Uncovering “A Tale of Two Uprisings” in Poland  
—By Giovanna Tsiolas SAS’21

After visiting Poland in May, it is ever apparent how exposure to travel and history influences the growth of knowledge. When my classmates and I began studying Polish and Jewish history this spring in Dr. Nancy Sinkoff’s interdisciplinary honors seminar, Exile Under Nazism and Communism, none of us knew the impact the subject matter would have on us. Through studying groups such as the Germans, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Catholics, and Soviets, we’ve learned to understand the viewpoints that each could hold.

During our ten-day trip to Poland, we were accompanied by Professor Sinkoff and fellow historical enthusiasts, who immersed us in a deluge of history with every step we endured. Each city held its own unique style and stories, from the re-established synagogues in Kraków, to the restored city of Warsaw, and finally the delicate architecture of picturesque Gdansk.

Trekking through the rain, we soaked in the opulent magnificence of Poland. With help from the Taube Foundation, we began our trip in Kraków where we were guided through the Main Market Square, Wawel Castle, the Jewish Podgórze Ghetto, Jagiellonian University, the socialist city of Nowa Huta (originated by Vladimir Lenin), and Auschwitz. Each of these sites held importance, including a glimpse into what it meant to be Jewish in the mid-1900s. Jewish people were moved out of the main city of Warsaw and across the river into the Podgórze Ghetto where evidence of the occurrence remains.

Progressing into the city of Warsaw, we stepped back in time, experiencing a place that has been rebuilt multiple times in order to recreate its pre-Nazi appearance. Known as the “Phoenix City,” risen from dust and rubble, Warsaw was a hub for Polish culture and art, and was thus targeted for destruction. Evidence can be found in the foundations of buildings and monuments, which show sporadic bullet holes from WWII. We honorably viewed other testaments of the past through the archives in the Jewish Historical Institute.

Our last stop along the Baltic Sea was to the cobblestone streets of Gdansk, home to the start of WWII in Poland, the WWII museum, the European Solidarity Museum, the pure amber extracted from Sopot, and many jewels throughout the Main Square. Gdansk boasts medieval and Dutch-influenced architecture like the Fountain of Neptune, which tells of both the city’s faith in the gods and its culture.

In Their Own Words:

Class of 2019 honors graduate Sridhar Sriram was one of 34 U.S. scholars awarded a Gates Cambridge Scholarship. He will be using the foundation of his double major in Public Policy and Computer Science to pursue a master’s degree at the University of Cambridge.

The SASHP served as the foundation of my time at Rutgers. From my days in Brett Hall to cultivating a relationship with my Honors dean, I was exposed to people and experiences that fundamentally shaped the course of my four years. Most importantly, I was able to connect intellectually and socially with like-minded individuals from all over the personality spectrum. From an academic standpoint, the SASHP granted me access to some of my favorite courses during my undergraduate career, like the Apartheid and Civil Rights Movements interdisciplinary honors seminar. As I prepare to pursue a one-year MPhil in Technology Policy at the University of Cambridge as a Gates Cambridge Scholar, I am eager to draw upon the friendships and experiences from the Honors Program to inform my future life decisions!
Message from the Honors Dean

Greetings! I am excited to join the SAS Honors Program as the new academic dean. After 4.5 years of service, Dean Jennifer Jones has decided to return full time to the History Department, where she will teach a new graduate course and finish a book on gender and the Enlightenment. On behalf of the entire SASHP community, we thank Dean Jones for her wonderful leadership.

As a professor of physics and astronomy, I have already worked with the Honors Program by teaching interdisciplinary honors seminars, being a faculty mentor, and serving on the summer reading selection committee. Now as dean I am eager to connect with the alumni network as well. At the Honors Alumni Gathering this past April, it was thrilling to feel the sense of commitment and pride that filled the room. Many have already offered our students summer shadowing opportunities, and we are continuing to look for new ways to help our alumni engage with current students. If you have ideas, please let us know!

Dr. Charles Keeton

Farewell, Dean Julio Nazario

After 20 years of service to Rutgers, beloved honors assistant dean Julio Nazario retired from the SAS Honors Program in spring 2019. A Vietnam War veteran, Dean Nazario started at Rutgers in 1999 with Livingston College where he was appointed assistant dean for academic programs in 2000. He managed the college’s honors program and mission course. With the reorganization of the Rutgers colleges, Nazario joined the School of Arts and Sciences Honors Program in 2007.

During his tenure, Dean Nazario taught several courses on Latin America and Vietnam through film. He is proud to have worked with each of the first three SASHP academic deans and to offer his artistic insight to enhance the Honors Colloquium curriculum. He was also instrumental in collaborating with faculty for honors global program initiatives. Some of his most memorable experiences were outside the classroom: journeying into New York City on countless bus trips to explore museums and travelling to the Yucatan. He recalls creating the Artists Collective and a space for students to discuss and engage with the arts, and simply getting to know students and advise them through their academic experience. One bit of wisdom he shared with students: “they discover as they grow and experience the university, that when they hit bumps on the road, it’s important not to be too hard on themselves.”

These days Dean Nazario spends his time visiting family, making art in his studio, reading about quantum mechanics, and still taking his camera with him everywhere he goes. You can follow him on Facebook to see his photos. We send him best wishes for an enjoyable next chapter!

Did You Know...

The SAS Honors Program recognizes the five year reunion of all our graduates by mailing them an School of Arts and Sciences Honors Program 5 year commemorative pin. Members of the Class of 2015 should look out for theirs next summer!
Faith Lee  
**Majors:** French and Medieval Studies  
**From:** Toms River, New Jersey  
**Post Rutgers Plans:** Teaching English in Montpellier, France, 2019-20.  
**Most memorable Rutgers moment** was through honors opportunities (classes, events, or even abroad), I have had so many belly-laughs with my friends. These are my favorite memories!  
**Dreams/Goals:** My dream is to keep doing exactly what I’m doing now—forever learning, teaching, and persisting.  

Matt Molinari  
**Major:** East Asian Studies  
**Minors:** Critical Intelligence Studies and Political Science  
**From:** Bridgewater, New Jersey  
**Post Rutgers Plans:** Being commissioned into the U.S. Navy as a surface warfare-information professional officer, serving aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71), an aircraft carrier out of San Diego, California.  
**Most memorable Rutgers moment** was interviewing over 30 individuals as part of the research project for the Honors Capstone; the list of interviewees included former DHS secretary Jeh Johnson, and former general counsel of J&J, Russ Deyo. The opportunity to interview individuals who have accomplished what I aspire to do in my career was tremendous and inspiring to me as I enter the next chapter of my life.  
**Dreams/Goals:** As a naval officer and an aspiring prosecutor or national security professional, my ultimate career goal is to create, enforce, and initiate practices and policies that minimize fear, and, in turn, make the world a safer place. Years from now, I hope to return to the “Banks of the Old Raritan” and become the athletic director of Rutgers University.

Nayomi Shah  
**Majors:** Human Resource Management and Psychology  
**From:** Montgomery, New Jersey  
**Post Rutgers Plans:** Human resources associate analyst at MasterCard.  
**Most memorable Rutgers moment** was working with prospective students and freshmen during my time as a student ambassador and on the Honors Peer Mentor Board.  
**Dreams/Goals:** To move up in the human resources field and to impact change in a company.  

Om Kothari  
**Major:** Genetics  
**From:** Voorhees, New Jersey  
**Post Rutgers Plans:** Attend the Drexel University College of Medicine to obtain a medical doctorate (MD).  
**Most memorable Rutgers moment** was the Honors Scholar Brunch, where we were recognized by our wonderful faculty as graduating Honors students.  
**Dreams/Goals:** After medical school, I hope to train as an oncologist and help patients and their families through what may be the most difficult time of their lives.  

Crystal Lam  
**Majors:** English and Chinese  
**Minor:** Education  
**From:** Edison, New Jersey  
**Post Rutgers Plans:** Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Taiwan for one year, before completing a master's degree at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education.  
**Most memorable Rutgers moment** was horseback riding through the Mongolian Steppes when I studied abroad in Beijing.  
**Dreams/Goals:** After I finish my master's degree, I will fulfill my lifelong dream of becoming a high school English teacher.

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**Senior Spotlight: The Class of 2019 Heads out into the World**

The SAS Honors Program played an integral role during my experience at Rutgers. My junior year I had the pleasure of serving as a Resident Assistant for the Honors Hall on Douglass Campus. It was incredible to be a part of a community of my peers eager to learn, discuss ideas, and grow together. The interdisciplinary honors courses allowed me to explore interests outside of my major and to challenge myself. Additionally, the honors faculty reinforced that learning also happens beyond the walls of the classroom. One of my best memories from the SASHP was traveling to Spain with other students to explore and study the history of religion. After graduating from Rutgers, I began working in the nonprofit sector and now work in the government sector. In both roles, I continue using the critical thinking skills I learned through the SASHP every day, and I know I will continue to do so throughout my professional career.

Want to stay up to date about all things Honors? Like us @RutgersHonorsAlumni on Facebook.
2019 Summer Reading Program

The SASHP Class of 2023 got a jumpstart on college by reading The Leavers, by Lisa Ko, which follows the paths of Polly and her son Deming as they are separated and reunited over the course of the novel. Students discussed the novel in an online community, and then had the opportunity to meet the author at the start of the fall semester. Students will expand on the community, and then had the opportunity to meet the author at the start of the fall semester. Students will expand on the issues of immigration and identity raised in the book in their fall Colloquium, Borders and Belonging.

Our 2020 Summer Reading Selection Committee will begin work in October. If you would like to recommend a book or join the selection committee, please e-mail hpsummerreading@sas.rutgers.edu.

Save the Dates

Honors Alumni Tailgate
Meet Up @ SHI Stadium (formerly Highpoint) RSVP Required
Rutgers vs. Boston College • Saturday, September 21, 2019

Annual Honors Alumni Gathering
Rutgers Day, Saturday, April 25, 2020 • 4:00–5:30 p.m.

Amanda Ackerman
Amanda Ackerman joined the SASHP in January 2019 as assistant dean on the College Ave Campus, coordinating the Peer Tutoring Program and first year scheduling. A proud Rutgers alumna, Amanda majored in Spanish as a member of the Douglass College Scholars Program and went on to earn her Ed.M. in College Student Affairs through the Graduate School of Education. Amanda enjoys spending time with her husband—a Rutgers alum—and her two adorable kids. She is thrilled to be working with honors students at her alma mater.

Rutgers Honors Alumni Society Networking and Interest Meeting
On June 18, the RHAS executive board held a networking and interest meeting at the Rutgers Alumni House at Van Nest Hall. In addition to being an opportunity for honors alumni to connect and reconnect, discussions were held about future events, including honors alumni meet ups and ways to connect with current honors students. If you have ideas you would like to share with the RHAS, e-mail them at ruhonorsalumni@gmail.com. Honors Alumni can stay tuned for upcoming meet ups by liking @RutgersHonorsAlumni on Facebook.