# Pathways Fellowship Reports, Summer 2020

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Aidel Townsley (A22)
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Los Angeles, CA
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Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, MD
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Yu Yau “Alice” Wong (A22)
Louisiana State University; University of North Dakota (online programs)
Linear Algebra; Discrete Math

*Five students who were awarded Hodson funding for summer 2020 were allowed to transfer their funding to Pathways for summer 2021.

Please note: three additional students have deferred their 2020 Pathways award to summer 2021.
The summer course on ‘Brain, Mind and Behavior’ at UC Berkeley was my introductory course to Neuroscience. The course offered me more than I had imagined and expected. Coming from St. John’s, I had expected that the courses at other colleges would be very technical and would involve little abstract or philosophical thinking. I was pleasantly surprised to find that this course made us wonder about topics such as cyber-ethics, human nature, consciousness, and the moral implications of neurological advancement. Our instructor, Dr. Presti, would make us discuss about these big questions without telling us the correct answer. I felt at home during these discussions because of my experience at St. John’s. While the questions were similar, I found that the way most students in the course approached these questions was mostly from a practical point of view. We discussed the particulars more than the general. We searched for evidence from real life, contemporary research, and journals to support our arguments. In research, one of the important skills is to read. I felt quite comfortable with most materials in research. Some of the papers we studied were already known to me from our St. John’s lab readings or suggested readings for the science preceptorial. So, overall, the course did not feel that rigorous to me in terms of critical thinking. It did, however, demand memorization of facts and mechanisms, which felt tedious in the beginning. Eventually, I found ways to encourage myself to memorize terms, facts, and dates given their importance in this study.

The course was originally offered online. So, the instructions, videos and discussion platforms were clear and organized and there was no technical difficulty. At the beginning of the course, I was not sure whether I was going to pursue research in neuroscience or therapy with clinical psychology or social work. Regardless of these possible paths, the course was relevant, interesting and academically meaningful to either of these professional studies in the future. By the end of the course, my desire to explore the field of neuroscience was strengthened. The course really showed me the creative and all-encompassing aspects of neuroscientific study. At the same time, this also made me realize that I need to have solid experience in research in order to get into graduate studies in neuroscience. Coming fresh out of St. John’s, I know that my road to graduate school in neuroscience is not a straight path. In fact, it does not have to be. I have decided to gather as much experience and practical wisdom on the way to my higher studies. Currently, I am teaching mathematics in a Great Book school while learning to code on my own. I will be applying for research work in neuroscience next year, which will likely be a stepping-stone towards my graduate studies. Overall, I would highly recommend this course to any St. John’s student—especially to a freshman or sophomore who is looking forward to studying neuroscience. Given the course is introductory, it is not enough in itself to apply for graduate school. However, if you’re looking for Neuroscience or Clinical Psychology 101, this course is definitely the best starter. Lastly, I’m deeply grateful to Pathways Fellowship Committee for the opportunity.
Studying chemistry as a Johnnie presented unexpected challenges. At St. John’s I read texts that establish modern chemistry, Lucretius to Bohr, and this exposure provided me a sense of familiarity when approaching chemistry, generally. I was confident that, even though I might not have committed the facts of chemistry to memory, I had discussed the principles that determine these facts throughout all three years of lab at St. John’s. This comfort was pleasant but it did not prepare me for the reality of lecture classes and what it meant to be “prepared” for such classes—especially classes that progressed rapidly to cover a full year of material in two months.

From textbook readings to digital flashcards, to weekly exams, General Chemistry was a far cry from the experience of drawing trees in the courtyard during Freshman Lab—although I do miss drawing trees. This is not to say that my summer chemistry experience was bad in any way, it is that it was different than the usual St. John’s tutorial; to compare the two against each other would be unhelpful. What I gained from General Chemistry was a factual understanding of material interactions on the smallest level for the sake of answering quantitative questions. There were moments where geometrical or chemical intuitions I had developed at the College helped make a dense lecture more manageable to study, like when memorizing the common spatial-structures of chemical compounds, but this was not the norm. Most of the time, understanding a lecture meant doing practice problems, making flashcards, asking questions in office hours, and trying to teach the concept to others using my own words (peers, parents, pets, or plants all worked well as pseudo-students).

Another challenge of the program was that it was all online, via Zoom. Attending chemistry lectures over Zoom felt more manageable than attending tutorials over Zoom did. In tutorials held on Zoom I always felt that the conversation suffered or moved differently, but being on Zoom for a lecture did not change the material that was covered in the lecture—only the means of delivery was different. In fairness, I do not have an experience of in-person lecture attendance to which I could compare Zoom lectures. What has been strange is that I am just now meeting some of the people who I was in two months of Zoom classes with and it is great to be able to see them in three dimensions and talking—not through a screen—comes more easily (all of these interactions have been outdoors while wearing masks and with adequate distance between participants).

I initially struggled in chemistry. I did not have many transferable study skills from my time at St. John’s and I do not think this is a shortcoming of the College—tutorials are different from lectures, and for good reason. In the first three weeks of chemistry, I had to find out what “being prepared” for lectures meant to me and how I would get there. What I found was most
helpful for my own learning was: **getting a full night’s sleep**, making flashcards after every lecture (on a spaced-repetition program called Anki), reviewing flashcards every day, going to office hours, doing too many practice problems, and continuing to run outdoors.

When I say that I found all of these things to help my learning, I mean that they yielded the best marks of my weekly exams. Doing well on exams in itself motivated me to continue working diligently and learning material. My time at the St. John’s prepared me to pick myself up after not doing so well on an exam here and there—I think of the struggles that were the post-Thanksgiving break Aquinas seminars—and to know that it is only by having moments where one feels that they have not done what they could that one can do better.

At the end of these two months, I am still pursuing the rest of my post-baccalaureate studies at Goucher College, with the ultimate goal of applying to medical school and earning a degree in medicine. This chemistry course has helped me to have more realistic expectations of what this road will look like and what skills will help me on my way to helping others. I would recommend Goucher College’s Post Baccalaureate program to other Johnnies interested in pursuing medicine after their graduations, and I would recommend Post Baccalaureate programs in general to Johnnies interested in medicine. The advising that is available to students in such programs and the support of a cohort have been instrumental to my success, and are not wholly unique to Goucher. What I understand to be unique to Goucher is the great care that I felt from my chemistry professor, my teaching assistant, and the program advisors as we navigate learning this difficult and important material.

I am incredibly grateful to the Pathways Fellowship and those who fund it for affording me this final opportunity with the College.
Throughout the month of July, I participated in a Summer Bridge Course in preparation for my Master’s Program in Molecular Biology at the University of Maryland Baltimore. This course was not required, but an optional program for students who wanted to get “a leg up.” Though we took a brief look at somewhat-modern biology during the second semester of Senior year, the last textbook biology class I took was in high school.

The course covered Molecular Biology, Protein Chemistry, Action Potentials, and Cell Signaling. Unlike most of the students in my program, I had to grapple with these concepts for the first time. There was a lot of content covered in a very short period of time. The lure of the program, however, is that after learning the major processes, enzymes, and elements of molecular biology, we must become scientists. Side by side with content, we learned the methodology used to probe the cell, primarily the DNA and proteins that determine who/what we are. Underlying material and method was the overarching message: we must learn how to ask specific, unanswered questions; draft reasonable hypotheses; and construct unbiased experiments to prove them. Special emphasis was placed on experimental controls, without testing for potential false positives and false negatives, our inquiries are meaningless, even circular. In this sense, St. John’s prepared me. It instilled in me a love of testing nature, the beauty of finding and hitting upon her “pressure points,” observing her response. Further, it taught me to heed the words of our older, greater minds without assuming they struck truth; to modify not glorify their hand-me-downs, to pivot and find their “pressure points” and so on, ad infinitum. Yet, I cannot recall an author in the lab curriculum who attempted to address his own biases. Often, later authors had to shine the needed light, albeit adding their own prejudicial shadow. I find this the most promising facet of modern science, the preoccupation with disproving one’s own premise.

This was my first brief look at the universe inside the cell. I’m only starting to see the therapeutic and academic applications of exploring its intricacies. My dream remains the same, though now the distance between me and it is concrete, I want to be a scientist.
The summer of 2020 has probably been the hardest summer I have faced. First, the uncertainty of a job in the United States was already looming from the beginning of March for a fresh graduate. And then the pandemic happened. Thankfully, I was able to secure the Pathways Fellowship to study psychology courses. My aim was to enter graduate school in the fall of 2021. I took four courses, worth 14 credits from the University of North Dakota (UND). The four courses are: Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 101), Abnormal Psychology (PSYC 270), Introduction to Statistics (PSYC 241) and Research Methods in Psychology (PSYC 303). I could not convince them to not require the introductory courses. I knew that four courses would probably be too hectic, but I knew I had to do it in order to get into graduate school—and I am grateful too—I think there are a lot of gaps in my understanding that the introductory courses have helped me to overcome.

When I entered St. John’s four years ago, I would have never imagined going into psychology. Now I think that this field is the right fit for me, and I am still exploring how to make my career more specialized. Specifically, child psychology fascinates me. I want to explore how our education sector can benefit by the research in psychology. Ensuring a child’s emotional and intellectual development is probably the biggest challenge in today’s education—even then, most of our schools do not focus on the emotional development of the child. As I fulfil the duties of a teacher myself, I see these concerns on a daily basis. The classroom serves as an experiment for me—the kids are teaching me a lot.

I was in Annapolis when I was taking this one whole semester’s worth of courses. Then in the beginning of June, I moved to Phoenix for my teaching job at Great Hearts. I had already completed one third of the course materials in the first month. I did not expect the teaching job to be challenging. But it surprised me. I spend almost all of my day at the school. Because half of the kids are online and half of the kids are at school, the teaching load has doubled. All this is to say that I have not been able to complete the course on time. Thankfully, UND gives you 3-9 months of time to complete the Self-Paced courses. So, I will be able to complete the courses by December.

The professors at UND have been very helpful. Although all of the course materials are pre-recorded, it does not give a sense of separation from the professors. The professors are willing to help in any way possible. I have also found that the administration and registering process at UND is very efficient. I would recommend to all Johnnies to consider the UND Self-Paced online courses for their summer enrichment.
After a great deal of shuffling following the cancelation of my dream internship in the U.S. Embassy, Oman, I enrolled in a remote C1-C2 level Academic Turkish course from Ibn Haldun University in Istanbul. My intention with this course was to acquire the academic Turkish skills necessary to pursue a Master’s in Turkish History. However, the research I did in pursuit of stronger Turkish skills ended up changing my post-graduate plans altogether.

Taking place between 1-5 a.m., five days a week, over Zoom, the small, discussion-based class resembled a St. John’s classroom. Each day, we came to class prepared to discuss, in Turkish, an academic paper, radio clip, or video on a topic ranging from the Ottoman ‘vakif’ system, to public opinion on euthanasia. My classmates—calling in from Uzbekistan, Russia, Egypt, and Turkey— and I would then surmount myriad linguistic, cultural, and technological difficulties to make sense of these texts, before writing a short essay on them, then breaking into groups for a teamwork exercise.

Without learning how to forge through challenging material in a group at St. John’s, I would’ve gotten caught up in the course’s linguistic hurdles, and entirely missed the important cultural lessons necessary for fluency.

Outside of class, we were required to research and write, entirely in Turkish, a paper in the academic register. I chose to write mine on how Turkey used its cultures and identities in its Soft Power. Through researching this, I realized that soft power offers an intersection for my career choice of international politics, and my lifelong interest in culture and society. Previously, I was hoping to bridge these two areas by pursuing a Master’s in the latter, then working in the former.

Looking back, I am tremendously grateful to the Pathways Fellowship for providing the opportunity to dive so deeply into a culture and language I love, while clarifying what sort of direction I would like to take once I am done with school. I would highly recommend this program to any others who desire to learn Turkish, and especially to those who, like me, have maxed out U.S. options for Turkish learning.
Nancy Hilton ‘20  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, Virginia  
Course: Post- Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program  
Instructors: Jillian Golasewski & Susan Salko  
Length: June 10 – August 3, 2020  
Credits earned: 6

The Pre-medical post-baccalaureate program here at UVA attempts to complete in one year what most undergraduates undertake in 4-5 years. I used my Pathways grant (and continue to use) for the two semesters of general chemistry which are completed during eight weeks over the summer. My classes were originally meant to all be in person and there is one time in the week when we can get together to have class in person for two hours.

This year the program has become quite unusual due to Covid-19. All of my classes are online, which means I have had to rapidly adjust from the ways of St. John’s to the ways of learning at a large institution in addition to online learning. It was not an easy transition, especially under the accelerated format. Under the conditions of eight months of chemistry fit into two months online during a pandemic, there honestly was not much room for enjoyment or adjustment.

As I progress further into the program, I feel that I have become in some ways a different person because of this new way of learning and being. I have had to learn new ways of absorbing information, preparing for tests, and taking notes. If I can do it, I promise anyone else worried about how they will transition into a STEM field can too.

There were larger extenuating circumstances beyond the pandemic which greatly affected me but, I have to say I did not find myself well suited to General Chemistry this summer. The best way St. John’s prepared me for what was to lie ahead was being accustomed to reading and thinking all day, but it was still exhausting!

I do not mean to scare any future post-bac students who may read this, I hope the pandemic will have abided by that time. You (the prospective Pathways recipient) may find that at whatever school you go to, the summer or any accelerated courses you have to take will be the most challenging part of the experience. I found that the only thing that can be done is to simply go through it and try to become a more tenacious and humbler student. I have come to the awesome realization that I can do hard things and in the face of adversity and impossibility I can overcome and achieve.

In spite of some of these downsides, I am grateful for many more things than I feel discontent with, everyone has been very understanding and shown a great resilience towards the struggles we all face. Most of my professors seem to be able to carry on class like normal, so things do not feel so completely different after a brief time. The technological and personal learning curves have been huge!

I am grateful to spend more time in proximity to loved ones and stay safe in my home. I am grateful to have this incredible opportunity at UVA which has been greatly aided in receiving a Pathways Fellowship. It is more than simply buying lab equipment, textbooks, and paying application fees. All of these things add up to create a new threshold for me to step into. Even though post-baccalaureate pre-medical programs, online classes, and in-person classes for that matter are difficult, I truly cannot recommend programs like UVA highly enough.
This summer, with the help of the Pathways Fellowship, I took a general introductory course to psychology at the University of California Davis. I was interested in this course because I have an interest in the social sciences, and wanted to see if this would spark further interest as something I wanted to pursue after completing the undergraduate program at St. John’s.

Originally this course was to be held in person on campus, but due to COVID-19 it was switched to remote learning with live lectures over Zoom. At first I was disappointed by this shift, because I was hoping for a return to some normalcy after the remainder of the St. John’s school year had been put online, but adapting to an online class was not difficult. Unlike classes at St. John’s, this class was lecture style which was quite easy to do remotely.

The background of philosophy that St. John’s has given me was more applicable to the study of psychology than I had anticipated initially. Both study human behavior, just in different ways. While I found the information being taught very engaging, it did not take long for me to realize this field was not going to be something that I wanted to pursue further. What I enjoy about philosophy, and social sciences in general, is the broader systematic categorization of what goes on in the world. Psychology as it was being taught in this course was much more zoomed in on understanding the specifics of human behavior.

While I don’t have a whole lot of zeal to dive deeper into psychology, I did gain a lot of helpful insight of what I do like and do want to pursue. With this opportunity I was able to have a conversation with my professor who had useful information on how to find passion in academic topics, and discussions about different aspects of social science.

I would recommend this program to any other students who have the opportunity to take advantage of it. It helped me gain some direction for researching what I would like to study after college by letting me find out what I didn’t like. As an added bonus I also got to speak to a professor who had a plethora of useful information from his own experiences.
Rory Quinn Johnson ‘22  
The Schuler School of Fine Arts  
Baltimore, Maryland  
Course: Summer Program  
Instructors: Francesca Schuler & David Good  
Length: 6 weeks  
Credits earned: Certificate of completion

St. John’s prepared me for Schuler by engraining within my learning process the value of starting at the beginning. Whether it is starting with Theophrastus or Euclid, we gain a sense of rebuilding our academic knowledge from the foundation. At Schuler, they teach the old master’s way of approaching art which involves traditional techniques and the intersection of many different mediums. Alike to the St. John’s education, Schuler is equally intersectional. We studied figure drawing, oil painting, water color, and sculpture. You cannot study one without the others. My program was mostly in person doing plein air classes, and sculpture in the studio. Figure drawing and oil painting were online. The online aspect of figure drawing and oil painting was limiting but given the current situation, I am grateful for the opportunity and safety I was afforded.

Before the summer program, I was unsure if I could make a career out of sculpture as I had only done the art classes at St. John’s. Perry Carsley, who teaches the art classes, is an alum of Schuler, and a fantastic mentor. Having completed the summer program and learning from Mr. Carlsey, I am inspired to pursue a deeper relationship to art. Studying art through the old masters is incredibly hard. There is nothing easy about it. You must retrain your eye, the relationship between your mind and hand, and your mentality. I learned to be okay with starting from the beginning even if the others in the class were miles ahead. I even had to learn how to hold all the tools. I slowly developed an ability to balance my natural talent with the technical side of art allowing the piece to come together more fluidly. I learned that I love to sculpt, and that it is what I want to study for as long as I am able. The most important thing I was told during the course was that we (the students) do not come here to leave with one shiny finished product. We come here to leave with hundreds of attempts, and a wealth of knowledge to apply from now on. Every great artist is sitting on a pile of thousands of failures. After hearing these things, I was excited to fail and take risks with the goal of learning. I would recommend Schuler to anyone interested in learning art the Old Master’s way. It has changed the way I approach my visual world.
This summer, I took an online course called *Introduction to International Relations* at UC Santa Cruz. Although I was unable to spend my free time on the sunny California beaches, I could still enjoy a beautiful view from my room in Tbilisi, Georgia. Taking a course in IR theory is a sort of travel, as one is required to explore many current and historical international events simultaneously. It is a travel both in space and time, just like any education should be.

Before the course started, I read the syllabus very closely in order to know what to expect. The course syllabus promised to introduce students to the study of IR as a discipline and a way of thinking and knowing about the world. I found out that there would be four main components of the course: readings, lectures, writing assignments, and discussions. The course would be divided into five modules, each consisting of two parts. For each part of a module my professor updated readings, lectures, and writing assignments online. Although we are supposed to start with the readings, I listen to the lectures first, as they help provide a general outlook of a topic. I read the articles and listened to particular talks after going over the questions in the writing assignments, which are due each Sunday.

In the beginning of the course, we examined three major theories of international relations: Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism. After going through the key concepts that are relevant to the study of international relations, we examined the main assumptions of each theory. In our discussions we asked the following questions concerning the individual theories: *What does Realism tell us about war and conflict? Is cooperation a solution to all problems in international politics? How is our understanding of international politics constructed?* In our reading and writing assignments, we conducted case studies for each theory on the War in Syria, Brexit, and the Rohingya Refugee Crisis, respectively.

One of the fundamental questions one has to ask before studying IR is: *Why do we need theories of international relations?* The course has helped me to understand some current, recent, and historical political events better through the logic of different IR theoretical perspectives. It is indeed rewarding to know that political events are not random, and to recognize some patterns behind them that could help to predict the future.

Our participation in the course was mainly measured through writing. In addition to short writing assignments that followed specific articles, lectures, or talks, throughout the course, I submitted two readings responses, one midterm exam, and one final essay. In my first reading response I compared Realism and Liberalism and their main assumptions based on course readings and lectures. I also argued that Liberalism is a more convincing IR theory than Realism. In my feedback, I received some helpful advice regarding my use of grammar, style, and organization; our teaching assistant also pointed out appealing and strong parts of my discussion. This feedback helped me improve my future writing assignments.
In my second reading response, I compared how Economic Structuralism and Critical Theory view power. I first defined power from the perspective of both theories, and discussed who has it and how it manifests in international relations. I then explained why the Critical Theory approach to conceptualizing power is more convincing for me. These short argumentative essays helped me formulate opinions that guided me in our online discussions.

I successfully completed the midterm exam, in which I was asked to define five terms from the course and write a short essay on one of the provided prompts. I chose to write on globalization challenges caused by the pandemic. Although I was under pressure to complete the exam in time, as I haven’t written exams since I got to St. John’s, I enjoyed writing about a subject that is relevant today.

My final essay was on the future of the nation-state and considered the main challenges that the nation-state faces today. I was asked to discuss how different theories of international relations—such as Economic Structuralism, Critical Theory, Feminism, Green Theory, and Normative Theory—will approach and explain the changing importance of the nation-state. I then hypothesized whether the nation-state will persevere as the main actor on the international stage or if it will be replaced by something else.

In addition to improving my writing, communication, reading, and listening skills and making me more politically aware, this course has changed the way I feel about the field as a whole. Before this course, power, security, globalization, international law, and climate change were issues I always cared about but never thought I had enough information or experience to talk about seriously. In addition to reading and writing assignments, discussions and office hours have helped me gain more confidence discussing politics. As my professor was researching Putin’s rule, public opinion, and media in Russia, she was well informed about events in Georgia, which I found especially useful in our conversations. In order to get the most out of the course, I tried to participate in all of its parts equally and consistently. Even though the discussions were optional, I considered them a fundamental part of the course. They provided an important opportunity to apply different IR theories to the real world.

Studying different IR theories gave me an opportunity to question many political opinions—such as capitalism, state security, and climate change—that I have taken for granted before. It is challenging to analyze political events and approach concepts of war and peace from more than one perspective, but it can be much more rewarding to question the ways in which dominant IR theories view these concepts.

This course showed me that the development in IR theories is not arbitrary, but rather that the newest theories meet the demand of modern society more closely. Critical Theory has revealed to me how unexpected reality can be if studied thoroughly. Thus, Critical Theories should be taken more seriously, as they can actually help us in reshaping the world by offering more efficient ways of dealing with global problems. The ongoing debate within the field of International Relations between positivism and post-positivism has challenged me to explore the reality from multiple perspectives and thus find some middle ground.

Before taking Introduction to International Relations, my interests in politics were not solid. Intellectually I have always been stuck between two extremes. I found mathematics attractive for being precise, and I appreciated art, poetry, and literature for their more abstract beauty. But politics for me remained a place full of opinions that I always avoided defending. During this Pathways Fellowship, I learned that the space between precise and abstract arts taken by social sciences is very complex and multisided. Although it might sound counterintuitive, there is no universal good and bad in politics. Thus, political events and decisions as well as the international system itself should be examined from many different perspectives.
I originally planned to take part in an in-person neuroscience internship this summer with a Hodson award, yet as circumstances befell me and many others, I found myself in Annapolis without said internship, living with about nine other international students in Gilliam. Thankfully, Career Services offered me the choice of converting the Hodson award to a Pathways Fellowship, and I looked to UC Berkeley’s online summer courses once again, this time their psychology course. Along with the neurobiology course I took last summer, the course would provide me with a comprehensive view on the neuroscience field.

The course itself is normally a semester long, but compacted down to a month and a half for the summer. It offers Johnnies a rare glimpse into the conventional mode of education: lectures, homework, discussions that ARE supposed to conclude, and finally, exams. Regardless, the course was immensely informative on the methods of research in the psychology field, and the questions that the field is currently trying to answer. The workload can get heavy at times due to the compact nature of the course, but there were regular office hours present to help.

My summer thus consisted of this psychology course, surviving the pandemic, and working in IT at St. John’s throughout the pandemic. Like my last summer, it was an exercise in independent living (now more difficult), preparing for the coming school year (now an online one), and preparing for a career after St. John’s (now also more difficult). More than ever, it required of me the ability to adapt to every changing situation, and to make the best of my time.
I spent 12 weeks taking an Orchestration 1 class at Berklee Online in Boston, MA, which is relatively longer than other summer courses. The class is one of the required courses for a Bachelor's degree in Film Scoring. The course was originally online. Berklee College of Music has a good reputation for having a strong online class curriculum, and it is part of why I decided to take the class at Berklee.

The final goal of the course is to compose a 2-3 minute & minimum of four pages of a full score orchestral piece. I had to hand it in as both a PDF score and a MP3 file. To be able to compose proper orchestral music for the final project, the class learns about characteristics of each orchestral instrument like the range of the instrument and specific playing techniques. Every week has a composing/arranging assignment for certain instruments to see if the class can apply what they learned for the week to their music.

The class also analyzes some classical and film music. In most of the cases, arranging orchestral music begins with copying great composers’ style. Thanks to our Sophomore music tutorial, reading the full scores and analyzing them in class was somewhat familiar to me.

Prerequisites for this course are knowledge of software (1. sequencing software e.g. Logic Pro, Cubase 2. Notation program e.g. Finale, Dorico 3. Orchestral sample library e.g. Vienna Symphonic Library, Eastwest) and some music theory. Our Sophomore music tutorial is enough for the latter requirement; however, the class will be challenging if you are not familiar with using a sequencing software.

After taking the course, I have more understanding about what my career goal looks like. Weekly assignments/exercises and some big projects for the semester allowed me to experience a preview of working in a music editing and composition field. For instance, every week, I got used to working on the assignment by keeping a deadline of a project in mind. It is the common environment of the field that customers often expect the music to be made in a short period of time rather than of good quality.

I would highly recommend Orchestration 1 as a 101 class to the students who are interested in working in a music editing or composing field, especially in film, TV and game music. If one is interested in composing yet not good with using MIDI, I also recommend the class as a challenge. I do not recommend it to students who are not interested in orchestral music or only interested in studying music theory. One minor thing—the class also requires you to take a final exam with the final project.
During my time at St. John’s College, I realized my passion for the conveying of ideas and stories. I became interested in pursuing a career in screenwriting. I decided to use the Pathways funding that I received this summer to take a variety of courses to help me prepare for this field.

There are a couple elements to screenwriting that I needed to familiarize myself with. These being the formatting of writing a script, how to write scripts, the ability to channel ideas and how to target my script. This required a lot of reading and memorizing rules. Fortunately, my time at St. John’s College prepared me for large amounts of reading and writing as well as giving me the capability to process large amounts of data.

The Masterclasses that I took were led by famous screenwriters and writers who spoke about and gave advice about the writing process and workshopping to bring ideas to light. I found it extremely helpful because in such a vague field having somewhere to start and project goals is very helpful. The script reading class with Mr. O’Malley was an essential element to my career path since most screenwriters break into the industry by working for a studio as an analyzer rather than a writer of scripts. This certificate class also helped me begin to understand how studios might view ideas and potential scripts that I will write in the future.

Overall, the various courses were a perfect combination to give me a firm foundation for my career in screenwriting and all the instructors were very helpful. The instructors gave extensive feedback on written assignments and pointers for the future that helped me develop as a writer and prevent the onset of bad habits. Also, many of my preconceived notions of the field were removed during the classes. The instructors provided lots of extra readings and for future research such as Aristotle’s Poetics and some of Aristophanes, works that I am already familiar with, as the building blocks and inspiration of much of modern screenwriting. I would recommend this program for anyone interested in screenwriting because it provides a solid foundation and allows you sets goals and projects for yourself.
Through Pathways funding this summer I was able to take online introduction to graphic and design and color theory courses through the Corcoran College at George Washington University and the Otis College of Arts and Design, respectively. Despite the setback of the Coronavirus pushing the courses to online, I had a wonderful experience and am extremely grateful for the opportunity the Pathways grant afforded me.

I have been passionate about art and design for years, and although I was able to pursue this in small ways in my time at St. John’s, through my job as Fine Art Assistant and on the Energeia staff, I wasn’t able to actualize these passions through academic work. Fortunately, this never stopped me from creating art and spending my own time studying design. But, through these courses I was able to lay the groundwork and foundations for a more successful future in the field of art and design.

In my graphic design class, we discussed the basics of the field using the Adobe Creative Suite (primarily Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator). This course was particularly helpful because we covered the practical aspects of art and design such as marketing tools such as logo design, resources for marketing and branding, and of course, technical skills for mastering these skills. Although I do not have a career plan quite yet, I am certain that the knowledge and skills I have gained in this course will be incredibly helpful, whether this be in the form of the knowledge of desirable marketing and branding techniques, the necessary skills for digital art production, the hexadecimal value system and color process for digital-to-print work, and much more.

Though I thoroughly enjoyed my graphic design course and I am excited to see where the skills I learned there will lead me, the true highlight of my summer was my color theory and design course through Otis. Prior to this class, I had a basic understanding of color through art classes in high school, my personal experience with color as an artist, and tidbits I had read in texts on art theory; but I quickly learned that this was only scratching the surface of color theory. The course culminated in the creation of a 16-page “color book” consisting of hand painted gouache swatches expressing various color harmonies and basics of color theory. We worked through various standardized color systems (Munsell, Pantone, Itten), essential terminology (all color is defined through hue, value, and chroma), and the cultural impact of color worldwide.

Color is an essential aspect of our life and experience, and as an artist, this course allowed me to broaden my creative horizons in so many ways. Every week we would hand mix a new set of swatches for our “color books”; value, monochromatic tint, tone, shade, warm/cool harmonies, complementary harmonies, and split complement, triad, tetrad harmonies. We had almost complete freedom to mix our colors, meaning that more often than not, I ended up with completely unique and personalized colors, which really added to the charm and excitement of learning about color theory. In addition to our swatches, we constructed free form compositions in an attempt to portray the organic expressions formed through the abovementioned harmonies.
Along with our practical and hands-on approach to color theory, in this course we also explored various artists who employ color theory specifically in their work such as Stanley Whitney and Odili Donald Odita. We also read through important texts in the history of color theory, focusing on Josef Albers *Interaction of Color* (1963), which utilizes about 150 color studies created by himself and students in order to study and understand the science and psychology of color. One of Albers greatest additions to color theory are his ideas on the illusion and trickery that color can play on the eye, which really makes one consider color in a new light.

I would certainly recommend this course to anyone—artist or not—interested in understanding color or our perception of color in art and society. It was an incredible introduction to the vast world of art and color theory, and I am eager to continue not only my study of art and color theory, but also to see how my new knowledge will influence my life and art.
Any student would say that the summer of 2020 was not like any other summer. For me, it was no exception. My class was set to take place in July, however, it was announced that my class too would be online-only. To my surprise, the experience of taking this class online has proven to be a fruitful experience. Being able to re-watch lectures after they were recorded, accessing the course materials for free provided by the course instructor and connecting with other students from the comfort of home has not only taught me how to use my time wisely, but also helped me fully immerse myself in the course. One thing I’ve learned about myself as a result of online-only education is that I really enjoy going over every detail, and that I can work individually in a way that proves to be productive.

Our class consisted of 25 students, of which 24 were UC Berkeley students. I was the only non-Berkeley student, let alone one who was a liberal arts major. I definitely stood out, as all my classmates were legal studies or pre-law majors who already knew each other, the professor and the teaching assistant. I noticed that I quickly blended in with them. I showed up to all the virtual office hours and made sure I stayed connected with my professor. I believe my eagerness to learn, participate and build personal connections with my professor and TA is the result of my time at SJC, where we are encouraged to intensively engage with the Program and our tutors. In addition, most of the texts we were required to read were texts we had already studied at the College—e.g. The Federalist Papers. Having a prior understanding of the fundamental texts and their history definitely helped my learning of the U.S. Constitution and my analysis of certain case studies. I’ve ended up writing two papers on two different Supreme Court cases—my midterm paper on Roe v. Wade 410 U.S. 113 and how the Supreme Court behaves with regards to reproductive law, and my final paper on affirmative action in U.S. public schools and the Supreme Court’s role in it, specifically on the Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1, 551 U.S. 701 case.

After completing the course, I had a better idea of what pursuing a legal career looked like, and whether I was a good candidate for it. I even talked to my instructor after the course ended, and her guidance along with the papers I had to write for the successful completion of the class has shown me that I am indeed a good fit for it, and that I enjoy this line of work more than I enjoyed previous experiences working on different topics. My academic goals haven’t changed, as my intention in taking this class was to have a foundation for law school. I now have a better idea of what that plan looks like in the future and a more concrete understanding of how to pursue those goals. I would definitely encourage any Johnnie who is interested in the legal field to apply to this course, as I have learned things about both myself and the career I would like to pursue.

Ece began her coursework in the U.S. and finished at home in Turkey.
Aidel Townsley ‘22
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Los Angeles, California
Courses: Introductory Psychology & Introduction to Statistical Reasoning
Instructors: Maureen Gray & Dr. Miles Chen
Length: 6 weeks
Credits earned: 9

One of the most important ways St. John’s helped me with the requirements of the courses I took was through attendance. At St. John’s attendance in class is of primary importance. One of my professors gave 10 percent of our grade to quizzes that he gave the answers to during class, in order to incentivize students to go to lecture. I would have gone to lecture regardless because of my experience at SJC. It made doing well in the class a lot easier. Of course the reading skills I learned through SJC were helpful as well.

My course was meant to be in person but then became online. One of the classes was run asynchronously because of this which definitely changed how I felt about the class, it made it less personal. I also felt that tests were easier because they were open notes due to them being online. Overall, because I am not interested in switching to a different college, I did not mind “missing” the campus experience.

My academic and career goals have not changed drastically though I was reminded how mindless and boring I find classes to be at “normal” school. The material was wonderful but because grades are the primary motivator, the classes become routine and it is hard to be invested in learning.

I learned that I value education that requires me to be individualistic, which is something I thought was true about myself, but I truly learned this summer. I also learned that there will always be someone who is willing to have a deeper conversation about the material you are learning. Those Johnnie skills of openness and conversation only improve my quality of life, wherever I am. I also remembered how important and interesting I find psychology, and I learned a lot about how to interpret statistics which should be useful when reading the news.

I would definitely recommend people apply for Pathways if they are interested in learning more about a subject. I definitely enjoyed learning about psychology and statistics, and thoroughly enjoyed the readings I did for those classes. If you have a specific goal for graduate school this is a really simple way to boost your chances of being accepted and it is a lot of fun to learn in a new way, even if it is not as preferable as the St. John’s way for me. I am very grateful that St. John’s offers us the opportunity to further ourselves and our careers in this way.
The Calculus I course was originally intended to be an in-person course, but it was switched to an online course in the summer. The course format, however, is different from other online courses at the school. The instructor uploaded materials to the Canvas platform, which was the only means of communication. Classes were held in the morning: instead of simply attending an online lecture or presentation, we attended a live class in which the professor shared her screen and lectured on the materials. The discussion was lively: frequent responses, done through the class chat, were required to satisfy the attendance policy.

The professor was also very patient and supportive. She was willing to elaborate upon everything, and her email responses were timely. She encouraged students to have questions, even simple ones. My classmates were very engaged. Their active participation motivated me to study hard. They also got in touch with each other outside of class for group-studying. Having taken this course, I am even more motivated to pursue my goal, which is studying mathematics at the graduate level. However, I realize that I have a very long way in front of me before I can achieve what I want to do. Mathematics is so vast and difficult, and this course only covers a minimal portion of it.

Studying at another school gave me a first taste of the academic experience outside of St. John’s College. I learned to focus on my grade and organize a working schedule to study outside of class. I also came to understand that constant practice with the class materials helps not only with exams, but also in mastering the subject overall. I am also more confident in reaching out to other people for help, which is very important for success.

I would strongly recommend this program to any student who wants to have an experience in learning at other schools, as well as those who want to pursue graduate studies. It is a shame that this course was not available in-person, because given the satisfactory experience I had, it would have been much better if I had known the professor and my classmates in person.
Yu Yau "Alice" Wong ‘21
Louisiana State University and University of North Dakota
Online programs
Courses: Linear Algebra and Discrete Mathematics
Instructors: Stacey Vessel and Jeremiah Bratz
Length: 12 weeks
Credits earned: 6

The two credited courses that I took were Linear Algebra and Discrete Mathematics. They were both online and self-paced courses. In the linear algebra course, I learned about systems of linear equations, vector spaces, linear transformations, matrices and determinants. The course provided concepts that are crucial to many areas of computer science, including graphics, machine learning and optimization. In the discrete mathematics course, it covered a wide range of topics that are particularly important to the areas of computer science and mathematics. Unlike college algebra, learning about the concepts and point of view of discrete mathematics is at least as important as mastering various computational techniques. The demand for mathematical proficiency has grown exponentially in a number of careers. These courses provided me with great enlightenment and the necessary mathematical tools to approach the theory and practice of computation.

I have greatly benefited from these courses, and they have confirmed my interest in computer science. This learning experience definitely opened up more opportunities for me in further studies and in potential career paths.

I highly recommend both programs to students who are interested in mathematics and related subjects.