

Lizzy Barker '14

Monday, January 20, 2014

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What made you want to choose this course of study?

I came into UNH as an English major and have pretty much loved English for years, though I'm sure that's due in large part to spending summers in middle school attending UNH's summer Writer's Academy. Towards the end of high school I learned to love politics, too and thought that I would try taking political science courses while at UNH. I had a great (though intense) first semester with two of the toughest poli-sci professors at UNH, but I felt like I got a ton out of the classes, so I continued. When I was a sophomore, I took an intro-level education class where students get to observe a local teacher and participate in leading classrooms. I loved the experience of working at Oyster River High School, and my now-graduate adviser persuaded me to change my English major to English Teaching (the English department offers a variety of different types of majors—though I've tried to sample classes from all sorts of curriculums in English!).

What stands out as your favorite course, project, or "learning" moment?

Why pick one? As an English major, my best experience was definitely studying abroad at Cambridge University in England. I took two courses with Cambridge professors in which I got to see Richard III on opening night at the Globe Theater, trace Leopold Bloom's path through Dublin on a long-weekend while reading Ulysses for one of the nicest professors I've ever had, and most of all, I got to explore England, Scotland, and Ireland all during the 2012 Olympic Games! As an English major, I've also been exposed to a diverse array of writers and filmmakers, including a class on strictly African literature which gave me the opportunity of presenting at UNH's Undergraduate Research Conference (and winning a prize in Ethnic Studies!). As a political science major, I took Constitutional Law with a lawyer and foreign policy classes with a former diplomat and army colonel. In political science, I've also had multiple opportunities to pursue research as a research assistant, which offered me the opportunity to represent UNH at an international foreign policy conference at West Point Military Academy. Plus, through the college, I feel that I have been able to cultivate personal relationships with multiple professors, from being a research assistant, to conducting an independent study in order to write a thesis with a professor who specializes in my area of interest in literature.

What is one thing that has surprised you about the field you've chosen—something you couldn't have known in high school?

Though I have a pretty structured field (as a double major who is pursuing education I have a lot of requirement to meet for classes), I think that I am continually surprised by the amount of options that I have. In English and political science, and perhaps in liberal arts generally, you have to be somewhat creative in imagining where to go within the University and beyond it. Sometimes my path in my field is not always clear, but I think that that can be a chance for opportunity, not anxiety.

If you had to give advice to the next group of UNH students what would you tell them about getting the most out of your studies at UNH?

Dive in! I would still love to be taking classes on all sorts of different areas within my majors, probably more than is good for me given that I only have a semester left! Don't hesitate about taking a class that you may think is overly challenging or participating in a project that goes

beyond the required material. Learning in college is all about getting out of a course or project the effort that you put into it, so explore as much as you can!



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