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INSIDE LONDON HONORS

SYDNEY ARNOLD '27

Freshman Isaiah Borchert sat back in his chair and laughed, "I had no interest in doing anything that was academically harder for basically no reason...but my mom encouraged me to apply for it." He recalled thinking during his interview that the London Honors program sounded "like the coolest thing ever" and if he didn't get in he would have cried. He smiled, "I got the honors invitation from two other colleges that I also applied to, and I threw those out immediately."

London Honors at Houghton University is a writing and humanities intensive program only available to incoming freshmen. In the fall semester, the cohort participates in a pro-seminar that prepares them for their spring semester in London where students become immersed in the rich history of the world. Many colleges structure their study abroad programs as a senior



London Students

COURTESY OF MEGAN SENSENG

capstone, but with London Honors, students can begin their time at Houghton with this experience.

From London's stunning artwork to the city's unexplored corners, students' learning experiences are enriched through immersion in their course material. Whether that means spending the day at King Henry VIII's palace or tak-

ing pictures with Big Ben, every moment is exciting and engaging. Studying abroad in a different culture provides students with a unique perspective, enhances communication, writing, critical thinking skills and better prepares them for future studies and careers. Although studying overseas early in an academic journey can seem

daunting, the skills gained are valuable and lasting.

Like Borchert, many students are hooked the moment they hear about other's experiences. Borchert's classmate, Jennifer Bensley '28, shared, "I originally didn't even want to interview... somehow my parents convinced me to go to the interview, and at the interview when they

were explaining what the program was, I was like, 'Okay wait, I think I want to do this.'"

Now that the students are in London they have endless stories to share. While the sights are incredible Bensley shared that the friends she made within the cohort have been even more significant.

"I feel like what sticks out more is the little things that were not really planned, but everybody was just like, hey let's go out and do this," Bensley said, and continued, "Those are the most fun and most memorable experiences."

Of course, the semester is not only filled with traveling and late-night donut runs. Students have to balance their explorations with lectures, reading, art gallery journaling and writing.

They begin their week with lectures called "plenary" where one of the professors, either Associate Professor of English Jesse

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Experiencing Ecuador

CLANCEY COCKLE '26

During the spring 2025 semester, Arija Grant '26 has been studying in Quito, Ecuador as part of a study abroad program through Living and Learning International. The organization provides Christ-centered education programs throughout the world, including other locations such as Italy, England and the East Coast of the United States.

Grant has been staying with her cohort in an apartment in Quito, where she can walk to her classes. During the week, she spends her time attending classes, working on homework, spending time with her cohort and exploring the city. On the weekends, all of the students go on excursions exploring other parts of



Ecuador Students

COURTESY OF ARIJA GRANT

Ecuador including mountains, volcanoes, beaches, jungles and other breathtaking sites. A couple of months ago they spent a week in the Amazon jungle where they partnered with a missions group called Jungle Kids for Christ.

Soon after they returned, they all split up for a month-long homestay with local Ecuado-

rian families. This was one of Grant's favorite opportunities that she has experienced during her study abroad.

"It was so cool to experience the hospitality of the Ecuadorians and how they welcomed me in as one of their daughters," Grant said, and added that, "I am grateful for the relationships I was able to form with my host family,

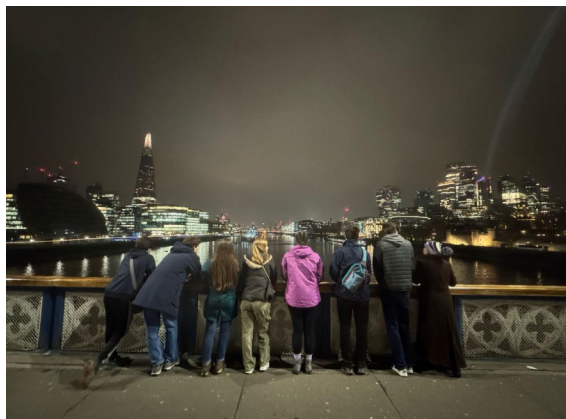
as well as being able to experience family life in Ecuador - from long mealtimes filled with meaningful conversation and laughter, to having water fights to celebrate the national holiday of Carnival, to trying all the new Ecuadorian foods!"

Grant has also learned so much from studying abroad, and not just from the classes she is cur-

rently taking. She has gained a lot of perspective on the world and has developed more understanding and empathy for those who live cross-culturally while also learning a new language. She grew up learning Spanish from kindergarten through high school, but being immersed in Ecuadorian culture and being surrounded by people speaking Spanish has helped her to better understand and speak Spanish more than she could have ever imagined.

While it is very helpful and eye-opening, there are definitely challenges associated with living in a different culture and being surrounded by a different language. Overall, the biggest challenge for Grant has been having to live in the city for the majority of the semester. She was not used to living among so many people

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with so much noise, but she has been able to feel refreshed from weekend excursions in nature.

Grant also said that she has been growing personally and spiritually during her stay in Ecuador.

"I have learned the importance of slowing down and really being intentional with people," she said. "Ecuadorians live the day to day at a much slower pace and they really value relationships. Their hospitality and kindness has shown me more about how Jesus wants us to care for others and welcome others into the family of Christ."

For someone who is considering studying abroad, she highly recommends it.

Grant said, "It truly widens your perspective on the world. It is so fun to see different ways of life, explore beautiful landscapes, and make new friends from all over the U.S. and the world. There are so many opportunities abroad that have classes that fulfill credits for your major and/or fulfill general education requirements. It is so cool to study and experience another part of the world for a semester."

Grant will return at the end of the semester, just in time to see her sister Phebe Grant '25 graduate in May. She would appreciate people keeping her in their prayers as she finishes out the final stretch of her study abroad! ★

LONDON *from page #1*

Sharpe or Professor of Political Science Peter Meilaender, teaches the cohort about a new period in Western history. From there students are sent out into the city's museums to explore art from that period, in addition to readings they discuss in small groups each morning.

At the end of the week, students are expected to synthesize literature, artwork, music and even architecture examples to prepare a thesis about the period they have studied. While Sunday is a true Sabbath day, this full schedule can be daunting.

Bensley shared that "one of the biggest challenges is trying to fit everything in and still get the work done. Going to class in the morning and then museums in the af-

ternoon, and then if you have a show or something at night, it's hard to find time to do the reading."

She added that when you have the freedom to "go anywhere and do anything" it can be hard to balance seeing the sights and learning the course material.

Program assistant Megan Sensenig '25 shared that her main role in the program is to support the students.

"I monitor how they're doing academically, mentally, and emotionally," she stated, "if they need any help with papers or just with their emotions or whatever might be going on back home, I am sort of just like a big sister to them."

She shared that one of the greatest joys of her time with the students has

been watching them all come into their own.

Sensenig said, "I've seen so much independence in them now that wasn't there at the beginning of the semester. They've gotten so much more confident, going out and doing things, bringing up really interesting connections in discussions that they've seen from the fall [coursework] or from the beginning of the semester."

Despite the challenges of traveling across the world to a whole new environment, the students have gained so much from their journey. A fresh perspective on the world, new independence and memories they will have for a lifetime. ★



Deny, Defend, Depose: How We Are All Luigi Mangione



ELIJAH BACIUSKA ('26)

On December 4, 2024, Brian Thompson, the CEO of UnitedHealthcare, was walking in New York City on his way to an investors' meeting when he was approached from behind and fatally shot. In the wake of the incident, authorities launched a nationwide manhunt, partnering with the FBI and agencies across the country. When forensic analysts recovered the bullets from the scene, they discovered three words inscribed on them: Deny. Defend. Depose. Five days later, authorities arrested Luigi Mangione as the suspected perpetrator.

Political figures and news outlets quickly

praised the investigation, but the public reacted differently. Online, people created videos offering fake alibis for Mangione, while others expressed support through protests and joked about his conventional attractiveness. This divide between official praise and public sympathy reflected deeper frustrations with the system Mangione's (alleged) actions symbolized. His potential crime, while extreme, was not an isolated act—it was an eruption of resentment toward an American healthcare system that has long operated on three fundamental pillars: Deny, Defend, and Depose.

"An American citizen is 2.33 times more likely to die from a lack of health-care coverage than from homicide."

Deny: The first step private insurance companies take to maximize profits is to deny care to those who need it most. Claims are routinely rejected on the basis of a procedure being

"To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail; to a private insurer, every life looks like another dollar."

"medically unnecessary" or because a patient has a "pre-existing condition," forcing people into medical debt or premature death. In 2023 alone, insurance companies denied 20% of all network claims under the Affordable Care Act, leaving countless families drowning in bills for life-saving treatments

profits, their CEOs earning tens of millions annually while patients ration medication, delay care, or die.

Defend: When patients and doctors contest these denials, corporations respond with bureaucratic warfare. Appeals can take months or years, requiring extensive documentation, legal battles, and testimonies from medical professionals—all while the patient suffers, goes bankrupt, or dies. Some never live to see their care approved. Others, forced to pay out of pocket, face financial ruin. Nearly 100 million Americans owe an estimated 220 billion dollars in medical expenses, yet lobbyists continue to flood Washington to ensure legislation never threatens their bottom line (The Guardian). In 2022 alone, the healthcare industry spent \$700 million on lobbying, outspending the defense and oil industries combined (OpenSecrets). The message is clear: profits come before people, no matter the cost.

Depose: Eventually, public outrage reaches a boiling point, so the system offers a scapegoat. A CEO resigns with a golden

parachute, a politician makes a speech about "reform," or a lawsuit ends in a quiet settlement. To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail; to a private insurer, every life looks like another dollar. They continue to rake in billions, hospitals charge thousands for an ambulance ride, and working-class Americans are told to set up GoFundMe pages to afford cancer treatment. This isn't broken—it's by design.

Luigi Mangione was not the first to lash out in alleged anger, and he will not be the last. His suspected actions were an extension of rage in a country where people die rationing insulin, where medical bankruptcy is a uniquely American tragedy, and where patients are treated as revenue streams rather than human beings. Though killings like these should never be celebrated, the root of this anger speaks to a greater cause—it was a product of a system that devalues life in the name of shareholder value.

So, what's more violent? Mangione's alleged bullets, or a system that kills for profit? ★

Elijah Baciуска '26 is majoring in Biomedical Sciences. When not studying, he enjoys spending time with friends, playing video games and is interested in politics.

Have an opinion
you want to share?

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SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor
should be less than 600 words

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Columns

The Heart of the Team

Grace Bailey '28

People often talk about how team morale boosts performance. What I've discovered since coming to Houghton is that the person who has the biggest impact on morale is the coach. I am on the cross country and track teams, and when I was in high school, my coach's goal in life was to create a team that won everything. While winning makes you feel good, people didn't realize what got us there. It was a lot of hard work, but it was also a lot of being told that you weren't good enough. Or that you were going to be the reason the team lost. The coaching pitted all of my teammates against each other. However, the constant bullying and competition between the team wasn't the hardest part. This coach only put in an effort with the people he believed were winners. He only focused on two or three people per season, and they were almost always the same people. This coach quite literally altered my brain chemistry so that I was scared to be open with Coach Hager when I got to Houghton.

Since being here, I have had 2 injuries occur. Each time I was scared to tell Coach, because my high school coach always told me that pain was weakness and it wasn't allowed to exist for us. If we were in pain, we were faking it in order to get out of running. The current injury that I am facing has taken me out of both my indoor and outdoor track seasons, which is crushing my mental health. But I have a team, and an incredible coach, who are both helping me through it. When I first told Coach about the injury, I expected him to be upset. The reaction I faced was completely different. He told me to get it checked out, and when I went to the doctor and told him what may have caused it, he blamed himself. It was in no way his fault, but his reaction made me realize just how much he truly cared for each one of his athletes individually. I am not even close to being one of the best runners on the team, but unlike in high school, Coach Hager truly puts in an effort to get me to be the best I can be. He pushes me to my limits and just a little bit further, because he sees my potential and wants me to see it too. That is how he is with every athlete he has.

No matter who they are, he cares. He asks questions, he takes time out of his day to talk to you, even if it's just about random things. He focuses on each athlete as an individual and helps them to become the best version of themselves, all the while making sure they're feeling confident about themselves and the team as a whole. His style of coaching has made sure that our team is confident but humble no matter how we perform. So from the bottom of my heart, thank you Coach Hager. I wouldn't be where I am now without your support. ★

Puerto Rico

Kaitlyn Avery '25

Prof. Ryann Cooley took students in his Photo Documentary and Cultural Studies to Puerto Rico during the February 28 to March 9 trip this spring. The class visited, among many locations, Old San Juan, Loíza and Luquillo.

