



JULIAN COOK RETURNS  
FEATURES, P. 5

# the houghton STAR

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OP. ED: INTENTIONALITY |  
OPINIONS, P. 7

DOWNTON REVIEW |  
FEATURES, P. 4

ARTIST OF THE WEEK:  
ATALIE FITE FEATURES, P. 8

February 28, 2014 Vol. 110, No. 18



## Shades of Black Exhibition Defaced

## College Expects Tuition Increase

SARAH SLATER



The defaced exhibition.

YINKA ARAROMI

LUKE LAUER

The "Shades of Black" exhibition located in the Campus Center basement was found with unapproved alterations early Monday morning. The number "50," the word "light," and paper chains were added to the

display. The exhibition title then read: "50 Shades of Light Black" with handmade paper chains hanging above the title. The new title allegedly made reference to the erotic romance novel, *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E. L. James.

The exhibition, which began at

the beginning of February and was scheduled to be taken down at the end of the month, was sponsored by the Black Heritage Club (BHC) and Student Programs office. The purpose of the series, originally conceived by

See **SHADES** page 3

See **TUITION** page 5

## HOPE Office Launched for Student Volunteers

GRETCHEN REEVES

After a half semester of planning, an official HOPE office has been opened in the campus center basement for student assistance. According to Hanna Kahler and Jina Libby, juniors both involved in the formation of the office, HOPE aims to both track student volunteer service and connect students with new volunteer opportunities in the area.

Greg Bish, director of student programs, maintains that the initiation of a HOPE office is a continuation of a strong tradition of service at the college. "There have been variations of the HOPE office through the years. The HOPE office as we're currently experiencing it started just this year. If you look at service, service goes all the way back to Willard J. Houghton," he said.

One of the current projects of the HOPE office has been the use of "Impact Cards" to quantify student involvement in the community as volunteers. Said Bish, "It's an effort to do some data-gathering and not just anecdotally say our students do service. We do know they do service, but we're just trying to find a way to collect information about what they're doing." The cards, which

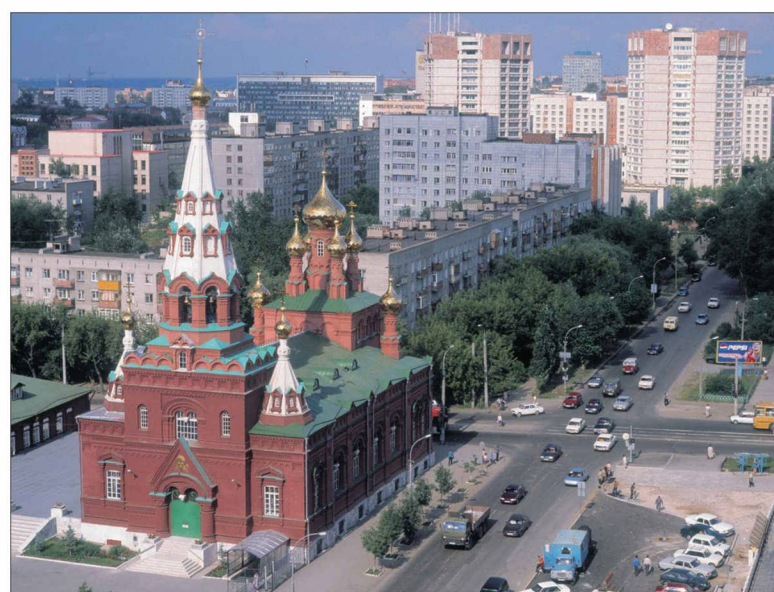
work in a way similar to timecards, may be filled out on a weekly basis and may include hours from multiple volunteer projects.

Initial response to Impact Cards has been slow. "[The cards have] been trickling in," said Bish. "I wouldn't say there's been a huge overflow yet. We've not gotten hundreds back by any means, but we're in the early stages." Kahler added that the office has recorded about 46 ½ volunteer hours from students via Impact Cards. "To me, that is satisfactory. Not as amazing as I would want, but it's satisfactory," added Libby. She explained that while the recorded hours may be low, the depth of student volunteering is notably higher. "If you take the JET program alone, there are approximately 20 students going down every Saturday, and that's six hours a Saturday, eight Saturdays. We're talking over 700 hours," she explained.

Impact Cards, while a measure of student volunteering for the college, also aim to be a motivator for current volunteers and those interested in volunteering. "On an individual level, we're trying to encourage volunteer service in the community, so

See **HOPE** page 3

## Russian Educators to Visit Campus



Perm, Russia.

WWW.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

DANIEL MOORE AND  
SARAH HUTCHINSON

During the week of March 10 through 14, Houghton College will be hosting six English teachers newly arrived from the city of Perm, Russia. The arrival of this group of Russian guests continues a practice of over 12 years in

which Houghton has welcomed visiting professionals from Perm.

The teachers have been familiar with Houghton, and friends with many of the faculty and staff, for many years due to the efforts of the Perm Mission Network (PMN). Susan Hice, former director of Student Academic Services (now known

See **RUSSIA** page 3



# WORLD // China: A Falling Star



LUKE LAUER

JOSEPH GILLIGAN

Despite its reputation and self-portrayal as an economic powerhouse, Chinese economic and government data show inconsistencies in exports, colossal corporate and local debt, an imminent collapse in its shadow financial sector, and the Chinese government's misunderstanding of the Chinese citizens' desire to purchase gold.

Last month, according to Chinese government figures, total exports grew a whopping 10.6% compared to analysts' moderate forecast of just 2% as reported by the Wall Street Journal. How can analysts underestimate by 8.6% when they

are normally off by only a fraction of a percent? Many Chinese experts such as Shao Xiaoyi warn that "the figures may be inflated by fake trade transactions, where traders forge deals to sneak cash into the country past capital controls." At the same time of the reported tremendous growth, Chinese manufacturer's reported "overall orders and new export orders fell, while inventory [of unsold goods] rose" according to JP Morgan economist Haibin Zhu. The Purchasing Managers' Index of Chinese economic activity is also below 50 points, which signals a contraction in the economy. Additionally, international corporations have been forecasting little to no growth in China. Two consumer goods companies—Nestle SA and Pernod Ricard SA—said their sales last year were hurt by a continuing slowdown in China's consumer demand, which dropped as much as 18%.

More disturbing news is the rise in China's corporate debt to \$12.1 trillion. Standard and Poor's estimates that China's corporate debt will exceed the US's corporate debt this year, making China's corporate debt the largest in the world. As a result, according to Shen Hong from the Wall Street Journal, "Borrowing costs for Chinese companies are raising strongly, a shift that could herald weaker corporate profits, slower economic growth and even the first defaults by indebted corporations on the mainland."

In the public sector Chinese local government debt has risen 67% to \$3 trillion. According to Robert Samuelson, "local debt now equals about 33 percent of China's economy up from 10 percent in 2008 and almost nothing in 1997." Most of the local debt is from financing new infrastructure such as roads and bridges and from building new cities notoriously known as "ghost cities" constructed of commercial buildings that sit empty and uninhabited apartments. Tao Wang of UBS (a Swiss global financial services company) believes "dependence on this investment spending poses a dilemma for China." If localities cut spending, the economy would be severely weakened. If localities keep spending at the same rate, localities could face default.

Problems in China's financial sector stem from a practice known as "shadow banking." Shadow bankers, operating without regulation, borrow from regulated banks to lend at higher interest rates to businesses and local governments. According to Time Magazine's Michael Schuman, "An expansion of risky and complicated financial practices in the world's second-largest economy has the potential to explode into a major economic crisis." Now these shadow banks are in trouble and are being bailed out. Aaron Back of the Wall Street Journal predicts that these shadow bankers will cause a domino effect and that "more distressed trust

situations are inevitable and will test Beijing's resolve."

This month China became the biggest buyer of gold. Chinese officials believe this demonstrates the strength of Chinese wealth in the private sector. Gold, however, is often used as a hedge against inflation or a slowdown in the economy. As economist Kimberly Amadeo notes, "investors flock to gold when they are protecting their investments from either a crisis or inflation." According to Laura Clarke of the Wall Street Journal, "Fears about the slowing Chinese economy, a potential property bubble and fragile financial system have spurred buying, especially as retail gold buyers in China have few other appealing options."

The Chinese government should heed the warnings of an old Chinese proverb, "To tell only half the truth is to give life to a new lie." China must stop giving the world half truths if it wants to become a real world economic superpower. If it fails to follow ancient wisdom, it too will be doomed to the same fate as the Soviets. ★

*Joseph is a freshman business major.*

## SHADES from page 1

Niala Pressley, a BHC member, was to share the stories, inspirations, uniqueness, and diversity among black students at Houghton, according to Abena Griffin, senior and BHC member, and Greg Bish, director of student programs. It displayed portraits of black students and a paragraph-long biography about each one.

The idea behind the series came from comments being made about black students. Griffin said, "I heard 'all black people look alike, we're the same.'" Bish said the members were looking to exemplify diversity among black students, both domestic and international. He also said any student who self-identifies as black was invited to participate.

The modifications to the wall happened sometime between Sunday evening and Monday morning, when they were discovered. Yinka Araromi, senior and BHC communications director, was the first to make the vandalism widely known. He posted an image of the alterations on Facebook with the single hashtag "nowords." He tagged several friends who were involved in the project. Griffin found

out about the alterations through text and Facebook messages, along with the image posted by Araromi, before visiting the exhibition herself. The alterations were taken down shortly after their discovery.

Araromi said that although the chains were allegedly a reference to E. L. James' book, many students, including himself and Griffin, connected the chains to slavery. He also said that putting racism aside, it was about the "...disrespect of defacing that display, which was meant to be about sharing stories and inspirations."

Bish said there was a "breadth of student response" which varied from feelings that it was a prank to a hate crime. Katrina Sawyer, BHC president and junior, said "...even if this was a joke that had nothing to do with race, how can you think this was okay?" A similar question was also asked by other students on campus, she said. Griffin said one of her first responses to seeing the alterations was, "When I saw 'light,' I saw that replacing black."

The person responsible for the vandalism, a 2013 Houghton graduate, confessed and publicly apologized Monday evening for what was done to the display. The student was

on campus visiting for the weekend and he met with Pool and talked to several students on campus. He also called Sawyer to apologize. The perpetrator then left Houghton campus late Monday night. According to Pool, after a discussion with campus Safety and Security director, Ray Parlett, they decided it was neither in his or the college's "best interest" for him to stay.

Late Monday morning through the evening, upset students met with various student life administrators, including Bish, vice president of student life Robert Pool, Dean Michael Jordan, and dean of students Dennis Stack. Bish organized and attended a dinner in the south end dining hall Monday night for students involved with the project to come talk about the incident face-to-face. Approximately 30 students attended. The president's staff, who met Tuesday morning at a previously scheduled meeting, also discussed the incident, the college's response so far, and intents to move forward, according to Pool.

After the incident, students on Monday afternoon began posting sticky notes on the wall around the portraits. The act was started by Leah Sweeney and Caitlin Aloï, according to Griffin and Araromi. Each note had positive and encouraging words to specific students pictured in the display or for all black students on campus. Griffin also said that students stayed close to the display, ensuring that no more vandalism would occur nor that the sticky notes would be removed.

There have previously been minor incidents involving the "Shades of Black" project. Griffin said the picture of Daniel Thompson, a resident of Shenawana Hall and featured student, was removed from the exhibition, moved to the hallway of his floor in Shen, and defaced with writing and drawings. Another copy was then printed to replace the stolen one.

Earlier in the life of the exhibition, Bish said an unknown person wrote in pencil "50 Shades of Black." Shortly after, another student erased it.

The college administration decided to address the issue in front of the student body in chapel on Wednesday morning. Pool opened chapel by speaking to the campus about the incident. Dean Jordan then talked about the issue in his chapel message. He emphasized the importance of listening and dialogue, saying that a collective response must be to continue to talk about this issue as individuals and as a community.

The Diversity Task Force, a pre-existing committee chaired by Stack, focuses on campus diversity and related issues. The committee includes students with various backgrounds, including Sawyer. It began last year and generated a "campus climate survey" last spring. The members have done a series of focus groups concerning underrepresented groups on campus, including African American and black students earlier this semester, as Pool explained. Members ask what life is like on campus for these groups and ask for their stories.

Griffin said that the conversation which has begun as a result has been quite encouraging. She said many students feel this is not just a black issue, as they also felt disgust and hurt by it and for black students on campus. Bish has committed that his office will work on at least two events before the end of this semester that will "encourage a healthy dialogue about race and respect." Griffin said we need to do a better job of explaining what Black History Month is about. She said it must start amongst faculty and in classrooms; it can not be from black students alone. Pool voiced his hopes that the student voice is prominent concerning this issue and said that "this is a community wide concern, but it's only going to change when we individually act." ★



Post-it notes with positive messages around the exhibition.

LUKE LAUER



**RUSSIA** *from page 1*

as CASA), along with numerous other Houghton constituents, have traveled to Perm every summer for more than twenty years. According to Daniel Moore, coordinator of audio-visual services and PMN group member, these groups have built an extensive network of friends in the process of ministering to orphanages, schools, businesses, prisons, churches, universities, and summer camps.

It is during the PMN's summer ministry that the invitees to this program are selected for an educational exposure in American, and specifically Christian, higher learning institutions. The group of six this year, said Moore, "are very excited to see America and curious to

interact with students.... They plan to visit a few classes and are eager to observe how American higher education compares with their system. They hope to collect a few ideas that may be useful to them when they return."

Moore added, "The fact that they are investing their own money to pay for travel, taking time away from employment, enduring the rigors of bureaucracy, and leaving the security of their family, is testament to their curiosity and excitement."

Another visit to Russia with the PMN is being planned for this coming June. Students interested in participating in this group ministry should contact Daniel Moore at [daniel.moore@houghton.edu](mailto:daniel.moore@houghton.edu). ★

**TUITION** *from page 1*

Brady, once a local high school athlete, set a new school record in a meet this past Saturday in Ithaca. Scoring 4141 points after his final event, Brady finished tenth out of twenty-three against a field of athletes from St. John Fisher, Cortland, Cornell, and other regional universities. The week before, Brady was named as NCCAA Track and Field Student-Athlete of the Week. Another freshman, Joanna Friesen, a native of Pennsylvania, nearly broke the school record with her pentathlon score of 2279 points in five events. Friesen placed twelfth out of fifteen in her field. Junior Andrea Melhorn also shattered an old school record in the hammer throw with a score that landed her in thirteenth place in her event. These athletes will lead the charge for Houghton in their events in Illinois.

Travelling along with the athletes and trainers will be the meet's Vice Chair Matt Dougherty, a Houghton graduate of the class of 2001, who was named men's track coach in 2010. Coach Dougherty provided solid endorsements for the swath of athletes Houghton will be bringing to the event. "As always, we are looking to improve every chance we get to compete and we look to see how competitive we can be in the team rankings. The men are fairly low this year with injuries to some key upperclassmen and some athletes who are just lacking their fitness from a year ago. The women are a good mix of new and experienced athletes. Hopefully our seniors can help our first year runners adapt well to the national championships."

Houghton's men's and women's track and field team also performed at the Empire 8 Championships in Ithaca at the beginning of February. While Ithaca ended up sweeping both

the men's and women's overall titles, Houghton's athletes successfully finished in the top five in a multitude of events. Friesen placed in the 800 meter sprint, the distance medley relay (DMR), and the 4x400 meter relay, while Figueroa placed in the triple jump and 60 meter sprint events. Another female athlete, senior Leah Williams assisted in the DMR and ranked highly in the women's mile race. For the men, a fifth position in the DMR as well as strong performances by Brady in the long, triple, and high jumps rounded out Houghton's first round of indoor championship events.

Houghton's gradual integration into the NCCAA allows for continued involvement in NCCAA championship meets as well as NCAA events. As a Christian organization, the NCCAA asks hosting universities to develop a service aspect of the event to parallel the athletic events. This year's project, sponsored by voluntary donations from participating colleges, is a partnership with an organization called Living Alternatives, a pro-life clinic and assistance program that seeks "to promote life-affirming options

and provide practical assistance, while sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed and to minister restoration to those who have been wounded by the trauma of abortion."

Houghton's track and field athletes head into this weekend's championship events with great determination. Coach Dougherty, when asked about pre-event jitters, commented, "I wouldn't say we are nervous. It's an excited anticipation to test ourselves to find out where we are. This year's national championship is as competitive as it has ever been and, as one of the smallest schools competing and the only NCAA DIII competing this year, we try and make our presence known as best we can." ★

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**HOPE** *from page 1*

when people get to 25 hours, we want to ... recognize that somehow," explained Kahler.

Also part of the office's work is connecting students with potential volunteer opportunities. Through connections with the Southern Tier Regional Volunteer Center, a database that lists opportunities between Jamestown and Binghamton, the office is able to search a pool of current needs for volunteers in the Southern Tier area and pass them on to students with specific volunteer interests.

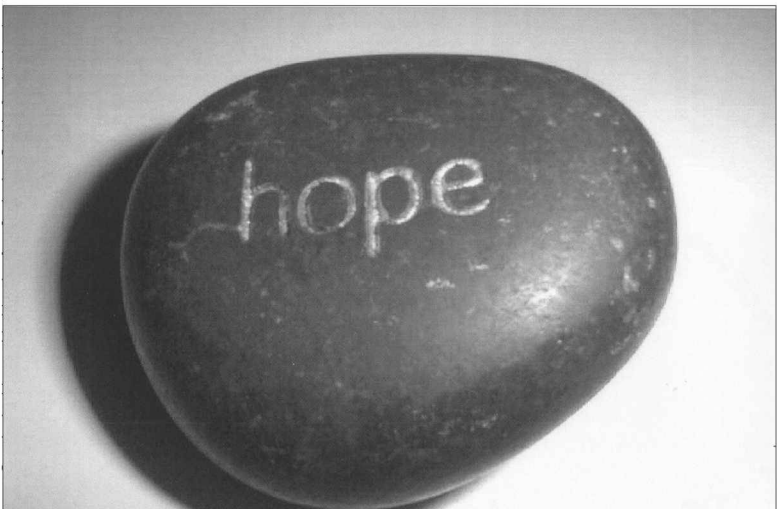
Locally, the office has worked on establishing volunteer connections with Wellspring Ministries in Belfast, NY; Absolut Care, a nursing and rehabilitation center in Houghton, NY; and the Powerhouse Youth Center in Fillmore, NY. One of Kahler's and Libby's current tasks is to publicize a project over spring break which would call for student volunteers for Wellspring Ministries. Another task

is to involve student-run clubs and honor societies in leading activities for youth at the Powerhouse center. Explained Bish, "We would ask different clubs and organizations to sign up ... and do something related to [their] club. If it's the French Club, they could be making crepes. If it's Sigma Zeta, they could be doing a science experiment. Basically, [we're] trying to get clubs and organizations, or RAs and floors, to ... take one day and go volunteer at the after-school program and provide some kind of activity..."

As for long-term projects, Kahler hopes to better integrate volunteer service with classroom instruction. "We're also doing a faculty survey to see how much service learning there is in the classrooms. It's something recently developed, so it's not going to be sent out for a while," she said. Both she and Libby stressed the importance of service at Houghton. "Looking at it from a Christian perspective, it's one of our callings, as a Christian, to serve," said Libby. ★



Increased tuition is a concern for current and future students. WWW.STRIPES.COM



An old logo for the HOPE office. COURTESY OF THE HOE OFFICE



## Have an opinion on today's news stories?

Send a letter to the editor to: [editor@houghtonstar.com](mailto:editor@houghtonstar.com)



# Little Surprise: Downton Abbey Season Four Disappoints

SARAH HUTCHINSON

PBS’ *Downton Abbey* was only ever an elegant soap opera dressed in period costume, but, following the recent closure of the fourth season, it appears as if the show has finally abandoned its pretensions and fully embraced itself within the genre.

It comes as a little bit of a disappointment. The first season, set between 1912 and 1914, appeared to be aspiring to something greater. Viewers were introduced a set of intriguing characters (upstairs and downstairs) and plot themes centered around class division, general uneasiness surrounding the period preceding WWI, and cultural changes taking place at the turn of the century. The efforts of the first season were well-rewarded with a strong viewership and countless awards for both its writing and acting. Viewers hoped that the following seasons would be a little like the AMC show *Mad Men* in maintaining its historical accuracy along with strong storylines and character arcs.

But whatever its initial aspirations, subsequent seasons of *Downton* just could not reach the high bar set by the first season, with unbelievable plotlines and characters becoming more and more commonplace. Regardless, fans still clung to the show. Whatever the series’ shortcomings, the world of *Downton* is irresistibly charming. (Maybe it’s the clothes.)



Lady Mary Crawley and her brother-in-law Tom Branson.

STATIC2.HYPABLE.COM

The just-ended fourth season, though, takes the cake for implausible plot threads and shallow characterization.

To be fair, this season was going to be rocky from the beginning. For the past three seasons, the backbone of the story has been centered on the relationship between Lady Mary Crawley (daughter of the Earl of Grantham who is current owner of Downton) and Matthew Crawley, her very distant cousin and heir to Downton. However, at the very end of season three Matthew was killed in a car accident (an actor’s contract is as good as a Grim Reaper), leaving Mary, not to mention the show, in a bit of a lurch.

Writer and creator Julian Fellowes attempted to make up for Matthew’s noticeable absence by introducing

three drab and hardly distinguishable suitors, with little success. (Even Mary herself seemed bored with them.) Outside of this tedious storyline, there were multiple instances during the season where Fellowes appeared to be taking plots from a basic soap opera’s playbook: an unexpected pregnancy, a mysterious disappearance, a juvenile love triangle downstairs, and a case involving blackmail.

Suffice it to say, the only storyline that seemed to matter this season was the fallout resulting from the rape of Mary’s maid Anna by a visiting valet. Regular viewers of the show were shocked at the initial event, which was no doubt Fellowes’ intent as Anna has remained a fan favorite since season one. (Equally appalling was Tom Branson’s rape that occurred in the same episode, but this [regretfully]

did not receive due attention from *Downton*’s viewership.)

However, the handling of this storyline was mismanaged from the get-go. Rather than taking the opportunity to explore Anna’s perspective and personal development following what happened to her character, the plot instead centered on the potential actions of her husband who, we are lead to believe, would be so infuriated over what happened to his wife that he would inevitably murder the rapist (and thence be sent to prison, etc.) So Anna spends most of the season silent about what happened to her, while viewers are meant to be more concerned about her husband and whether he will attempt to seek *his*

DOWNTON *page 5*

## DAILY CALENDAR

28 / FRIDAY
Chapel: Julian Cook
Science and Math Colloquium: Grant Bledsoe, Trident Technical College
11:45 AM   Paine 317
10 / MONDAY
Athletics
6 PM   MLAX vs. Cazenovia College
Chapel: Dr. David Dick
Wesley Chapel
11 / TUESDAY
Athletics
7 PM   WLAX vs. Cazenovia College
CAB Coffeehouse
8 PM   Java 101
12 / WEDNESDAY
Flute Choir
8 PM   CFA Recital Hall
Chapel: Deacon’s Lenten Service
Wesley Chapel
13 / THURSDAY
Faculty Lecture: David Stevick
4:15 PM   Library
Dinner Roundtable: Sustainable Food
5:30 PM   Lennox Dining Room
Athletics
7 PM   MLAX vs. Alfred University

# Cinephiles Rejoice, the Oscars Are Here



Ellen DeGeneres will host the 86th Academy Awards.

HUFFINGTONPOST.COM

SALLY MURPHY

There is a magical day near the beginning of February when all of America comes together to sit in front of the TV and eat chicken wings and bean dip until their guts burst. It is a day for greasy fingers, team sweatshirts, and high adrenaline. Most families gear up for this; they throw parties, check stats, and dedicate a Pinterest board to cakes shaped like footballs. But for some reason this was never a “thing” in my family. While the rest of the country

hummed to the tune of (hopefully) witty commercials we largely took this as a day to run numbers, read reviews, watch the main completion, and prepare for our main event: The Academy Awards.

Ah, the Academy Awards. The event that fuels the two dreary months after Christmas. It is just an awards show, of course. It is flawed and any real critic will roll their eyes at you if your only citation as to why a film is great is “it won an Oscar.” But behind all the bureaucracy, the politics, and the movie money machine, the Oscars remain the only place where

real Hollywood glamour still exists.

The Academy Awards made their debut in 1929 at a closed, invitation-only event costing those present \$5 a head. Their intention was simple: to recognize and award those in the film industry who were exceptional at their craft. It began with directors, writers, producers, and the cast and as its popularity grew so did the award list. By the time it was aired on television in 1953 the Academy Awards had achieved the pinnacle status for any person in the American film industry to

OSCARS *page 5*



# Julian Cook: Houghton Legend Returns



Julian Cook, class of 2013. LUKE LAUER

MEGAN SPECKSGOOR

If you have ever heard Julian Armand Cook address a chapel audience, discourse on social and spiritual issues, or hit that final note on a soulful hymn variation, you know he is a force to be reckoned with. To those who know him it comes as little surprise that Cook is currently enrolled at Boston University School of Theology, the oldest theological seminary of American Methodism and the alma mater of Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. In Boston, Cook is working towards obtaining a Master of Divinity and holds the position of graduate assistant at the Howard Therman Center for Common

Ground. The establishment acts as a cultural center for student programming and the commemoration of the theologian who was the first African American in the nation to become dean of a university chapel. “The Center,” Cook said, “revolves around the search for the unity of all people.”

As a passionate speaker, an ardent social activist, and a prominent perpetrator of black heritage at Houghton, Cook “excitedly obliged” to a request from the Heritage Club that he return to campus to lecture Thursday night and preach Friday’s chapel service. In previous years as president of the club, Cook had the ambition to “help Houghton take steps in the right direction” in reference to issues of diversity. Now, as a returning alumnus, he is furthering the discussions he began over the last four years.

As a recent Houghton graduate, Cook cited his college experience in western New York as invaluable indispensable. “Houghton prepared me academically to attend one of the top seminaries in the country,” Cook commented. “It gave me the foundation to inform myself of issues and cultivate these issues, as well as placing an emphasis on being educated for the purpose of serving the world and serving God,” he elaborated. For Cook this standard is manifested in “being the best student I can be; not just for my own end, but to impact someone else.” Cook described Houghton as an “extremely unique and beneficial” place with so many “critical resources” available at the fingertips of the eager student. “Besides academic excellence, Houghton instills and encourages an

optimistic worldview in which students have the ability and the responsibility to make a lasting external impact. Houghton teaches us to really believe that we can change the world,” said Cook.

After completing his work as a graduate student, Cook plans to endeavor a PhD in American history with the hope that this distinction will lead to an eventual professorship. In addition to

teaching college level classes, Cook aspires to become a local pastor and a political figure. After successfully completing the requirements of a Houghton education, Cook is confident that his efforts have been rewarded. “I can never say thank you enough,” he offered. “I can be nothing but grateful for the support and the knowledge I was given here.” ★



Cook singing at commencement May 2013.

FACEBOOK.COM

## Want to write?



Send an email to:  
[editor@houghtonstar.com](mailto:editor@houghtonstar.com)

## DOWNTON from Page 4



The Dowager Countess played by Maggie Smith. GPB.ORG

own closure. Besides implausible storylines, even some of the strongest characters of *Downton* were horribly reduced. For instance, Thomas, the evil butler, had been outed at the end of last season (increasing viewer’s sympathies for this otherwise dastardly character) but this storyline was completely dropped, maybe even forgotten. Meanwhile, Tom Branson - the former fiery Irish rebel - was forced to re-tread old “adjustment to aristocracy” plotlines. And then other characters were treated merely as backdrops. Cora, for instance, did nothing of significance

this season except, as quipped by the *Washington Post*, tilt her head and give “a legal-in-Colorado smile” during any conversation. Even the Dowager Countess (played by the excellent Maggie Smith) was reduced to one-liners at the dinner table and not played to her full force. (Given Smith’s acting chops, this was a real pity.)

Still, there were glimpses of the old *Downton* in season four that sparkled through the (very) muddy plot. Part of what made *Downton* so rewarding in earlier seasons was its constant celebrations of loyalty, love, forgiveness, and hard work. Those themes still persisted in season four. One of the most poignant scenes of the season took place in the nursery where Lady Mary, Isobel Crawley, and Tom Branson (all grieving for the loss of a spouse or a son) reflected on their losses and experiences of love, commenting, “Aren’t we the lucky ones?” Additionally, the developing mother-daughter relationship between Mrs. Patmore and Daisy was also well done.

Overall, yes, season four was unremarkable. Yes, it appears that the series is near the end of its run. And yes, it is disappointing that, given the brilliance of its first season, *Downton* could have been great. But, given that it has clearly asserted itself as one, there’s no reason not to sit back in your armchair and enjoy the show exactly for what it is: a good ol’ fashioned soap opera with beautiful clothes.

★

## OSCARS from Page 4



Oscar statuettes awaiting the Awards.

MOVIES.YAHOO.COM

achieve. To win an Academy Award was beyond words. As Audrey Hepburn stated in her win for *Roman Holiday* that first televised year, “I am just so... terribly happy.”

Now, at the 86th Academy Awards, despite cynicism and an over-abundance of hipster film buffs, the Oscars are still the crowning night for American film. There will be no half naked Miley Cyrus, there will be no Madonna in white spandex (there will be a fabulous Ellen DeGeneres with all her wit and blue eyes rockin’ the MC however). No, instead there will tuxes and gowns as far as the eye can see. And America will get to wallow in some beautiful people that are honestly really just damn good at what they do.

This year the star of Hollywood is

undeniably Cate Blanchet and heavens is it her time for a leading lady Oscar. The Australian actress was robbed in 1998 by Gwyneth Paltrow, and although she has one truly earned Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for playing the legend Katherine Hepburn in *The Aviator*, she should rightly have a few more alongside it (she played BOB DYLAN in *I’m Not There* for pete’s sake!). Her (fingers crossed!) award this year would be for her lead in Woody Allen’s somewhat mediocre film *Blue Jasmine* for her stunning performance of a woman on the edge of a post-marital mental breakdown.

The 86th Academy Awards, hosted by Ellen DeGeneres, will air on Sunday March 2nd, live on ABC. ★



TWO

VIEW

MO

2

VIEWS

What is your opinion on Pope Francis' criticism of capitalism? Are they warranted?



ALEXA DAKIN

A fear of all things red prevalent in our Western cultural mindset only continues to expound itself in our cultural practices, even as memories of the Cold War fade from the minds of our youngest generations. Popular entertainment pits our favourite Hollywood heroes and

videogame characters against stock Russian supervillains. Historical figures from Marx himself to revolutionary Che Guevara are labelled and discarded by religious, educational, and state institutions. Even the most recent Twitter trend #SochiProblems can be traced back to massive generalizations about countries that are politically unlike us in favour of an educated knowledge of their governmental systems and Christ-like interest in the wellbeing of their citizens.

This inherent bias lashes out against anything our 'red detectors' might suspect, including (what should be considered) apolitical statements by Pope Francis about the inequalities present in many Western economic systems.

In an apostolic exhortation entitled *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel," for those of us who don't speak Latin), Pope Francis outlines in five chapters what he believes the evangelical goals of the Catholic Church ought to be.

While my quick scan with the search bar dragged up the word 'capitalism' zero times in *Evangelii Gaudium*, it is evident that parts of the second chapter of the apostolic exhortation released in November of 2013 point directly at some of the glaring inequalities of free market systems. The Pope denounces

"trickle down theories" that leave the poor sidelined, and claims that "a rejection of ethics and a rejection of God" are the primary causes of growing economic inequalities. The "new idolatry of money" finds us scrambling to consume and leaving those who can't keep up behind us.

Read: Communism? "pure Marxism," to quote Rush Limbaugh? Pope Francis is clearly not an economic theorist (nor does he claim to be), and the *Evangelii Gaudium* is not a political statement. It's boldly Christian.

"I exhort you to generous solidarity and to the return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favours human beings." Let's be honest. We live in a culture of overwhelming affluence and comfort. We also live in a culture in which we find homeless beggars on the street to be commonplace, and we are willing to literally kill each other over good sales (American Black Friday death tolls since 2006 amount to seven deaths and up to ninety injuries). Is it possible that our anti-Communist cultural bias has become an excuse to avoid charitable practices?

Those who denounce Pope Francis as a Communist or as simply too liberal for the Holy See are missing the point. Pope Francis' statements centre on a Christian theological core: the desire for Catholics (and for all Christians, at that) to express love and concern for our neighbours. There's nothing political, let alone Communist, about sharing wealth with the needy. This financial practice is one that was endorsed both by Jesus himself (Matthew 19:16-30) and practiced by the early believers (Acts 4:32-35).

Questions about the influence of liberation theology on the Argentinian pope have been raised, but especially for those of us outside of the realm of Catholicism it is difficult to judge the theological beliefs of another. Fair concerns about Pope Francis' writings being viewed as sweepingly general (and primarily negative) towards wealthy people have also been voiced. It may well be that not all of us will agree with all of the Pope's exhortations. Yet, as Christians, I think the message at the heart of *Evangelii Gaudium*'s second chapter is one that deserves our interest. ★

Alexa is a sophomore English and history double major.



SARAH HUTCHINSON

Last fall, there was much hullabaloo in American political and religious discourse over a segment of the Pope's "*Evangelii Gaudium*" ("The Joy of the Gospels"). The most inflammatory was the Pope's comments on "trickle down economics", which (as the counterpart article in this edition of "Two Views" highlights), received great attention and drew a substantial amount of criticism.

I think much of the arguments made against the Pope are misplaced and, frankly, missing the point. The Pope was not, as some have accused him, advocating a "socialist" economic system or portraying "just plain ignorant" about the values of capitalism. Instead, the Pope was asking us to consider broader questions involving economic institutions to deliver *morally*, not just economically, particularly in context of our duty to the poor and the marginalized. Outside of the question of whether a free-market system is good or not (which is not what the pope was asking), what is our responsibility in a system that can perpetrate injustices?

To clarify, let's begin by clearing up what the Pope was actually talking about. To briefly sum, the Pope says "no" to an economy of exclusion (by which he means an economy that "accepts" having the poor on the basis of its system); "no" to the idolatry of money and consumerism; "no" to a financial system that rules rather than serves; and "no" to inequality that will inevitably tear the social fabric with violence.

Ultimately, Pope Francis' overarching critique, however, is against any point of view that places the system over people and makes them "afterthoughts." And he sees the free-market system, the dominant system in the present geo-political climate, extremely capable to do so. Conservative commentator Patrick Deneen noted that

the Pope "sees the deep underlying connection between an economy that highlights autonomy, infinite choice, loose connections, constant titillation, utilitarianism and hedonism, and a sexual culture that condones random hook-ups, abortion, divorce and the redefinition of marriage based on sentiment, and in which the weak—children, in this case, and those in the lower socio-economic scale who are suffering a complete devastation of the family—are an afterthought." This seems to be worthy critiques in our culture. Our consumerism, extreme individualism, and inability to stop "keeping up with the Joneses" often rely upon sweatshops, child labor, environmental damage and other abusive practices that place humanity as an afterthought.

But what is our responsibility in all this?

As Walter Wink writes in "Engaging with the Powers," the power of evil is not to be found flapping around in the sky dressed like a demon, it's to be found in within "corridors of power," which often manifest themselves within political, economic, and social

systems - evil and injustice systemized.

One of the very unsettling ideas within this theory of the "systemic" power of evil is how individual people can become so

wrapped up in it. As Miroslav Volf summarizes, "the power of evil imposes itself so irresistibly through the operation of a transpersonal 'system' that is both 'institutional' and 'spiritual.' Caught in the system of exclusion as if in some invisible snare, people behave according to its perverted logic." This is exactly what Pope Francis means when he says that "the culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us."

It becomes important, then, to not idealize a certain economic system. By turning a blind eye and failing to criticize or

expose the injustices contained within economic systems, we are losing in the fight against evil. So, yes, Pope Francis' criticisms are warranted and, indeed, necessary in order to expose injustices.

Sarah is a senior political science major.

Is it possible that our anti-Communist cultural bias has become an excuse to avoid charitable practices?

Yes, Pope Francis' criticisms are warranted and indeed necessary.

Those who denounce Pope Francis as a Communist or as simply too liberal for the Holy See are missing the point.

The pope's overarching critique, however, is against making people into "afterthoughts."



# Disce aut Discede / Intentional, By Any Other Name



LUKE LAUER

LYDIA WILSON

Over four long years living and working in one location, it's easy to develop a list of pet peeves and annoyances specific to Houghton campus. You can refer to your own list of grievances--maybe you don't like the isolation. Maybe you're fed up with the weather. Many of the typical complaints, I'm sure, have to do with the side-effects of living in a Christian community. I've heard numerous people disparage the over-use of buzzwords and phrases such as "blessed," "on my heart," and "accountability." What I rarely hear discouraged, however, are academic buzzwords. Perhaps it's due to the fact that many people on campus have been

steeped in religious language their whole lives, whereas all the isms of academic language--existentialism, postmodernism, dispensationalism--are a new and exciting experience.

One word in particular that never fails to irk me is intentionality. This word seems to be a house favorite at Houghton College. I heard it so often my first year that I couldn't help but assume that Houghton must be the most prudent place on earth: a magical land in slow-motion where people move with deliberate and measured steps everywhere they go, like studious sloths. Little did I know that the word's usage would only continue to multiply until this my senior year, when it colors the speech of my fellow classmates like profanity from the mouth of a sailor.

What is it that intentionality means, exactly? Since living with intention is the new purpose-driven life, we ought to have a solid definition. Most often when my peers discuss living with intention, what they mean is that they intend to make informed decisions and see situations from every possible angle. They want to live in a way that they believe does no harm to anyone else. They want to make a difference. They want to put their passions behind their actions.

Those are an awful lot of connotations to demand from one word. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, intentionality is "the power of minds to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states

of affairs." Dictionary.com defines intentional as "done with intention or on purpose." Intention is purpose, purpose is intention. The fact is, the very definition of intentionality is far too vague and redundant to legitimize its frequency in daily Houghton conversations. It's a superficial word, and its iteration is ever-so-slightly pretentious, attributing more weight to our actions (or lack thereof) than what might actually exist. After all, what is unintentional? Anything we choose to do, by definition, is intentional. While we are in college, "living" with intention ends up being "thinking" with intention. But, when we graduate, will we be able to make the transition to "acting" with intention, and, more importantly, will we graduate with grand ideas only to realize that, in the "real world," intentionality just might be completely meaningless?

No matter your personal impression and use of the word, the question remains: how are our academic concepts and "intentions" going to translate into life after college? Our culture of late is intensely focused on youth, experience, and personal happiness. I scroll over countless BuzzFeed and Thought Catalog articles covering fantastic places that you simply have to visit, all the best things to do before you die, how to put your own happiness first, how to worry less, why money isn't important, and why you should avoid committing to a career path, marrying, or settling in any way when you are "too young,"

i.e. below thirty-five. This mentality can't help but to affect the mindsets of twenty-somethings across the board, even at Houghton, and even if only minimally. It's likely that it springs from the currently dismal job and economic climate--a way to seem in control when one's life will be inevitably remain aimless either way. Paired with the earnest Houghton student's vision of impact and intentionality, however, this presents an interesting conundrum. The "real world," for all the hard knocks and gritty characteristics that we make it out to inhabit, simply will not contain very many momentous and important decisions. We will be working at coffee shops and retail stores. We will be grasping for any opportunities that we can, and embracing any occasions for freedom.

I believe in doing good acts. I believe in helping others, working hard, and sticking to my principles. And I definitely think that the word intentionality is much too limited and ambiguous a word to encapsulate all of that. It is unrealistic, and it cannot survive life after Houghton. Applying the word intentionality too liberally idealizes the concept and distracts us from the honest choices that we will make in our lives. We need to start using the word intentionality with more intentionality. ★

*Lydia is a senior art and writing major*



The mission of the Houghton Star is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have characterized Houghton College since its inception. This will be done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Dr. Paige, in last week's Star, does well to discuss firm obedience to Christ's command to proclaim the Gospel specifically, and not merely to be decent folk. Retaining our fervor for Christ the Truth and our fervor for altruistic living is a common theme of Scripture. We are admonished unto both strong faith and works to accompany that faith. If we give someone a fish, we shouldn't neglect showing them how to get living water to sanctify and satisfy the soul. Dr. Paige's observation is correct: Christians of recent generations are leaving doctrinal vitality by the wayside for impermanent worldly good, often failing to proclaim Christ. Yet this is only one side of the Church's current situation concerning a vital faith.

For some, indeed, theology is becoming less than popular. Meanwhile, there has been an increase in ecumenical worship over the past century. Dr. Paige describes well our problem of abandoning higher and more detailed theology, but this issue seems inseparable from discussion of ecumenical worship. Perhaps ecumenism has no small role in the growing notion that loving people is more important than fine-tuned doctrine. If so, how are we to balance doctrinal specificity with a unity of all believers and love for all founded in creedal orthodoxy? Dr. Case has addressed the latter side of this balance in his Faculty Lecture of February 20th we need a conversation between these issues at Houghton. The Church would not be new to such conversation.

*Christ's and yours,*  
David Gordon

# SPEAK OUT

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less

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the houghton  
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# Artist of the Week



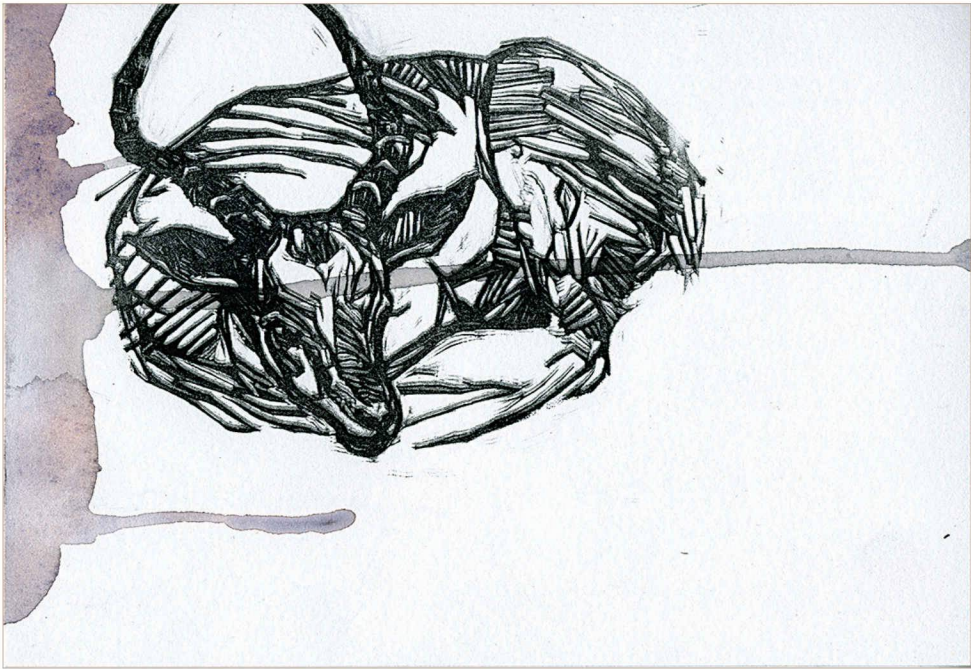
LUKE LAUER

## Atalie Fite //senior art major

### Titles and Media

Left to right descending

- Run Down, linocut, coffee
- Owl Miss You, pencil
- Benjamin, ceramics
- Impala, linocut, watercolor
- Fury, pen and ink, watercolor



“Do not dare not to dare.”

C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*

Sudoku								
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9		5	8					
			5				7	9
					2	1		
	8					6	2	
5								7
6		1		8				3
8	3		7					
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