2012 Honors Graduates

Rachel Battershell (Stow, OH) is graduating with honors in French and a major in chemistry. Her honors thesis explores the works of French philosopher Sarah Kofman and how her final work (an autobiography titled Rue Ordener, Rue Labat) mirrors the evolution of that philosophy. After graduation Rachel plans to enter a graduate program in business in Seattle, Washington.

Brandon Burkhart (Caledonia, MI) is graduating with honors in biochemistry and a minor in biotechnology. His honors research investigated the catalytic mechanism of binuclear transition metal complexes using the computational chemistry software Gaussian03. He presented this work at a chemistry department seminar and a poster session at the national meeting of the American Chemical Society. Brandon has also been published in Organometallics and The Journal of Chemical Education. After graduation he will go on to graduate school for a Ph.D. in chemistry.

Nathaniel Cha (Lincolnshire, IL) is graduating with honors in philosophy and a minor in Spanish. He presented a paper on “The Irony of Religion with Conquistadors and Aztecs” at the Medieval Studies Conference. His honors presentation in philosophy argued that the pragmatism of William James and Richard Rorty reflects Hegel’s philosophy of history, and that a Hegelian interpretation sheds light on problems many critics have identified in the work of the later thinkers. Nathaniel plans to work for City Year in Washington D.C., a program of Americorps, tutoring students and participating in community service. Following that, he would like to attend graduate school.

Alex Cohen (Rochester, NY) is graduating with honors in biology and a major in psychology. His senior research with Dr. Randy Van Dragt (biology) examined the anti-predator and anti-human behavior of fox squirrels in local cemeteries, evaluating factors like the level of human use, cemetery composition, and surrounding landscape. He has also done some work monitoring the breeding success of shorebirds on the Atlantic Coast with Mass Audubon, and some psychological research with Professor Donald Tellinghuisen (psychology) on human attentional processes and distractibility in visual and auditory domains. After graduation, Alex will be starting a graduate degree in Purdue’s Forestry and Natural Resources program.

Samuel Cooper (Palos Park, IL) is graduating with honors in engineering (chemical concentration) and a major in chemistry. He has participated in cavity ring-down spectroscopy research with Dr. Mark Muyskens (chemistry) and calculated thermodynamic data for new environmentally friendly refrigerants with Dr. Aubrey Sykes (engineering). After graduation Samuel will begin working at Siemens Oil and Gas in Houston, TX, as a process safety consultant.

Ryan Deters (Kalamazoo, MI) is graduating with honors in business (marketing concentration) and a major in Spanish. He has done honors work in econometrics to construct a forecast model, and written a case study based on research and interviews with co-workers at Steelcase. His honors thesis is a study of the ways knowledge is transmitted through visuals and stories. Ryan has been hired at Steelcase as a market research analyst.
Emily Diekema (Zeeland, MI) is graduating with honors in biology and a major in biochemistry. Her research under the supervision of Dr. Amy Wilstermann (biology) includes a review paper titled, “A Characterization of Lactobacillus and Its Potential Use as a Probiotic Treatment for Bacterial Vaginosis.” After graduation Emily will attend graduate school at Penn State to earn a doctorate in biochemistry, microbiology, and molecular biology (BMMB).

Andrew Dykhuis (Kalamazoo, MI) is graduating with honors in engineering (mechanical concentration) and a minor in business. After graduation Andrew will attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology to pursue a Ph.D. in Nuclear Science and Engineering.

Rachel Flim (Hawthorne, NJ) is graduating with honors in sociology, a major in mathematics, and a minor in business. She is working on her honors thesis comparing the role of different types of food stores in the local community. After graduation Rachel plans to enter graduate school for an advanced degree in public health.

Stephanie Garvelink (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in French and a major in English. She wrote her honors thesis with the help of Dr. Jolene Vos-Camy, on Madame de La Fayette’s La Princesse de Clèves, arguing that this novel critiques the court through its destruction of the Princess of Cleves, a character whose absolute purity and strong moral convictions cannot prevent her downfall, as she must flee the court in order to reclaim her life and her voice. Stephanie has accepted a position as a teaching assistant in France, teaching English to French secondary students in l’Academie de Bordeaux.

Grace Ghent (Jenison, MI) is graduating with honors in art education. She has done honors research on Malcolm X for a chapter in a book the whole class collaborated in writing. She has also completed an art curriculum study for middle school, constructed unit plans for her advanced ARTS classes, and presented one of them in ARTS 308.

David Greendonner (Bridgman, MI) is graduating with honors in English and a major in philosophy. He wrote his honors thesis on the theme of “fame” in John Milton’s Samson Agonistes. After graduation David hopes to find employment while exploring graduate school opportunities for the future.

Amanda Harris (St. Catharines, ON) is graduating with honors in biology and minors in French and biochemistry. She did undergraduate research on the effects of environmental pollutants on the immune health and reproductive ability of Great Lakes fish-eating birds and Adirondack loons. After graduation Amanda hopes to enter medical school.

Rebecca Hiemstra (Ann Arbor, MI) is graduating with honors in international relations and a minor in German. She studied political science at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, for an academic year, and completed her honors thesis on “Al-Bashir, Sudan and the Paradox of State Failure.” After graduation she hopes to follow Christ with “reckless abandon!”

Emily Howell (Holland, MI) graduated in December with honors in Spanish and a minor in biology. Her honors thesis is an exploration of works by Argentinian author Griselda Gambar, and Spanish film director Iciar Bollain, in which she investigates the ability of their art to lead an audience into social
activism. After graduation Emily will attend medical school at Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine.

Scott Jones (Elk River, MN) is graduating with honors in biology and a minor in environmental studies. He has worked on the Calvin Tree Inventory Project and is submitting his paper for publication. After graduation Scott will attend graduate school for a Ph.D. in ecology with a focus on plant restoration of ecosystems and plant response to anthropogenic changes in climate and ecology.

Andrew Knot (Flossmoor, IL) is graduating with honors in biology, a major in German, and a minor in writing. For his honors project he wrote a three-piece set of short stories about his brother, David, and his life with bilateral nodular periventricular heterotopia, a condition that falls under the autism umbrella. Andrew is waiting to hear a decision on his application to teach English in Austria after graduation.

Sarah Kok (Broomall, PA) is graduating with honors in religion, a German major, and a Spanish minor. Her honors projects include a presentation about the life and work of 20th-century German artist Georg Grosz, and research into the history of the Sunni/Shia division in the Arabian Peninsula.

Morgan Krannitz (Brier, WA) is graduating with honors in psychology and a minor in gender studies. For her honors project she conducted a study investigating the relationship between media multitasking and pressure and how these variables interact to affect cognitive control. After graduation Morgan will join Penn State’s industrial/organizational psychology Ph.D. program.

Constance Kreamer (Nairobi, Kenya) is graduating with honors in nursing. Her honors research includes three literature reviews on infant mortality and nursing research. She presented a literature review on infant mortality and its relationship to race (specifically for African American women) in the spring of 2011 at a nursing department seminar. It was titled “Infant Mortality and the African American Race.” After graduation Constance hopes to find an RN position in a hospital.

Lauren Manck (Fort Wayne, IN) is graduating with honors in chemistry and a minor in environmental studies. She has worked for two years as a research assistant with Dr. Douglas Vander Griend (chemistry) during which she studied several nanomolecular structures using spectrophotometric characterization techniques; the results of her studies have been published in *Dalton Transactions*. After graduation Lauren is planning on pursuing a Ph.D. in environmental chemistry.

Luke Mc Rae (Oshawa, ON) is graduating with honors in history and a major in English. He has served as a member of the Honors Student Council for four years. His honors thesis examines the distinctive aspects and overlap of secular and sacred motivations for the persecution of Jews in twelfth-century England. Luke hopes to attend law school after graduation, probably at the University of Toronto.

John Morton (Auburn, IN) is graduating with honors in communication arts and sciences (film studies) and a major in English. He has presented some of his research at the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Colloquium and was a McGregor Summer Research Fellow in 2011 with Dr. Martin Hughes (sociology)

**Ben Niewenhuis** (Battle Creek, MI) is graduating with honors in engineering (electrical and computer concentration) and a minor in mathematics. During summer 2011 he did research at Carnegie Mellon University on improvements in Monte Carlo Analysis, and he has done advanced work on signal processing. After graduation Ben plans to pursue a Ph.D. in electrical engineering.

**Kathryn Overbeek** (Byron Center, MI) is graduating with honors in nursing. She has spent time in the Heartside Community of Grand Rapids learning about the nutritional needs of homeless women. She worked with support groups for women in poverty and conducted research at Mel Trotter Mission. Kathryn has a desire to work with women in poverty and educate them about nutrition and the impact nutrition can have on an expectant mother. After graduation Kathryn plans to work as a nurse on the Cardiac Unit at Spectrum Health.

**Kendra Poel** (Kent, WA) is graduating with honors in nursing and a minor in music. This past fall she was privileged to join the Kappa Epsilon Chapter-At-Large of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing and was recognized with the Award for Excellence in Student Performance. She has focused her research on health policy and the role that health promotion and education play in reducing costs while improving outcomes. Her research papers include “The Effectiveness of Perinatal Home Nursing Care Related to Birth Outcomes, Impact on Mothers’ and Children’s Lives, and Cost Stewardship”; “Health Care Policy: A Look at Several Models for Chronic Disease Management for those with Cardiovascular Disease and the Role that Nurses Play in Reducing Costs While Improving Outcomes”; and “Health Policy Through the Eyes of the Nursing Metaparadigms Environment and Health.” After graduation Kendra plans to work as an ICU nurse before pursuing a Ph.D. in nursing with the goal of working in health policy and becoming a professor of nursing.

**Ian Robertson** (Saline, MI) is graduating with honors in chemistry and a minor in scientific computation and modeling. His research involved synthesis and characterization of a model system for b-amylloid protofibrils, which are putatively responsible for Alzheimer’s disease. After graduation Ian plans to attend graduate school to obtain a Ph.D. in materials chemistry.

**Bonnie Robison** (Irvine, CA) is graduating with honors in engineering (civil and environmental concentration). She has conducted research with Dr. David Wunder (engineering) on the use of bagasse charcoal for removing contaminants from water with the goal of using the system to provide safe drinking water using an available resource in developing countries. After graduation Bonnie will attend graduate school at UC Davis (Davis, California) to earn a master’s degree in environmental engineering.

**Nathan Romero** (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in chemistry. He has worked for two years as a research assistant for Dr. Carolyn Anderson (chemistry), studying different approaches to synthesizing a class of pharmaceutically relevant molecules called N-Alkyl Pyridones. The results of his research were published in *Organic Letters*. After graduation Nathan will be pursuing a Ph.D. in organic chemistry.
Megan Rose (Muskegon, MI) is graduating with honors in nursing. She has done research on the physiological and psychological issues associated with multiple birth pregnancies, and she is currently working on the effects of prenatal counseling on preventing pre-term births in multiple birth pregnancies. She will be presenting “Births of Multiples: The Psychological Effects on the Parents” at the Midwest Nursing Research Society conference this spring. After graduation Megan plans on working as a nurse in a hospital for a year or two to gain experience before applying to graduate school to become a nurse anesthetist.

Kyle Schaap (Holland, MI) is graduating with honors in religion and a minor in international development studies. One of his favorite honors projects examined the relationship between the doctrines of creation and eschatology and how that relationship serves as an imperative for a Christian ethic of environmentalism. After graduation Kyle has a year-long fellowship at the Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church of North America, then he will attend seminary to pursue a dual masters of divinity and social work.

Allison Schepers (Byron Center, MI) is graduating with honors in biology and a minor in music. She has served on the Honors Student Council for four years, and she did research at the Van Andel Institute, testing a possible treatment for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) in a mouse model of the disease. After graduation Allison will attend the University of Michigan Pharmacy School.

Jacob Schepers (McBain, MI) is graduating with honors in English and minors in writing and linguistics. His honors thesis analyzed John Berryman’s The Dream Songs through the lens of Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory. He argues that in the performance of the Songs, the audience must consider the poem’s stagecraft, including syntax, stanzaic form, and the dialogue between characters to better understand the work as an attempt at community, not as the one-sided confession it seems. After graduation Jacob plans to pursue graduate studies in English.

Philip Sonderman (Hartland, WI) is graduating with honors in biology and a minor in biochemistry. His honors thesis investigates the use of prophylactic mastectomies to treat women with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. He has also completed research on breaking dormancy in Iris virginica, using physical, chemical, and hormonal treatments. After graduation Philip plans to enter medical school.

Rebecca Spears (Midland, MI) is graduating with honors in speech pathology and audiology and a major in Spanish. She has written a research paper assessing children’s language ability based on their narrative sample. Her case study focused on bilingual children, and their narrative samples were analyzed to determine whether they had a language difference or a language disorder. After graduation Rebecca plans to go on to graduate school.

Mark Stehouwer (Kalamazoo, MI) is graduating with honors in engineering (civil and environmental concentration) and a minor in environmental studies. He has done environmental engineering research focused on removal of nitrate and emerging water contaminants with Dr. David Wunder (engineering), presented a research poster on the “Fate of Antibiotics in Slow Sand Biofiltration and Batch Tests” at the West Michigan Regional Undergraduate Science Conference, and given a presentation on “Siphoning Education with C.S. Lewis” at the 12th Annual C.S. Lewis and the Inklings Society National Conference.
After graduation Mark will marry Anna Boersma, begin an internship at the Wyoming Clean Water Plant, and attend graduate school to pursue a Ph.D. in environmental engineering.

**Katherine Strong** (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in mathematics and majors in physics, Spanish, and English. She has researched the use and application of quaternions as rotation operators in three-dimensional space with her honors advisor Dr. James Turner (mathematics). After graduation Katherine will be entering graduate school at the University of Michigan to earn a master of arts in educational studies with secondary teacher certification.

**Jesse Sun** (Beijing, China) is graduating with honors in international relations and minors in religion and Greek. He has worked with Dr. Joel Westra (political science) on the implications of Augustine’s thought on just-war theory and foreign policy-making, and also with Dr. Kevin den Dulk (political science) on the implications of cause lawyering in Chinese political and social contexts. He presented “The Unattainable Peace: On the Failure of the Peace Negotiation before the Chinese Civil War in 1946” at the Grand Rapids Honors Student Research Conference last year, and his paper on China and democracy has been published in *The Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics* Fall 2011 issue. His thesis focuses on the relation between Chinese Christian communities and social capital and its political implications. After graduation Jesse plans to pursue a Ph.D.

**Bethany Tap** (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in English and minors in French and writing. Her honors thesis “Redefining Ekphrasis” explores ekphrastic poetry (poetry that engages visual art) and attempts to broaden the definition into a poetics that also works to engage literature. This project involved writing a chapbook of poems and a critical essay and was supervised by Dr. Lew Klatt and Dr. Linda Naranjo-Heubl (English). Bethany plans to take a year off after graduation and then attend graduate school.

**Jennifer TenBrink** (Kalamazoo, MI) is graduating with honors in nursing. She has researched factors that lead to the development of perinatal depression, specifically unintended or unplanned pregnancy. Her research included a literature review and case study examining the lived experience of perinatal depression in a low-income minority woman in Grand Rapids. Her work, written in conjunction with Professors Joke Ayoola and Gail Zande (nursing), is being submitted for publication to *The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing*. Jennifer hopes to find a job as an acute care RN after graduation.

**Christine M. Timmer** (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in biology and a minor in biochemistry, and she has been a member of the Honors Student Council for four years. With Dr. Kumar Sinniah (chemistry & biochemistry), she has researched a drug delivery system for cancer therapeutics and studied the biomolecular interactions between insulin and G-quadruplex DNA. She has presented her research at the Biophysical Society Meeting in Baltimore (2011) and San Diego (2012), and locally at Van Andel Research Institute’s undergraduate research conference. Her paper “Biophysical Characterization of a Riboflavin-Conjugated Dendrimer Platform for Targeted Drug Delivery” was published in the journal *BioMacromolecules*. After graduation Christine will attend medical school at Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine.
Mitchell Uitvlugt (Okemos, MI) is graduating with honors in psychology and a major in mathematics. He conducted research with Dr. Donald Tellinghuisen (psychology) on the negative consequences of multitasking on cognition, focusing on working memory, and attention. The results were presented at the Michigan Undergraduate Psychological Research Conference. After graduation Mitchell plans to work in the field for a year and then further his education in psychology at graduate school.

Michael Valk (Fredericton, NB) is graduating with honors in religion and history. He is completing his honors thesis on historical uses of names for and in Israel/Palestine and their modern implications. After graduation Michael plans to volunteer for a year in Palestine working with Palestinian Youth on leadership and English skills.

Samantha Vanderberg (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in English and a minor in writing. Her honors thesis is titled, “Habits of Mind: The Intersection of New Media and Academic Writing.” In it she analyzes the results of 250 surveys of English 101 students and interviews of seven students and ten English faculty members on the subject of students’ text messaging habits. She would like to recognize her thesis advisors Dr. Elizabeth Vander Lei (English) for her support and revision, and Dr. Bill VandeKopple (English) for his encouragement. Samantha hopes to find a job in publishing after graduation and to attend graduate school in a few years.

Nicole Vander Meulen (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in political science, a major in international development studies, and a minor in Spanish. Under the supervision of Dr. Joel Westra (political science) she is completing her thesis on the relationship between non-governmental organizations and the state in Israel. Nicole plans to attend Georgetown Law School after graduation.

Lindsey VanderWel (Grandville, MI) is graduating with honors in nursing. She has written honors research papers on obsessive compulsive disorder in adolescents and children and in older adults. She presented one paper at a nursing department seminar. Lindsey hopes to work as an RN at Spectrum Health after graduation.

Kristin Vanderwell (Jenison, MI) is graduating with honors in nursing. Her honors work has focused on HIV/AIDS, largely due to the experiences she had in Haiti volunteering over the past six summers. She has written papers about the public health implications of HIV/AIDS and about interventions to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV in resource-poor settings. She is currently researching the effects of stigma on those who are living with HIV/AIDS. After graduation Kristin hopes to enter the University of Michigan’s Pediatric Nurse Practitioner program.

Alexandra Bos Van Milligen (Guelph, ON) is graduating with honors in English and a minor in biology. She will be writing her honors thesis this summer, working with Dr. Bill VandeKopple (English).

Michelle Vecchio (Modesto, CA) is graduating with honors in religion, a major in English, and a minor in Church, Society and Ministry. She has served as a member of the Honors Student Council four years. Michelle participated in the Scholar’s Semester in Oxford, where she did honors research on homosexuality in Victorian literature. After graduation she plans to attend seminary with the hope of
entering into some kind of ministry in the church or a para-church organization, but is also considering going on to further schooling to teach religion at the college level.

Daniel Vryhof (Palos Park, IL) is graduating with honors in biology. He has done research on Mycorrhizal fungi as a possible soil inoculant for native plant growth and has worked with medical missions in Uganda, Honduras, southern Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic. Daniel has been accepted into The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Hannah Whyte (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in French and international relations. She is doing her international relations capstone research on the application of Hannah Arendt’s political philosophy to modern government. She wrote her French honors thesis on a chantefable, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, arguing that the work was not a parody but a progressive piece which offered an alternative perspective on gender roles. After graduation Hannah plans to teach English in South Korea for a year or two before heading to law school.

Christine Wolffis (Grand Rapids, MI) is graduating with honors in speech pathology and audiology and a psychology minor. Her honors thesis reviews literature on the agenesis of the corpus callosum, focusing on how the disorder may affect one’s ability to comprehend nonliteral language. She has developed a prospectus and plans to conduct this study alongside Dr. Judy Vander Woude (CAS) on five individuals with this disorder to see if any of her findings confirm the literature. Supplemental research examined behavioral and language differences common to the disorder. Christine will continue her education at Calvin by completing the master’s program in speech pathology, and then she hopes to work as a speech pathologist in a medical environment.