the lecture, we walked away with less abstract thoughts and more concrete understanding about the phenomenon. The Honors Program encourages students to further reduce their carbon footprints (e.g., avoiding food waste, reducing other waste, and conserving energy). The speakers set a perfect example on how to conduct research that will impact lives. As one audience member, who kindly sent in his feedback, said it best "one cannot be more cutting edge and involved in real-world problems than that." We would like to thank both Professors Abbate and Plater-Zyberk for accepting the invitation to speak on our campus, preparing and delivering this illuminating lecture, and speaking to us on the topic. Afterwards, the speakers kindly sent in their own feedback, indicating how they were impressed with HPSAB's leadership in organizing the event and the quality of questions from the audience on "this very difficult topic."

HPSAB would like to thank those in the audience!



UPCOMING EVENTS & IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS



On March 20th, 2018, Barry University will host the annual Undergraduate Mini-Conference. Inspired by the common reader, “Affluenza: How Overconsumption is Killing Us—and How to Fight back” the conference will explore the theme of “Affluenza: Causes, Symptoms and Remedies”

Time: 9:30 AM-2:45 PM

This is a great opportunity to learn more about another pressing issue in our society. This all-day event will include panel presentations and discussion. For more information, check BUCWIS or Student Web.

MEET YOUR NEWEST HPSAB MEMBER!



Nicole Rafols

Position in HPSAB: Student Liason

Year in HP: 2nd year

Year at Barry: Sophomore

Year in HPSAB: 1st year

Why I joined HPSAB: To contribute to the program that does so much for me and my fellow athletes.

SCHOLARSHIP ENGAGEMENT

On March 17, 2018,
the Honors Program will be at the Urban Farming and
Gardening, Dania Beach PATCH.

7:00 AM – 1:00 PM

We will be planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting.
Dress properly!

**THIS IS A MANDATORY EVENT FOR ALL HP STUDENTS
RSVP REQUIRED by March 9: psirimangkala@barry.edu**



Barry University's Honors Program

*Mandatory Scholarship
Engagement
March 17, 2018*



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the Honors Program will be at
the Urban Farming and
Gardening, Dania Beach PATCH.

7:00 AM – 1:00 PM

We will be planting, weeding,
watering, and harvesting.
Dress properly!

Special Note
For Transportation please
meet @ 7:00 AM
North Side of Landon
Parking Lot (By the bookstore)

Remember to wear:

- Closed-toe shoes - NO Flip Flops
- Clothing that can get dirty
- Sunscreen
- A hat



Volunteer

Refreshments will be provided!

- Breakfast and lunch will be served
- Water will be offered throughout the day

For more information, please contact
Dr. Sirimangkala: @ psirimangkala@barry.edu

Seniors' Corner: HP SENIOR THESIS

My honors thesis is titled, “Pre-Migration and Post-Migration Factors that Influences the Mental Health of Refugees.” The idea for the thesis came about through my work at the Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI). I was assigned Church World Service (a non-profit organization that works with the US Department of State to help relocate refugees) as the community partner to work with upon joining a fellowship program (Barry Service Corps Fellowship) at CCSI. After a semester and a half of working to translate, lead student on service trips to Church World Service, and talking to the refugees, I started to realize the difficulties the refugees were facing after arriving to the United States. Some the challenges were the difficulty for the refugees to adapt to the new culture, healthcare, and mental illnesses. Hence, I decided to write my thesis on those problems and more.

If anyone is interested in reading more about the project, a copy of my thesis will be at the library at the end of this semester, and below is what I wrote for the abstract:

Immigration has been, for quite some time now, a pressing issue for most developed countries; these countries have found it difficult to create ethical and non-controversial immigration policies. Within the immigration population, there is a more vulnerable group—the refugees. All refugees had witnessed extremely dehumanizing experiences before they fled their home countries. In addition to being exposed to tragic events, these individuals must prove their stories to a believable extent before being accepted into another country as refugees. The scrutiny can be harmful to the refugees' well-being; yet, no psychological help is being offered to help the refugees cope with their past experiences. Also, refugees are at risk for psychological morbidity because of the events they are exposed to pre-and-post migration (Vonnahme et al., 2014). This literature review will cover the most common mental illnesses in the United States' refugee population, the current issues affecting those individuals, the type of therapy that should be provided to the refugees, and the upside and downside to providing mental health coverage to refugees. All the articles in this study were retrieved from PsycINFO; only studies that observed the impact of migration and its accompanied factors, such as language barrier, acculturation, and cultural changes, on refugees' mental health were included. The studies that analyzed the commonality of certain mental illnesses in a specific refugee population were also included. The ones that studied successful clinical approaches to treating mental issues in refugee populations were excluded.

~Presler Maxius, May 2018 Graduating Senior