

HONORS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

Complete this proposal **prior** to your project's start date and upload it in the UHP Database (<https://webapps.uc.edu/uchonorsstudent>). Create a project ("Add a new record") in the "Tracking Project" tab and then upload your proposal document as an attachment. The deadline for [submitting proposals](#) is on the 5th of each month.

While the quality of the proposal is most important, strong proposals are typically 3-4 pages in length (single-spaced). Please maintain the proposal format.

Basic Information

Full Name: April McPherson
 UC Email: mcpheral@mail.uc.edu
 College: College of Engineering and Applied Sciences
 Major: Biomedical Engineering
 Title of Project: Discovering Long Island, New York
 Thematic Area: Global Studies
 Expected Project Start Date: January 2015
 Expected Project End Date: August 2015

Project Information

1. Provide a detailed abstract of your proposed honors experiential learning project.

"If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday." –Pearl Buck

Many people, places, and things' present state is largely influenced by the past. Furthermore, modern day media has a tendency to exaggerate and create misconceptions about the news, about cultures, about almost anything. I intend to explore the lasting influence history has on present day Long Island as well as the differences between the perception that is created and the actual reality. The overall goal of the experience is to gain a greater understanding and develop a greater appreciation for the present day by researching historical influence. I spent this past summer on Long Island for a co-op rotation and even without having a specific focus on determining discrepancies in the culture, many of my previous conceptions and thoughts were disproved and falsified. As a result, I want to revisit these locations and events, as well as new ones, with a renewed perspective.

There are four key thematic areas I would like to investigate: social influences, economics, culture, and geography. I have developed a base knowledge of the recent history of Long Island, in order to try and better understand possible explanations for the way things are today and for the stereotypes. I plan to conduct historical research on specific topics, locations, and events as well as establishing what the portrayal is. For example, I will look at mediums such as television shows, movies, songs, and the news to determine how a certain aspect is depicted. After having a firm understanding of what "I should see" and what "I should experience" based on these sources, I will travel to these locations and find out what a 'normal' person actually experiences. My experiences will be documented and compared to my research, both historical and pop culture.

I anticipate, on average, each experience will require around 8 hours, between prior preparation and research, travel time to the location, experiencing and documenting the topic in person, and finally analyzing and documenting the differences afterwards upon returning home. In order to fulfill the time requirement of an Honors experience, this would require at least 10-11 experiences. The exact amount of time for each experience will vary depending on the nature of the topic, such as if it is a specific location, a specific event, or a more broad idea. I have already spent approximately five hours completing initial background research necessary to prepare material relevant for this proposal and to begin determining focus areas and key historical events to further explore for this experience. No exact itinerary is made yet due to the duration (approximately 8 months) and ongoing nature of the project. In the budget table provided below are several of the major experiences and adventures planned at this point. However, as I continue to research and to find new opportunities this list of topics and experiences will grow.

Clearly and thoroughly address how each of the following elements will be exhibited in your work:

2. Connection to Learning Outcomes within the Honors Thematic Area (identified above)

The Honors Thematic Area this project is relevant to is Global studies.

Learning Outcome #1: Possess global literacy, including knowledge of geography, history, current world issues and similarities and differences among cultures

The four main thematic areas I would like to investigate are social, culture, geography, and economics. In order to better understand each area, I will research the history of a certain subtopic within each area. After understanding the historical events, I will explore the continuing historical influence the subtopic of the area has on current life on Long Island today. Specifically, I want to understand if the historical events influence modern day pop culture perception and media portrayal of aspects of life on Long Island. For example, horse racing has been prevalent on Long Island since as early as the 1600s, as I learned in conducting my initial research. Belmont Park in Elmont, NY opened in 1905 and is the site of the Belmont Stakes, the third-leg of the coveted Triple Crown. When the horse races are televised, normally the elegant, high-class individuals are highlighted by the media. Additionally, the media tends to only discuss large winnings from gambling. However, after attending the Belmont Stakes last year, even without specifically focusing on historical influences and analyzing stereotypes, I noticed many differences. For example, the majority of gamblers do not win. Additionally, most of those in attendance do not dress accordingly to those seen on television. I would like to return to this setting with knowledge of the history and perceptions and have conscious focus on observing particular aspects of the event to observe similarities and differences.

Learning Outcome #2: Interact with individuals from different cultures and express a sensitivity, appreciation and respect for the complex range of experiences of diverse peoples

In the discussion of the previous learning outcome, I explained how I will obtain knowledge of four thematic areas based on literature research and reviews. I can apply the information and knowledge obtained from the research to accomplish my second learning outcome, interacting with individuals. After completing sufficient research, I will determine an appropriate trip or event that is related to the specific topic. This will involve determining an activity, finding an event or attraction, or visiting a location to personally apply my learnings of the geography, history, and cultures. These activities will entail interacting with individuals who have a connection to the topic in some way, either personally (ex. family connection to the location or on a tourist visit) or professionally (ex. their job). Every topic that I research and explore will result in personal interactions with a wide range of individuals, backgrounds, and cultures due to the variety in nature of the topics I propose to pursue. For example, when exploring the history and influence of horse racing on Long Island culture I anticipate interacting with individuals from all culture, wealth, and educational backgrounds. Understanding and appreciating each type of person's role in the overall experience will be critical to analyze the similarities and differences of the event to my background research and to truly meet the goal of this proposal.

3. Connection to Goals and Academic Theories (include reference list, as appropriate)

- A. This project is extremely relevant to my personal development and future goals/plans. At this point in my life, with only two academic semesters remaining before receiving my undergraduate degree, I am undecided about my several aspects of my future, including where I would like to live after graduating. Although this is dependent on what I chose to do after graduating, I am hoping to explore a variety of areas of the country before choosing where I would eventually like to settle down in the future. With this project, not only will I have an opportunity to explore Long Island in-depth, I will learn to understand how history influences present day life. Furthermore, I will have a greater understanding and appreciation for the actual culture, as opposed to believing what the media portrays. I will learn to analyze and understand the bigger picture of a culture, of a society, and of the geography influencing an area's image. In researching the history and highlighting the reality of Long Island life, I will learn social science research skills that I can use and apply in the future to analyze other areas, with the hopes that ultimately one day I can find a place most suitable for my lifestyle, desires, and goals.

- B. Ethnography, the systematic study of people and cultures, is the theory underlying the basis of this experience. Dr. Brian A. Hoey of Marshall University provides a background and introduction to this field in “A Simple Introduction to the Practice of Ethnography and Guide to Ethnographic Fieldnotes” (2014). In this article, Dr. Hoey explains how to yield understandings of culture through an “insider’s point of view”, termed an emic perspective, rather than an etic perspective, or an analytical documentation. This source offers several suggestions on how to approach ethnography as well as how to write fieldnotes. Because this type of research is very different from what I am used to in my engineering studies, this source will help guide and focus my approach to each topic-experience I will pursue.

The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, an American Institutes for Research organization, operationally defines cultural competence as the “integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services.” This theory applies to this experience in understanding how a society integrates multi-cultural backgrounds and influences on its effective functioning. Cultural competency relies on five elements, including valuing diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Understanding this theory will allow me to better analyze Long Island society as well as develop my personal awareness and appreciation of culture.

For the preliminary investigation about Long Island history, *Long Island: People and Places, Past and Present* (1983) written by Bernie Bookbinder proved to be an excellent starting point. This source offered many starting points for further topics to research in each of the four areas I have defined for this proposal (social, economic, culture, and geography). I will be researching and citing additional, credible resources for each subtopic that I chose to explore throughout the duration of this experience.

4. Initiative, Independence, and/or Creativity

This project is entirely self-initiated. Upon confirmation that I would be returning to Long Island for a second co-op rotation, I began brainstorming different possibilities for an Experience. After multiple discussions and reflecting on my previous experiences, I developed the idea of comparing perception and reality of life on Long Island. However, upon further conversations and preliminary investigations into Long Island history, the project evolved to have a greater depth of meaning and relevance by incorporating historical influence into the scope of the project. This project will require initiative in performing general background research to determine specific topics and events to explore more in depth throughout the duration of the experience. Furthermore, it will require determining what perceptions about Long Island are established in modern day media and conducting the necessary research to learn more about the perceptions. Finally, it will require initiative and independence in that I will have to develop an itinerary and plan for each and every topic I plan to investigate. This includes determining where I need to go, how to get there, organize necessary finances, and how to document the experience. My experiences are unique in that I will approach and report each topic from an emic perspective, or an insider’s view, which will allow me to yield a better ethnography of Long Island. Additionally, ethnographies present a challenge of addressing subjectivity and objectivity. Thus, by incorporating research of the attitudes and preconceptions of a topic, I will be able to balance this tension.

5. Reflection

In addition to documentation on my Honors portfolio and scribing a reflective essay, I have created a blog (www.discoveringLI.weebly.com) to capture and reflect upon each individual topic. Within this blog, I will document the initial research findings. Furthermore, I will document my experiences with journal notes, photos, videos, and memorabilia when appropriate. For each topic I chose to explore, I will be applying the theory and principles of ethnographic research. On the blog I will post about the history and the continuing impact of that history today as well as the media portrayal and stereotypes, if applicable. After the event or adventure, I will document my experiences with pictures, memorabilia, and notes. I will also reflect upon the differences I discover from the literature search compared to my personal experience, as well as interpret and discuss the implications of

these differences. As Dr. Hoey states in his introduction to ethnography, “[you are writing to] represent things so that other people can experience- through your account- what you encountered.” Additionally, as I explore more topics, with this mode of reflection I will be able to see my growth in attention to details, in my ability to analyze cultural aspects, and in my ability to critically examine stereotypes.

6. Dissemination

I will share my findings on a public blog, for which I will distribute the link to friends, family, and appropriate faculty. The audience I have chosen is relevant because it will give those whom I am close with a better, more accurate understanding of where I am spending a significant amount of my time. Instead of falling under the misconceptions and believing the stereotypes, through my dissemination, my family, friends, and educational support network will gain a true depiction of the geography and culture I am immersed in. Further, they will have a brief understanding of the historical events that impacted the reasons for these events and stereotypes. This will help them to further understand the influences on my personal growth and development while I am away in Long Island. Additionally, I will share my blog with my coworkers so they can better understand and appreciate the culture and society in which they are currently living and working. Finally, I would like to share my experiences with students who may be considering working, interning, or living in/around New York City and Long Island so that they have an insight into the diverse nature of Long Island.

7. Project Advisor(s)

Dr. Stephen Porter
Assistant Professor
portersp@ucmail.uc.edu
301C McMicken Hall

Dr. Porter is a historian and social scientist. For various inquiries, including studies about immigration, Dr. Porter has spent considerable time in New York City. He can provide guidance on historical and social science research and understanding history’s influence on present-day Long Island.

8. Budget (if applicable)

	Topic	Experience	Source	Budget
Culture				
	Wealth	Oheka Castle	http://www.oheka.com/mansion-tours.htm Oheka Castle Mansion tour	\$25
	Gold Coast	Sands Point Preserve	http://thesandspointpreserve.com/ Sands Point Preserve car entry, Estate tour ticket	\$20
	Art	Nassau County Museum of Art	http://nassaumuseum.org/visitors.php Museum admission	\$10
	Italian influence	Italian Heritage and Cultural Festival	http://italianheritageandculturalfestival.com/ Admission	\$5
Economics				
	Whaling industry	Whaling watching tour Whaling museum	http://www.vikingfleet.com/whalewatching/ Whale Watching Day Trip Adult fee	\$75
			http://www.cshwhalingmuseum.org/visit.html Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum admission	\$6
	Aviation	Memorial Day Air Show American Airpower Museum	http://parks.ny.gov/parks/10/fees-rates.aspx Jones Beach car entry	\$10
			http://americanairpowermuseum.com/ WACO Bi-plane flight experience	\$280
	Vineyards	The Varietal Perspective at Martha Clara Vineyards	http://www.localwineevents.com/events/detail/566083/th-e-variatal-perspective-tasting Event Admission	\$45
Geography				
	Barrier Islands	Fire Island*	http://www.fireislandferries.com/rates/ferry-rates/ Fire Island ferry adult round-trip**	\$17
	Coast/lighthouses	Montauk	http://nysparks.com/parks/61/fees-rates.aspx Montauk Point State Park admission	\$8
			https://www.montauklighthouse.com/schedule.htm Montauk lighthouse admission	\$9
	Natural history	Vanderbilt Mansion National History Site	http://www.vanderbiltmuseum.org/vanderbilt-planetarium/planetarium-schedule-and-admissions/ Mansion and planetarium admission	\$12
Social				
	Horse racing	The Belmont Stakes	http://www.belmontstakes.com/experience/general_admission_info.aspx Belmont Website: General admission ticket	\$10
	Baseball	Long Island Ducks	http://www.liducks.com/tickets/individual/ Individual game ticket	\$20
	Cuisine	Fresh seafood	http://www.ebelliots.com/index.htm Dinner at waterside seafood restaurant	\$30
		Italian Bakery	http://vincentsitalianbakery.com/	\$10
		Kosher Delicatessen	http://www.bensdeli.net/	\$15

*Fire Island also has several important aspects that are relative to the social and culture topics.

**Only way to the Island is by the ferry, no cars allowed

Total budget requested: **\$607**