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## FLICS & FONDUE

REBECCA DAILEY '25

Tonight from 8 to 10 the Campus Activities Board (CAB) will host their Valentine's Day event, "Flics and Fondue," outside of Java in the Reinhold Campus Center basement. The evening will include a chocolate fondue fountain with assorted snacks, valentine writing supplies and a showing of the "Princess Bride"!

Emma Podobinski '27, who is leading the event, expressed her excitement: "I have always loved Valentine's Day, and that definitely inspired this event. I wanted to create a cozy and chill event for people to enjoy on the holiday while doing thematic activities. To me, eating chocolate fondue, watching a romance movie, and writing Valentines sounded like the perfect Valentine's night."

Jana Newberry, Director of Student Engagement and the supervisor for CAB, shared, "Emma mentioned

the idea for this event in her CAB interview process and so it's very cool to see it come full circle! Valentine's Day is a fun one, and I like that the event feels both special and relaxed. I like that anyone could come and have a good time."

Significant planning went into this event. Newberry helped coordinate behind the scenes details and supported Podobinski's process of reserving a space, ordering food and decorations and renting equipment.

"CAB works collaboratively on most of our events from the idea phase to putting on the actual event," Newberry stated. She added that "Typically, we have one or two people 'on point' in this case Emma Podobinski had the idea and energy for this event and has done a great job with the planning!"

Podobinski wanted to create an atmosphere for

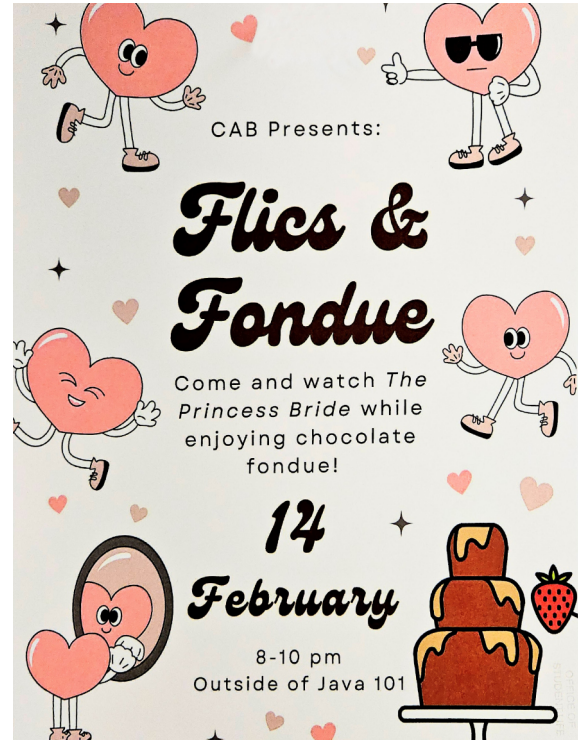
everyone. "For this event, my favorite part of planning was creating the atmosphere that I envisioned the event to have," she said. "When I was ordering decorations, I had a lot of fun planning how I wanted to transform the space outside of Java 101 into the cozy place I was imagining. I relied on Pinterest to see the vision come together and to come up with fun ideas for the event."

While Valentine's Day may be centered around love, this event is meant to share with all, Newberry said. "We wanted to do something specific for Valentine's day and most people can get behind food and movies," she commented.

She added, "Again, everyone is welcome, whether they can come for the whole time or just drop!"

"I want everyone to be able to enjoy Valentine's Day, whether they are in a relationship or not,"

See **FONDUE** page #2



Flics and Fondue Poster

COURTESY OF CAB

## Divine Sovereignty

ABIGAIL BATES '26

"Limits on God's Sovereignty" will begin next Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Willard J. Houghton Library, room 323, and is Around the Table credit. The panel is part of a series sponsored by Assistant Professor of Physics Dr. Katrina Koehler and Professor of Philosophy Dr. Benjamin Lipscomb. The series began in 2023 with the first discussion on Nov. 15 covering the conflict in Gaza and has since then covered topics like masculinity and censorship in the fall 2024 semester.

Koehler said they started the panel discussions to promote "thoughtful conversation[s] on hot-button issues." They wanted to

show how intellectual Christians can engage in complicated topics, not only "from their areas of expertise, but also as thinking believers," she explained. Although such topics are discussed in classrooms, Lipscomb added, "it seemed to both of us that there was an empty space for something more."

"If we as an institution don't sponsor and model serious, challenging discourse, we abdicate our role as educators," he said.

When Lipscomb arrived at Houghton in 2002, and throughout Koehler's undergraduate years, Houghton University's campus held many events similar to the current panel series. A few included topics on the Iraq War, nudity in art, sexual ethics and interpretations of feminism.

In recent years, however, few such events have occurred. Lipscomb listed reasons such as the institu-

tion's population decrease, COVID-19 pandemic and fears of cancellation.

"But we remember how valuable these panel discussions were to participants and attendees," Lipscomb said, because the events exposed "students to professors outside their majors and [gave] students opportunities to listen in on and join serious, respectful conversations by members of their community."

Next week's panel will host Professor of History Dr. Christian Esh, Associate Professor of Old Testament Dr. Andrew Walton, Interim Dean of Spiritual Life Rev. Dr. J.L. Miller and Associate Professor of Vocal Music & Conducting Dr. Daniel Black.

Lipscomb explained that the topic of divine sovereignty is one that has long divided Christians. He added that "it's the kind of thing students



Bible Study

COURTESY OF UNSPLASH DEBBY HUDSON

See **DIVINE** page #2

# Simanowski's Musical Journey

JIANA MARTIN '26

Senior Evelyn Simanowski '25's greatest passion since childhood has been music. Pursuing music in her studies and career was always a part of her desired plans and a "series of perfectly crafted 'God moments'" allowed her to attend Houghton University (HU) to follow those dreams.

"I believe so deeply that the talents God has given us correspond with the life He has written for us and the musical gifts He has given me deserve to be honed and developed to glorify Him and live out the life He has for me to the fullest," Simanowski expressed.

Despite her undying love for music, her musical journey has not unfolded without some hardships. One of which has been accepting that perfection is unattainable. As a perfectionist, it has been a hard lesson for Simanowski to learn that a perfect performance will never be achieved despite all the time and effort put into it.

"When you learn that lesson you can become discouraged and give up," Simanowski reflected, "or you can rise to the task at hand and pursue excellence anyways for the sake and value of the art."

During her years at HU, one of her greatest professional accomplishments has been placing as a finalist in the National Association for Teachers of Singing Solo Festival in the Finger Lakes Region. Simanowski also noted that having the opportunity to play Amalia Balash in the Lyric Theatre's production of "She Loves Me" was "a huge marker of

the progress [she] made in these last four years." However, despite these milestones in her Houghton career, Simanowski's greatest achievement has been perceiving her musical talents as God-given gifts and interactions as opportunities to give him the glory.

As a culmination of her time at HU, Simanowski will be performing her senior recital titled "Faint Heart Never Won" on Feb. 19 at 8 p.m.

Simanowski shared that the title originates from the English proverb "Faint heart never won fair maiden," which "serves as a lesson that if one sets out to achieve difficult things, effort will be involved."

She has chosen to perform pieces she loves containing female figures and characters who lived through unfavorable circumstances, yet are remembered for their strength and dignity. The performance will include "Try Me, Good King" by Libby Larsen that uses the last words of each of the wives of Henry VIII, a song cycle by Debussy using some French poetry and "Song to the Moon", an aria by Antonin Dvořák.

"I chose pieces for my recital that would challenge me vocally and intellectually, requiring thought on my part to bring the text and the composer's vision to life," Simanowski explained.

Reflecting on his time working with Simanowski as a collaborative pianist, Senior Ryan Nickelsen '25 has appreciated her "willingness to be flexible in the way she performs any given song." Rehearsing and performing with her has been an easy and enjoyable experience because she sees the pianist as a fellow performer rather than a

supporting role. Simanowski's professionalism and enthusiasm in her singing stand out to Nickelsen.

He commented that as a past observer and a current accompanist, "it has been a delight to see her continue to push herself to become a better singer, even when it seemed as if she had already hit her cap."

Nickelsen is excited to share the hard work he and Simanowski have put into the recital and hopes that everyone will enjoy it as much as he has enjoyed putting it together with her.

For Prof. Kimberly Prins Moeller, Associate Professor of Voice, walking with Simanowski and getting to know her over the past four years has been a privilege and a joy. She admires her dedication, willingness and how she welcomes feedback and critique in a positive manner.

"They say still waters run deep and I think that is quite appropriate for Evelyn. Her head is always on straight, she is a thoughtful student in every way, and she is not afraid of the effort it will take to achieve her goals," Moeller shared. "Evelyn is also extremely self-aware and unafraid of questioning and revisiting her dreams and plans," she added.

Moeller is excited about the many stories told through Simanowski's selections, and the new colors and qualities of her voice that will be displayed.

"It's a compelling recital that you definitely don't want to miss," Moeller said and added, "I trust that this recital will be a celebration of all her creativity, work and accomplishments!" ★

## FONDUE from page #1

Podobinski expressed. "So, I hope this event creates a space where people feel comfortable and can spend time with their friends and loved ones on the holiday." ★

## DIVINE from page #1

sometimes debate in dorm lounges late at night, but unless they're in a theology class, they don't get the opportunity of thinking in a more rigorous and grounded way about it."

He expressed that even in theology classes, usually only one professor facilitates and comments on discussions between students, which limits the conversations.

"The whole point of the series, though, is to make available conversations of a different sort: open to more people, involving more people," Lipscomb said.

He described the topic as pastoral, relating to the care and guidance of Christian followers, because it connects directly to who

God is; what God controls and how he directs that control. "It's not just academic; it's existential," he added. Some Christians are "suffering and watching others suffer," he said. They wonder "what God has to do with it."

Lipscomb hopes students leave the panel series with "a sense of what disagreement and mutual exploration within the body of Christ can be like."

"In a polarized world," Koehler said, "we want to demonstrate nuance, shades of grey, and the value of thoughtful discourse. Most importantly, we want to show that disagreement can be done well."

Later this semester, the question "Should you have children?" will be addressed, which Koehler said "reveals deep, often unspoken value systems beneath our varied responses." They are already considering future topic possibilities such as missions, immigration and AI, and are happy to take suggestions. ★

# Question of the Week

## Who are you spending Valentine's Day with?



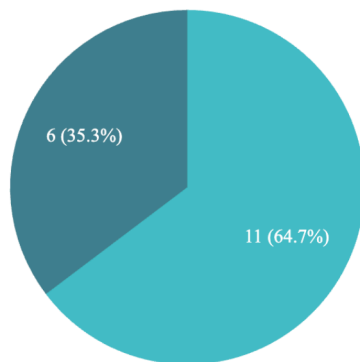
Also on the STAR website & HUB

Weekly questions open to anyone affiliated with Houghton University.

## Do you think it's possible that out of 8 billion people in the world, someone has some kind of superpower?

Submitted Question

- Yes
- No



### Respondents:

- Current students (10)
- Former students (4)
- Faculty/staff (3)
- None of the above (0)

# Love On a Deadline



JO BORGES EDWARDS '25

The concept of “Ring by Spring” is a cultural phenomenon prevalent in many small Christian colleges, where students feel pressured to get engaged before graduation. While marriage is a beautiful and meaningful commitment, the societal expectation that young adults should rush into lifelong partnerships by their early twenties is concerning. Although this tradition may work for some, delaying marriage could lead to healthier and more stable relationships for most.

Many students at Christian colleges experience an unspoken expectation to find a spouse before graduation, and Houghton is not the exception. This pressure often comes from religious and cultural beliefs that prioritize early marriage as a means of preserving purity

and fostering family life. Students may feel that their time in college is their best or only opportunity to meet a compatible Christian partner. Additionally, being surrounded by peers who are getting engaged can create a sense of urgency that leads people to prioritize marriage over other essential aspects of personal development.

However, the pressure of getting engaged within a limited timeframe can lead people to make hasty decisions. Many “Ring by Spring” engagements happen after only a few months of dating, which may not provide enough time to truly understand a partner’s values, communication styles, and long-term goals. Rushing into marriage under these conditions can increase the likelihood of incompatibility and marital struggles down the road.

*“Rushing into marriage under these conditions can increase the likelihood of incompatibility and marital struggles down the road.”*

ing well into a person’s mid-twenties. This means that many college students are still growing emotionally and psychologically, making it harder for them to make fully informed decisions about lifelong commitments. This biological fact affects both parties. Their partner’s brain is still developing; therefore, the person they are marrying now might be completely different in a few

covery, and rushing into marriage can sometimes hinder that process. Without a solid sense of self, people may struggle to navigate relationship challenges and personal growth in a healthy way.

Sociological research has also shown that waiting until later in life to marry correlates with lower divorce rates and greater marital satisfaction. According to studies, people who marry after age 25 tend to have more stable relationships than those who marry in their early twenties. This is likely because they have had more time to establish their careers, develop emotional maturity, and understand what they want in a partner.

Additionally, couples who take more time to build their relationships before getting engaged tend to have stronger foundations. Studies suggest that knowing a partner for at least two years before marriage significantly reduces the risk of divorce. This period allows couples to experience different life situations together, resolve conflicts, and truly assess compatibility. Unfortunately, many “Ring by Spring” engagements happen after dating for less than a year, which can leave couples unprepared for the realities of marriage.

Another key factor in delaying marriage is financial stability. Many college students have not yet secured stable jobs or financial inde-

pendence. Marrying young often means navigating significant financial stress, such as student loans, entry-level salaries, and the costs of setting up a household. These pressures can create tension in a marriage and make it harder for young couples to focus on building a healthy relationship.

Additionally, early marriage can sometimes limit career opportunities, particularly for those, typically women, who may feel pressured to prioritize family over professional aspirations. Establishing a career before marriage can give people greater financial independence and security, ultimately strengthening their future partnerships.

While “Ring by Spring” may work for some couples, it is important to recognize that healthy relationships take time to develop. Young adults should be encouraged to build relationships intentionally instead of rushing into engagement due to societal pressure. This means prioritizing communication, shared values, and long-term compatibility over meeting an arbitrary timeline.

Marriage is a significant commitment that should not be rushed by external pressures. While “Ring by Spring” may seem like a romantic tradition, it can lead to hasty decisions that might not be in the best interest of young couples. Instead of pressuring students to find a spouse before graduation, Christian communities should encourage intentional, thoughtful relationships that prioritize long-term compatibility and personal growth. ★

*Jo Borges Edwards '25 is a senior at Houghton. They major in Business and Communication and have an art minor. In their free time, they enjoy digital art, editing, photography and coloring books.*

*“Marriage is a significant commitment that should not be rushed by external pressures.”*

From a biological perspective, the human brain does not fully develop until around age 25. The prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation, continues matur-

years. Moreover, research in psychology suggests that young adults benefit from exploring their identities, career aspirations, and personal values before settling down. The early twenties are a critical period for self-dis-

Have an opinion you want to share?

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## SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be less than 600 words

SUBMIT TO  
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The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton University since its inception. This is 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.

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Review

Severance Season 1 (2022) Review

ANNA SUMNER '25

Severance (2022-) Season 1 Review  
Severance: A work-life balance, taken to a science-fiction extreme.

That's how I would describe the premise of the Apple TV+ psychological thriller. Severance is a show where the principal characters undergo a medical procedure that severs their memories from their work selves to their outer selves. At work, the characters have no idea what they do outside of work, and at home, they have no idea what they do at work. Imagine never actually having to work. Or, on the flip side, never being able to leave work.

Severance uses its premise in a myriad of satisfying ways, which is difficult not to spoil, and is worth seeing the full use of. Some characters are wildly different on the inside versus the outside. Mark Scout (Adam Scott), on the outside, is an alcoholic wreck, grieving his late wife. Mark S., at work, is the awkward, positive, lead of Macrodata Refinement. However, other characters, such as his new co-worker Helly R. (Britt Lower), see the workplace as a prison, and concoct various schemes to escape.

Severance is many things, it's high concept, it's nail-bitingly suspenseful, and it's a show that's really difficult not to binge. It's also a sharp corporate satire and a complex character drama, with separate storylines for each half of the severed characters. And it's a conspiracy, laden with little details that constantly make you ask, "But what's really going on?"

The dialogue and writing are sharp and crisp, with a tinge of the surreal. The pacing is slow and immersive, drawing you into the characters and strange events, but still moving along at a reasonable pace for one or two reveals per episode. There is not a single

poor episode in the season, making it remarkably consistent. The final episode of the first season is a tour-de-force, a climactic event, weaving each narrative together seamlessly, in what resembles a single shot.

The visuals are striking. The aesthetic is half-Apple (oh, the irony), and half anachronism. 90s cars, 80s computers, and mid century fashion contribute to the uncanny and surreal atmosphere. I found the aesthetic similar to games like Portal or The Stanley Parable. The shot composition is noticeably artistic: I regularly was impressed by the look and feel of the show, with lingering shots of empty buildings and cold hallways. Fun fact: much of the show was shot in upstate New York.

The show primarily deals with themes of alienation and dissociation, with each character split between their 'selves'. The satire is also biting, showcasing corporate dehumanization: childish 'perks', strange team-building exercises, almost constant surveillance, creepily cheerful managers, etc. It also shows the cult-like nature of many large tech companies, with Irving, one of the employees, treating the manual as a religious handbook.

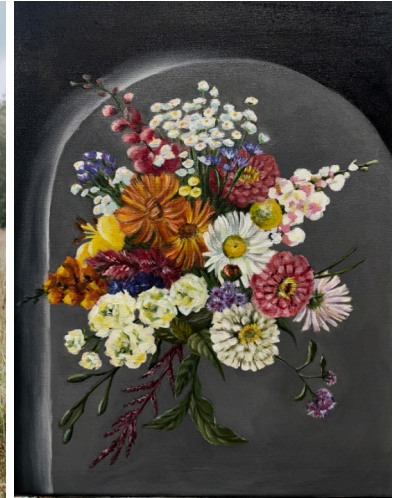
Despite not being directly horror, the show is often quite scary and contains several short graphic moments that more sensitive viewers may wish to avoid. There are also adult themes, such as self-harm. There is a lot of language, if realistically and non-gratuitously used.

Overall, I would heavily recommend this show. The second season is currently airing and is the same quality as the first.

"The work is mysterious and important." ★

Artist of the Week

Adelle Hunter '27



**H**i! My name is Adelle (Addy) Hunter and I am a sophomore with a double major in elementary education and art. I love painting with oils and watercolor, using lots of colors and texture. The main things I paint are flowers, plants, fish, and words. I even like to throw verses in Spanish into work that I do. I believe God gave us so many pretty things on earth to enjoy so painting nature is my way of admiring all of that. :)

