

## English Major Tali Cherim Receives Edmund Miller Prize

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### How Far Six Miles Can Take You: Tali Cherim's Odyssey from Dover to Durham and Beyond

Tali Cherim has a healthy skepticism about the familiar. It's what made her hesitate before deciding to come to the University to New Hampshire, and it's what made her hesitate again before deciding to major in English.

For the highly honored UNH senior, however, home — both physical and intellectual — turned out to be the place that allowed her to grow the most.

Winner of the English Department's Edmund Miller prize for outstanding writing on literature, and one of the Class of 2018's commencement marshals, Cherim hails from nearby Dover.

"I grew up on this campus," she said.

That's because her mother, Nancy Cherim, has worked at UNH since 1984, helping to train scientists on the use of the university's electron microscopes.

So Tali and her twin sister, Lilah, wondered whether it might be better to go to college elsewhere. Then practical considerations came to the fore.

"It came down to the fact we would have to pay for two people to

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go to school at the same time,” Tali Cherim said. “It was just so expensive.”

When it came time to pick her major, Cherim took a long pause before following the route that seemed most obvious. “I declared at the last possible moment,” she said. Torn among a broad array of interests, Cherim finally picked English, the subject she learned to love from a “fantastic” high school teacher named Marcia Goodnow.

Her decision was rewarded with the flexibility to explore all her intellectual interests.

“I like that a lot English classes here bleed over into women’s studies,” said Cherim, who is double majoring in women’s studies and minoring in French. Through the study of literature, she has been able to write about topics such as “women and gender, feminist theory, race and social dynamics.”

Along the way, Cherim managed to squeeze in a semester in London, a January term in Washington, D.C. and a trip to the 2016 Democratic National Convention — all while making regular appearances on the Dean’s List.

Cherim said her English degree has helped in her job search. “It hasn’t been hard to write cover letters and resumes,” she said.

Besides marketable skills as a communicator, her English major has given Cherim something of perhaps even more value: A deeper understanding about who she is.

As a senior, she worked with Professor Diane Freedman on an honors thesis about the poetry of the Holocaust. For Cherim, it was a deeply personal project: Her maternal grandparents fled to America to escape the Holocaust; her father’s parents came earlier, from Russia, because of the pogroms.

The project was the most difficult she undertook in the course of

her career at UNH, she said. “I sat alone in a room and cried so many times.” But she added: “I think it was a good experience.”

If she had it to do all over again, even if money were not a factor, “I would still pick UNH,” Cherim said, “because of the faculty I’ve met here, and the people I’ve met here and the organizations I’ve been involved in. It’s fantastic.”

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