

Honors Graduate Reflection

Name: Marian Hendricks

Graduation Date: 2026

Honors Courses Taken:

- English Comp 2
- Public Speaking
- History of the American People Since 1877

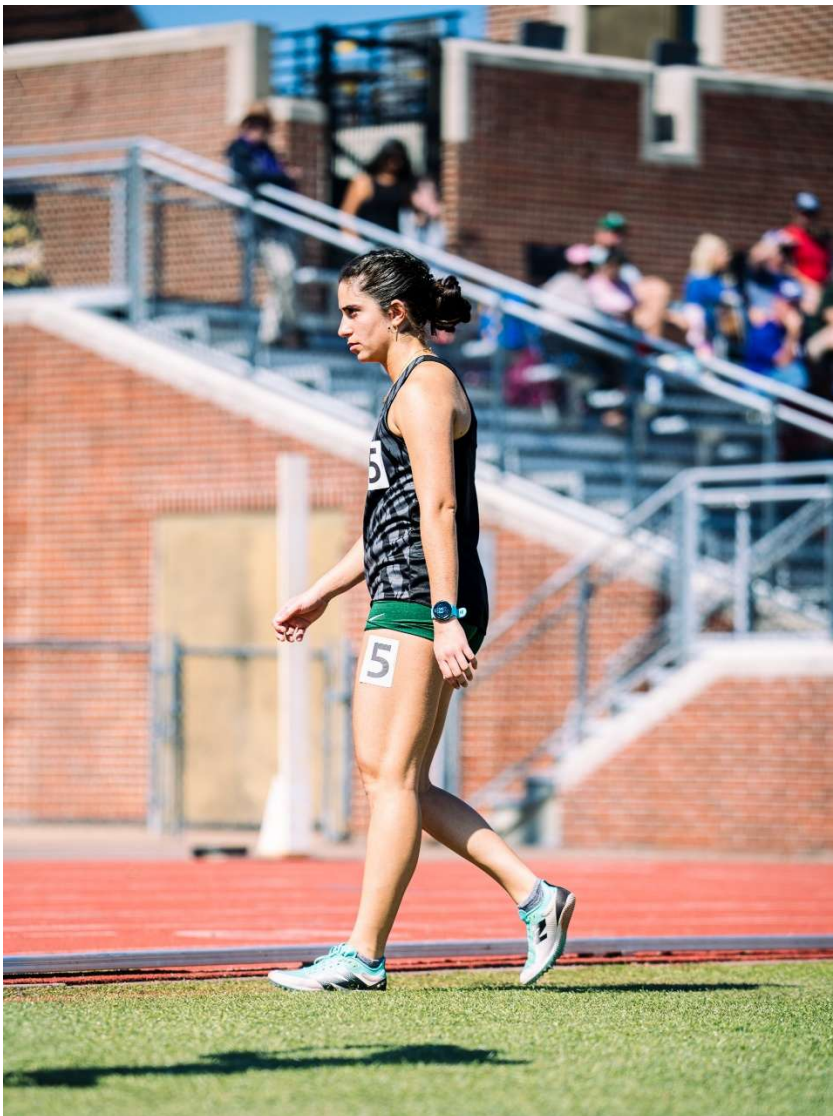


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Introduction

During my time in the Honors Program, I grew both academically and personally in very specific ways. I joined the program because I wanted to challenge myself and become more involved on campus, and I followed through on that by taking three Honors courses: English Comp 2, Public Speaking, and History of the American People Since 1877. Looking back, these classes pushed me to improve my writing, communication, and time management skills, and they helped me become more confident and prepared for college.

Section 1: Community, Curiosity, and Diversity

Community (Civic Engagement & Service Learning)

For my History course, I completed a service-learning project at *Beautiful Lives Boutique*, where I volunteered multiple times throughout the semester. During each shift, I worked in the back of the store for several hours at a time, tagging and pricing clothing items, steaming wrinkled pieces, and organizing racks so items could be placed on the sales floor. One specific moment I remember is spending a whole hour tagging clothes with another volunteer, her name was Susan. We just talked for the whole hour about life, beliefs and more. She told me about her family and her dogs and I told her about my family, what I was studying and why I was volunteering and I even got to mention the honors program.

Although I was not directly working with customers, my role was essential to keeping the store running efficiently. For example, if clothing was not properly tagged or organized, it could not be sold, which would impact the boutique's ability to support its mission.

Through this experience, I learned that even small, behind-the-scenes tasks can have a meaningful impact. I specifically remember seeing women come into the store who were clearly going through difficult situations, yet they were treated with kindness and respect. Even though I wasn't directly helping them, seeing how they were treated made the experience feel more meaningful than just volunteering hours. That showed me how something as simple as a positive shopping experience can help restore confidence and dignity.

Curiosity (Intellectual Growth)

One of the most challenging and rewarding classes I took was Public Speaking. My informative speech focused on the 1972 Andes plane crash. I first became interested in this topic after watching *La Sociedad de la Nieve*, but I went further by researching survivor accounts, timelines of the crash, and the rescue efforts.

For the assignment, I had to organize my speech into a clear structure, including an introduction, main points, and conclusion, while also practicing delivery techniques like eye contact and pacing. I rehearsed multiple times beforehand to make sure I stayed within the time limit and sounded confident.

Giving the speech in front of the class was nerve-wracking, especially knowing that I had to keep the audience engaged for several minutes. I remember being really scared, the whole class until it was my speech, but honestly once I started talking I started to remember everything I wanted to talk about. However, completing this assignment helped me become more comfortable speaking in front of others, and I noticed a difference in my confidence by the end of the course compared to the beginning.

Diversity (Exploring Perspectives)

In Honors English Comp 2, class discussions showed me how differently people can interpret the same text. For example, when analyzing readings, students often had completely different opinions about themes, characters, or the author's purpose.

Instead of there being one "correct" answer, discussions allowed us to compare perspectives. Hearing these different viewpoints helped me think more critically and consider ideas I would not have come up with on my own. This experience showed me that understanding diverse perspectives is an important part of both academic growth and real-world communication.

Section 2: Preparation for the Future

Academic or Career Preparation

After graduation, I plan to transfer to the University of the Ozarks to pursue a degree in Business Management while also playing tennis. Taking multiple Honors courses at once required me to handle a heavier workload, including essays, presentations, and projects due around the same time.

Because of this, I became more comfortable managing multiple responsibilities, which will directly prepare me for college-level expectations. When I returned to non-Honors classes, they felt more manageable, which showed me how much my work ethic had improved.

Hard Skills (Technical/Academic)

Research:

In my Honors classes, especially Comp 2, I used Canvas modules that provided step-by-step guidance on finding credible academic sources. I practiced using databases instead of just relying on Google, which helped me find stronger, more reliable information for my assignments.

Writing:

Although writing is not my favorite, I improved by completing multiple essays and even visiting the writing center for extra credit. For example, after getting feedback on one of my drafts, I was able to revise it and turn in a much stronger final version.

Time Management:

Balancing assignments from three Honors classes at once forced me to plan ahead. I even remember telling my therapist “I have no clue how to balance all of this” and she told me to just start writing everything down, so I began organizing my work by deadlines and importance, which helped me avoid last-minute stress and complete assignments on time.

Soft Skills (Personal/Professional)**Communication:**

One specific habit I developed was regularly checking my email, which became essential for staying updated on assignments, announcements, and opportunities. Before Honors, I rarely checked it, but now I understand its importance in both school and professional settings.

Leadership:

I demonstrated leadership by participating in service projects and taking initiative in class when needed, such as contributing ideas during group work or helping keep projects organized.

Collaboration:

Through multiple group assignments, I learned how to divide tasks, listen to others’ ideas, and work toward a shared goal. Over time, I became more comfortable speaking up and contributing to group discussions.

Section 3: Meaningful Experience

One of the most meaningful experiences I had in Honors was meeting my boyfriend in my Honors English class. On the first day, I sat next to him and noticed he had a track shirt on, then I mentioned that I was going to run cross country for NWACC. Then he was like “oh no way, I’m going to run track with NWACC.” So we got to hangout at school, honors, and at track practice. I never knew that I would meet such a special person in such a random place.

We started as classmates, then became friends, and eventually built a relationship. While this moment may seem small, it became one of the most memorable and meaningful parts of my Honors experience, showing how the program impacted my life beyond academics.

Section 4: Advice for New Members

My advice to new Honors students is to fully take advantage of the opportunities available. I didn’t fully realize how valuable those experiences were until later. Join service projects, participate in class discussions, and build relationships with both classmates and professors.

Also, stay organized and keep track of deadlines, because Honors courses move at a faster pace. Most importantly, regularly check your email, since that is where all important updates and opportunities are shared.

Conclusion

Overall, my experience in the Honors Program challenged me in specific and meaningful ways. It improved my academic skills, built my confidence, and prepared me for college. I will always look back on it as an important part of my growth and development.
