

# Kelsie Clark

Associate of Science, Liberal Arts and Sciences; Associate of Arts



Graduating in Spring of 2024

Honors Courses:

History of the American People since 1877, Honors

Honors Special Topics: Voting

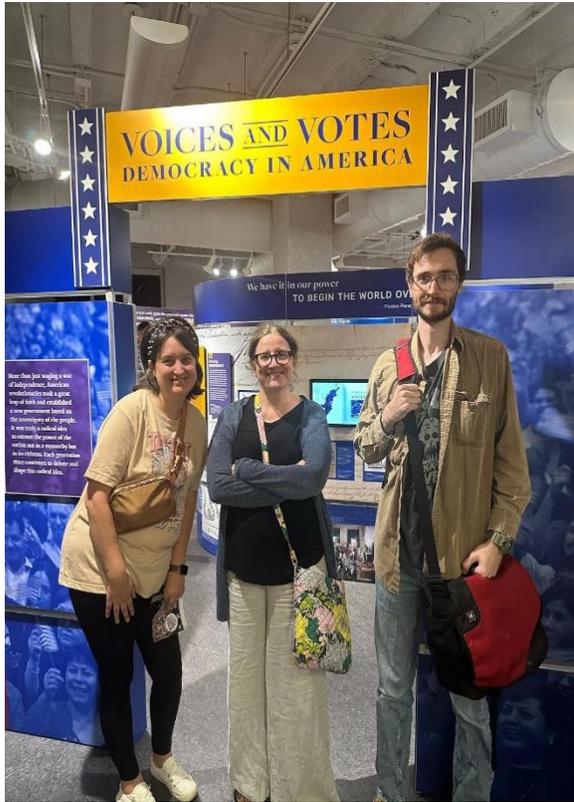
Intro into Gender Studies, Honors

## Section 1: Demonstrating Engagement, Cultivating Curiosity, and Exploring Perspectives

When I started at NWACC in the Fall of 2021, we were still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and had to still wear masks during in-person classes. On top of that my two children were still young, my youngest was not in school yet. I started with online classes and night classes. Throughout my time at NWACC I would continue to utilize online classes. I would continue with night classes until the Fall 2022 semester then I would switch to a mixture of day and online classes. I would not start honors classes until the Spring of 2023 semester. When the honors program was first mentioned to me, honestly, I was unsure if it was something I could fit into my schedule or if I could even keep up with all an honors course would require. My advisor at that time spent the better part of an hour talking to me, going through my options, looking at the honors courses that would be offered in the Spring 2023 semester. Still, I was not sure. It was a huge commitment, and I did not feel confident that I would be able to succeed. My GPA was just below the required GPA for the honors program, which worried me a little. My advisor convinced me to at least try. My advisor and I talked about classes, and I was already being fairly ambitious that upcoming semester with how many classes I wanted to take. I was told I could take honors classes and not be in the honors program. I remember thinking if I am going to take the honors courses then I might as well try and be in the honors program. So, I started that semester with five total classes, two of which were honors. See what I mean about ambitious?

I decided to take History of American People since 1877 with Dr. Gene Vinzant and Intro into Gender Studies with Sharon Fox. I knew I would enjoy History of American People since 1877 because I have always been a history fanatic. That to date is one of my favorite classes I took during my time at NWACC. I liked that Dr. Vinzant philosophy was that he loves US History and he wanted to make sure we loved it to. Going into that class I honestly did not know much about American History. I walked out of it by the end of the semester knowing so much that it has helped me in my job on many occasions as well as that class continued to foster my love of History. Intro into Gender Studies, however I had really no idea what I was getting myself into. My advisor told me it would be a change of pace class, and you will learn things you never expected to learn. If I am being honest at the first class, I was not sure it was class I was going to stick with, but I did and I am so glad I did. I loved how Sharon Fox let us; the class chose the topics we all wanted to learn. We had to do an essay every week about what was covered, and we covered many things that I knew little about. One thing Sharon Fox said that stuck with me was in her class we started with the micro (local, inside the United States) and ended macro (Globally). Also participated in the Spring Arts and Cultural Festival, book club, reading *Sissy, A Coming of Gender Story* by Jacob Tobia. I had not read a book quite like that and it was eye opening. There were several times in that class where my opinion differed from the majority of others which were welcomed in that class.

In the Fall of 2023 semester, I had planned to take the semester off. My kids needed me more presents after the previous semester being so full. Then I was sent an email about



the special topics class. It was all about voting, which admittedly I did not know much about. I went back and forth for a couple of days on whether I should take this class. In the end, I ended up taking it. This was the only class I took that semester. It was a very eye-opening class for me. I got involved with the outings for this class. We went to the Voices and Votes event at JBU. The walk-through museum part of that night was amazing. There was so much history. I do not think I fully understood the fight to be to vote in this country until I took this class. The Votes and Voices exhibition was on loan from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

As part of this class I also went to the Guerrilla Girls event at Crystal Bridges. Where I learned about Guerrilla marketing. Which then helped when as part of the Special Topics: Voting class the end project was to make culture jamming posters. Until that Guerrilla Girls culture jamming was not something I really thought about.



As the class went on and I started to think about what I would put on my posters where I ended up with them is not where I thought I would. I knew I wanted to do something about kids because ultimately what we do today affects future generations. I ended up on Child Maltreatment facts for Arkansas, I could not believe what I was reading when I knew that was what my poster was going to be about. I started with Arkansas and then looked at the whole United States. It got grimmer and sadder as the research went on. I did my poster just on Arkansas facts, this something we need to be bring awareness to. My other poster was more straight forward

**Change starts with you.**  
In the year 2022 in Arkansas

Division of Child and Family Services Reported:  
**31,859** child maltreatment assessments conducted

- Of that, **9,442** were found true.
- **4,524** children were in Foster Care.
- 883 Adoptions.
- **44** Child fatalities due to maltreatment.

**These kids deserve better**

Ask your candidates what they are going to do about this?

**WANT**

**CHANGE?**

Do you like where our country is headed?

Do you like our International presence?

Do you feel slighted by our government?

Do you have confidence in our justice system?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions

**GET OFF YOUR A\*\***

**VOTE**

for voting. Those are questions that after 15 weeks in that Voting class, I thought we should be asking not only ourselves but the people running for office.

## Section 2: Preparation

The honors program has shown me a few things. It has shown me that I am ready for the next step in my education. That I can manage honors classes while having a busy home life. College has changed some since the first time I was in college. I started with having to retake comp and college algebra, which I was not a fan of. Retaking those classes really helped me. Both of my comp. Professors (neither of which were honors classes) helped my writing so much. I know my papers and writing style are better because of those classes. Specifically, my comp. 2 Professor McGinn, pushed me to write

to the best of my ability. Math in general has never been my thing. In fact, I started at NWACC with Foundations of Algebra class. I went from that to an online but in person Algebra class, which did not work for me at all, so I ended up dropping that class. I decided to try a more traditional algebra class with Professor William Hammock. I struggled with that class but showed up almost every Saturday for that semester to retake quizzes, tests, and to really understand the content. With each honors class I took, my papers got better because the feedback was there. My honors classes challenged me in a way that I did not know I wanted to be challenged. That alone has prepared me for my next journey for my education. Each class I have taken, whether it be an honors class or non-honors class has helped me not only further my education, but it has helped me with my job, and it has helped me have more patience when helping my oldest with homework.

### Section 3: Valued Experience with Honors

I did not get fully involved with honors program events and outings until last semester really. I was able to experience a game night which was fun and took me out of my comfort zone. I did the Crystal Bridges outing for the Annie Leibowitz exhibit. My favorite honors class was American History since 1877 with Professor Gene Vinzant. I



went into that class thinking I did not know much about American History; I knew more than I realized. This class was my favorite for many reasons, I love history, before this class I thought I was all about European History, but I also really enjoy learning about American History. This was also one of the first honors classes I took. Now that I am at the end of my NWACC journey as well as my honors program study, I am a little sad that I did not participate more in things. This taught me

to keep going outside my normal and try new things, get those experiences.

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#### Section 4: Advice for Other Honors Students

My main piece of advice is to get involved, do the game nights, do the outings, and the field trips, make friends with other honors program people. Also remember to be present in your classes, get sleep, and take care of you. Your mental health is important also!

“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.” -Winston Churchill