

ARELI GISSELLE CABRERA



Graduating Spring of 2021 with an Associate of Arts

Honors Courses

- General Psychology
- Survey of World Lit to 1650
- Cultural Anthropology
- Introduction to Gender Studies

Section 1: In what ways did the Program help you “demonstrate engagement,” “cultivate curiosity,” and “explore perspectives” (community, curiosity, and diversity)?

When I first joined the Honors Program, I was very scared. I always want to try new things and challenge myself, but I knew this would be a big leap. I don't regret jumping. I thought being in this program would be very intimidating but not at all. I remember coming to my Survey of World Lit class and only seeing six people on the screen. I was terrified because I used to be the person who sat in the back or never asked questions. This was different but Sabrina Chesne made it as comfortable as it could be. I also appreciated how understanding the professors were when we weren't feeling okay or weren't prepared. I started by having my camera off to coming to class in a messy bun and PJs. Since it was a small class, we grew to know each other better and ended up growing as a class especially with it being my first virtual experience as well. We started class talking about our day and saying hi to each other's pets. I was also felt very overwhelmed when I saw all the books we had to read for the semester because I don't enjoy reading too much. I ended up enjoying all of the reading especially when we would discuss more during class. I can say that the program taught me to ask questions and to talk because others want to hear my thoughts as well. I quickly learned more about culture and what is truly going on in the world in my Anthropology and Introduction to Gender Studies class. We stay up to date on the world and inform each other on subjects we should know about. I



saw the most diversity in my Intro to Gender Studies class and it made the class so much more interesting during discussions because we all had different experiences and had different stories to share on topics that everyone should be talking about. My favorite part of all my honors classes was the projects and presentations. I disliked presenting in front of people but when it comes to subjects that are important to be like my culture and my personal perspectives/opinions of subjects, I am more than willing to talk. I enjoy hearing others share as well. One of my favorite projects was a journal entry assignment we have to do over a month's time. I already enjoy journaling so this assignment was actually so fun to do because I hadn't journal in a while. This motivated me to continue journaling again. This program gave me a sense of community with people who want to succeed and want to make a change. I enjoy knowing that I am a part of the change. Joining the Prison Project and seeing how other students want to help warm my heart. I wish I had participated in the Honor's Program straight out of high school so I could have been more involved in my time here at NWACC. Besides the students, I have made great connections with my professors like Sharon Fox. After class, a couple of us students stay on and chat for another ten to fifteen minutes about whatever we feel like talking about. It was also a good time to talk about upcoming assignments or projects we needed help with. It truly felt that these professors wanted to see us succeed. Overall I had a really good experience with the Honors Program and I would've liked to have taken more honors classes and been more involved with service learning because I enjoyed the year of experience I did have.

Section 2: How did this program prepare you for a university (or for a workplace, if you aren't transferring at this point)? What hard or soft skills will you take with you?

I learned so much from being a part of the Honors Program. I am transferring to the University of Arkansas this fall and I will be using all the skills that helped me be successful here at NWACC. I enjoy learning so I am looking forward to what else I can learn when I do start this fall. I hope to join the honors college at the University of Arkansas and be able to continue my journey of honors over there. One big takeaway is to always be ready to talk or ask questions. I learned this very quickly in my honors courses because they were all discussion-based. When starting these classes, I was very shy to ask and was actually too scared to talk because I felt intimidating. I quickly realized that this wasn't going to work for me so I started inputting my thoughts into the discussion. Now, after a year of being in this program, I enjoy talking and asking questions because that is the best way to learn. I did some group work in my Gender Studies course which improved my communication and teamwork skills. It was hard to work with others online but we made it work in the little time we had and ended up getting some laughs out of it. Something else I learned was how important it is to give back to our community. I want to continue to be involved in some way or somehow when I attend the University of Arkansas. I also want to join journalism because I saw how much I enjoyed discussions and writing. I always had a small passion for writing for I can't want to explore that at the University as well. I will also continue to challenge myself because I can only benefit from it.



Section 3: What is one experience you had while a member that you'd like to share?

This was actually a recent experience I had. I am a part of the LIFE program here at NWACC and we recently had an event called LIFE DAY. This event was to help high school students learn more about college and seek advice from college students like myself. We also had an expert panel with NWACC advisors and staff. One of the panelists that I recommended was Sharon Fox, my Intro to Gender Studies professor. I recommended her because I enjoy coming to her class and hearing her stories and how engaging she is during class. I just felt as if she was perfect for the panel. We got to meet in person on the day of the event. Since we have been virtual for so long it was so nice to see my professor in person. It felt so nice to talk to her for a little while and see her talk to students (with a mask of course). She did such an amazing job and I am grateful to have been in her class due to this program.

Section 4: Considering all you have written for the above, what advice do you have for new members? This answer should be "short and sweet."

My advice would be to do what will benefit you and your future. If you need and push or a challenge or even just want to have fun, I highly recommend being a part of the Honors Program. I also recommend starting as soon as possible so you can make your experience last as long as possible. It is an experience you will never forget. For the new members, do your best and strive for your goals and dreams. Don't forget to make connections, be involved, and most importantly have fun.

