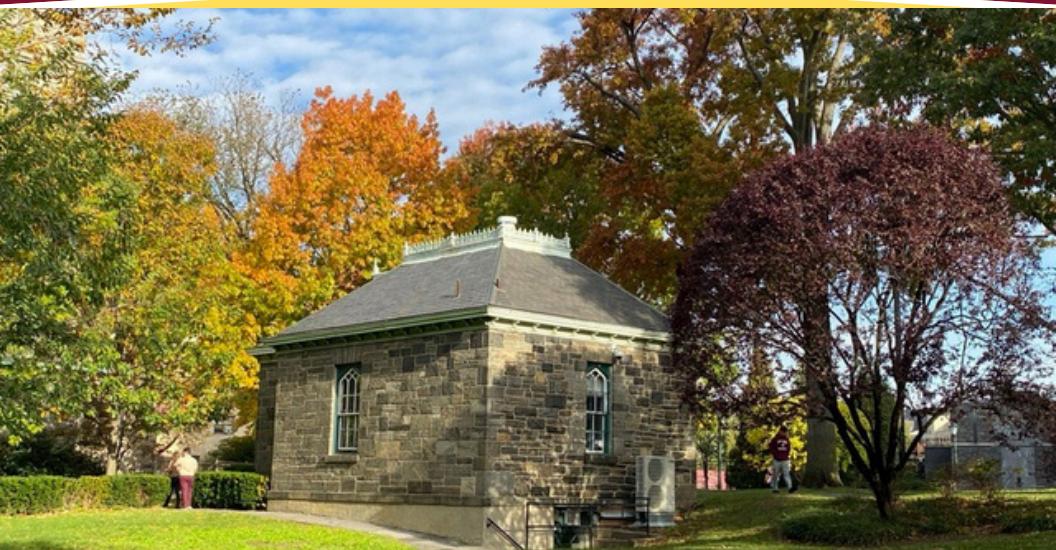


FORDHAM COLLEGE AT ROSE HILL HONORS PROGRAM



Fall 2025
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



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Program Overview

The Fordham College at Rose Hill (FCRH) Honors Program is a community of exceptionally engaged students who are passionate about pursuing knowledge and promoting social justice. With a total of over 140 students, approximately 35 per cohort, the program brings together majors in humanities, social sciences, and STEM. Honors students represent every major of the college and come together in a shared pursuit of learning.

Founded in 1950, the Honors Program has continued to grow and innovate, from hosting twice the annual meeting of the Honors Network of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities to launching a justice-centered curriculum in 2023 and establishing its first endowment in 2024.

Mission Statement

The mission of the FCRH Honors Program is to forge a community of scholars committed to justice.



THE FORDHAM COLLEGE AT ROSE HILL HONORS PROGRAM A TIMELINE

- 1 1841: Fordham College at Rose Hill is founded.
- 2 1950: Honors Program is founded, with Reverend Victor R. Yanitelli as its first director.
- 3 1953: The first Honors class — a group of six students — graduates.
- 4 1957: Fordham's bookstore is acquired to become Alpha House, an Honors-only space.
- 5 1962: The Honors Program becomes the first Fordham class to be inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.
- 6 1974: Fordham becomes a co-ed university.
- 7 1974: The Honors Program begins to accept women, following the closure of Thomas More College — Fordham's former coordinate college for women.
- 8 2006: The first Honors Program reunion is held, with over 100 alumni in attendance.
- 9 2006: Fordham Honors students attend the first annual AJCU Honors Conference at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.
- 10 2023: The Honors Program launches a new curriculum, built around the vision of fostering "a community of scholars for justice."
- 11 2023: The FCRH Honors Program sponsors its first-ever GO! project, sending students on an immersion trip to Mexico.
- 12 2024: The Honors Program sets up its first endowment.

FCRH Honors Oral History Project

In the summer of 2006, a team of Fordham faculty and students embarked on a project to document and preserve the history of the Fordham College at Rose Hill (FCRH) Honors Program and its alumni. Dr. Harry Nasuti, then-director of the FCRH Honors Program, worked alongside Honors students, including Kevin McKenna (FCRH 2007), Antonella Iannarino (FCRH 2007), Christine Barcelona (FCRH 2012), Kevin Crenny (FCRH 2011), Valerie Grant (FCRH 2011), and Jennifer Kwapisz (FCRH 2010), to interview and transcribe meetings with alumni from the earliest years of the program. This project was made possible by the generous support of Fordham's St. Edmund Campion Institute for Academic Excellence and its then-director, Dr. John Kezel.

With encouragement from Dr. Olena Nikolayenko, the FCRH Honors Program Director, and support from the Ambassadorial Grant, Kathryn Amend (FCRH 2027) prepared final versions of the transcripts, digitized, and uploaded the material. Kathryn is an Honors student, majoring in Math and Economics. Her research interests include development economics and monetary policy. Before working on the FCRH Honors Oral History Project, she was a Co-Managing Editor for the *Fordham Political Review* and a Research Assistant for the Bronx Jewish History Project dedicated to bringing to light the experiences of Jews in the Bronx through oral histories and artifacts.

Kathryn Amend (FCRH '27)

I am excited to digitize and preserve the Honors Oral History Project for posterity. Across the two oral history projects, I documented over 20 oral histories. These are crucial first-person accounts of unique subcultures that, otherwise, would often be lost to time. They allow historians to preserve lived experiences, rather than merely historical artifacts or impersonal data. Through the Honors Oral History Project and the Bronx Jewish History Project alike, readers can empathize with and relate to members of a community that has long since dissolved into history. The future of the honors program is tied to its past, and appreciating one can help build the other.



The digital collection of
the FCRH Honors Program Oral History Project
is available in the Fordham Research Commons at
https://research.library.fordham.edu/honorsprogram_fcrh_oral_history/

The entire interview transcripts are available for viewing online.
Below are some excerpts from the transcribed interviews.

I decided my sophomore year of high school, which was let's say 1963, that I wanted to come to Fordham. By the time I was ready to start filling out the application, Saint Thomas More [College] already existed, so I had a place to send my application. I was told by one of my roommates not to speak out in class because the guys didn't like the girls who spoke out in class, and they wouldn't date you. And my response was that my intention is to attend graduate school, so I don't care.

(Interview with Barbara S., FCRH 1969, 13 April 2010)

Junior year abroad was intellectually exciting. I learned a lot of mathematics, very good conditions, met tons of people, traveled...Our guidebook was Frommer's Europe on Five Dollars a Day. That was our standard. I spent about \$105 a month. I would go to some classes—math classes—in these big amphitheatres with tons of people hanging from the rafters. I also discovered, we were told we had to take philosophy courses junior year at the Institut Catholique [de Paris], where once [Jacques] Maritain had taught. So it was a real center of French Catholic thinking, right in the middle of Paris.

(Interview with Ken M., FCRH 1962, 23 July 2010)

Ramily Sunday



SAC leaders at the Ramily Sunday, 7 September 2025.

On September 7, Honors students across all cohorts attended Ramily Sunday, a special event in Bepler Commons to kick off the new academic year. Groups of students, comprising mentoring families, met over Chipotle lunch to better get to know each other, an opportunity especially valuable for the first-year students. The FCRH Honors Program welcomed the class of 2029, including majors in Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Engineering Physics, Environmental Studies, History, Integrative Neuroscience, International Studies, Journalism, Mathematics, Philosophy, and Political Science.

At Ramily Sunday, leaders of the Student Activities Council (SAC) presented information about SAC committees, sharing their plans for the fall semester. Students also learned more about the Youth Engagement Program and the ways in which they can get involved in the Bronx community through the FCRH Honors Program.

The event concluded with an HPRH Bingo, where students were able to connect by discussing their interests and backgrounds.

Bronx Explorations

All the first-year Honors students are required to take HPRH 1104 Bronx Exploration, a one-credit course aimed at building a sense of community and enhancing students' knowledge of the borough's history and culture. With the support from the FCRH Honors Program and the Course Enrichment funding by Fordham College at Rose Hill, Honors students had an opportunity to go on three excursions over the course of the fall semester.

Through a **walking tour of Morrisania**, students explored the musical and social history of the neighborhood. This tour, led by Ms. Elena Martinez, Co-Artistic Director of the Bronx Music Heritage Center, highlighted some of the cultural landmarks that have shaped American music. After the tour, students attended a film screening that shed some light on Latinx stereotypes in the mainstream media.

Students also attended *Bochinchando*, a Bronx Vaudeville-style show, at the **Bronx Music Hall**. The performance featured comedy, music, and dance, celebrating the Bronx's rich heritage.

Furthermore, students visited the **Bronx Museum of the Arts**, a contemporary art museum connecting its audience to local artists. This fall, students viewed the exhibit, titled "Ministry: Reverend Joyce McDonald," which centered on the artist's own spirituality, embodying themes that have shaped her life.



First-year students
on the Morrisania walking tour



Performance at the Bronx Music Hall

Interdisciplinary Seminars



First-year students at the Interdisciplinary Seminar, 5 November 2025

Following a long-standing tradition, first-year and second-year Honors students convened for an interdisciplinary seminar in November. The seminars integrated topics across disciplines, guiding students as they explored a given text. Alongside faculty, students were able to connect themes from these texts to contemporary issues facing our society.

The first-year seminar examined the value of liberal arts education in the United States. Students reflected on dramatic changes in the U.S. educational system in recent decades and compared their experiences to those of their parents.

The sophomore seminar focused on the film *1984*, an adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian novel. Sophomores discussed how the film explored concepts such as totalitarianism, oppression, and misinformation, and how these themes might be relevant in the present day.

STEM Research

Julia Gudis (FCRH '26)



As Fordham's first recipient of a ThinkSwiss scholarship, Julia Gudis (FCRH '26, Biological Sciences) traveled to Switzerland this summer to carry out brain tumor research in the Department of Biomedicine at the University of Basel. Gudis analyzed how macrophages—white blood cells that are key players in the innate immune system—can engage multiple components of the immune system to target a wide range of tumor antigens.

Kathryn Amend (FCRH '27)

Thanks to the generous financial support of the FCRH Honors Program through the Ambassadorial Grant, I had the opportunity to represent the Honors Program through my ThinkSwiss Research Fellowship in Switzerland. I conducted research in the Brain Tumor Immunotherapy and Biology Laboratory at the University of Basel's Department of Biomedicine under the mentorship of Dr. Gregor Hutter (MD/PhD), a neurosurgeon and a leading researcher in neuro-oncology, and Dr. Timo Schenker (MD), a current PhD candidate. My project focused on developing Chimeric Antigen Receptor Macrophages (CAR-Mφ) as a potential form of immunotherapy for glioblastoma (GBM), one of the most aggressive and fatal primary brain tumors in adults. Over the course of the fellowship, I pursued three main aims: producing lentiviral vectors to deliver CAR constructs, generating CAR-Mφ from the THP-1 monocyte line, and testing their phagocytic and cytotoxic activity against GBM cells.

Laurel Baxter (FCRH'26)



Laurel Baxter (FCRH'26, Biological Sciences) completed an internship with the Hospital for Special Surgery with the support of the Ambassadorial Grant. Her work involves studying skeletal dysplasias, integrating focused clinical data with reported patient concerns to improve patients' lives.

This summer, I began a clinical research internship with Dr. Cathleen Raggio, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS). My project focuses on gastrointestinal symptoms in patients with skeletal dysplasias, a group of over 400 rare genetic disorders characterized by abnormal bone and cartilage development and related orthopedic issues. I am continuing this internship throughout the fall, and I will write my Honors thesis on this topic. This project has helped me understand the intersection of clinical care and research, seeing the direct potential of research to improve patients' lives and helping me clarify my research goals as I prepare for a career in medicine.

Sean Huynh (FCRH'27)



Sean Huynh (FCRH'27, Mathematics and Computer Science, Minor in Philosophy) attended the Notre Dame Summit on AI, Faith, and Human Flourishing in the fall of 2025. Being a vice president of the AI at Fordham student organization, Sean participated in the Next Generation of Leaders panel and shared his perspective on artificial intelligence.

I had the chance to meet and converse with so many esteemed educators, technologists, and religious leaders, and I am honored to have had the chance to share my voice as a student on the pressing issue of artificial intelligence. I have learned so much from the many conversations surrounding AI, faith, education, and humanity.

Fordham Research Commons: Honors Theses

This fall, the FCRH Honors Program began depositing Honors theses in the Fordham Research Commons, enabling Fordham students and a broader academic community to access outstanding undergraduate research completed at the university. This project was implemented by Ashlyn Abate, a junior majoring in finance in the Gabelli School of Business.

Here are examples of recent theses defended by Honors students.

Katherine Cáceres Bravo (FCRH'25)

Patulin as a Negative Regulator of Wild-Type ELP1 Splicing in Familial Dysautonomia-Derived Cells

Thesis Mentors: Dr. Berish Rubin and Dr. Sylvia Anderson

Olivia Griffin (FCRH'25)

Ripples on the Bronx River: Exploring Gentrification and Indigenous Magical Realism Through Creative Storytelling

Thesis Mentor: Dr. Keri Walsh

Amy Herd (FCRH'25)

Dumy and the Nation: How Folklore and Folk Songs Help Compose a Distinct Ukrainian Narrative

Thesis Mentor: Dr. Daniel Soyer

Morgan Jones (FCRH'25)

Racial Bias in AI: The Impact of Discriminative Algorithms on Minority Communities

Thesis Mentor: Zakirul Alam Bhuiyan

Audrey Leung (FCRH'25)

Learning in Crisis: Analyzing COVID-19's Effect on NYC Public High Schools Through Open Access Data

Thesis Mentor: Dr. Gregory Donovan

The digital collection of
the FCRH Honors Program Theses

is available in the Fordham Research Commons at
https://research.library.fordham.edu/honorsprogram_fcrh_theses/

The Importance of Ethics in International Relations: Visit to the Carnegie Council

On October 29, Dr. Olena Nikolayenko took a group of Honors students on a visit to the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. The Council's **Global Ethics Hub**, located at 170 East 64th St in New York City, serves as a meeting place for individuals and institutions to advance values-based decision-making and ethical leadership in world politics. The Carnegie team discussed how the organization identifies emerging ethical issues across international affairs and fosters values-driven, responsible leadership among young professionals. Throughout the academic year, the Carnegie Council hosts the **Ethics Empowered: Leadership in Practice** series, bringing together scholars and practitioners to discuss pressing ethical issues, reflect on their careers, and provide guidance to young leaders. Honors students were invited to attend the in-person events. In addition, Honors students learned about internship and career opportunities in the non-profit sector.



*Honors students and the Carnegie Council staff:
Priya Chokshi, Kathleen Egan, Jacob Kamen, and Brian A. Mateo*

Students' Reflections on the Visit to the Carnegie Council

I had a truly enlightening experience at the Carnegie Council. My passions lie within environmental justice, and with my major being international studies, I feel that the Carnegie Council embodied these two ideas beautifully. The Council has numerous initiatives to share its message with the world, which surprised me; it's refreshing to see that many resources come from a non-profit. Additionally, I am now keen on applying some of the ethics we learned at Fordham, practicing similar exercises to the ones we did today. Our visit to the Carnegie Council had a profound impact on me.

I really enjoyed seeing a different perspective on international relations. I've always been interested in pursuing a career in international relations and research, but I wasn't familiar with many of the career paths outside of the classic examples, such as the UN and the State Department. It was really interesting to learn about the amazing work the Carnegie Council does, as well as the practical application of ethical solutions in a world with issues that often feel overwhelming. The topics felt particularly relevant to the institutional barriers we've discussed in Bronx Exploration, the policies and actions we've learned about, and the solutions we've hypothesized in that class. This trip was incredibly valuable and interesting, offering a glimpse into what I hope my future career will look like.

During our visit to the Carnegie Council, I was most interested in the Council's definition of ethics as "a process for finding solutions" rather than a cure-all solution in and of itself. I think there's certainly a misconception in our society that the study of ethics will lead all participants to the same conclusion, and thus, ethics is the best process for finding a solution that pleases everyone. However, as the Carnegie Council leaders thoughtfully addressed, they consider ethics to be pluralistic, because there is more than one way to approach a problem morally. The idea of pluralistic ethics reminds me of my Philosophy class's discussions about the Socratic dialogues. Some of us were frustrated by the fact that Socrates rarely, if ever, comes to a conclusion about the problem at hand. Rather, he usually shows the so-called 'expert' that their approach to the problem is flawed. I believe the ideal discourse on ethics mirrors the Socratic dialogues: participants are challenged about their beliefs and walk away with a greater understanding of the number of solutions that exist for any given problem.

Study Abroad: Spotlight on London and Granada



Quinn K. Burke (FCRH'27)

Major: International Political Economy

Minor: Art History

Host Institution: University of Oxford

*Photo in front of the Radcliffe Library
on Matriculation day.*

I decided to spend my junior year at the University of Oxford for the opportunity to fully immerse myself in a new academic and cultural environment, surrounded by some of the most intellectually curious people in the world. Although I study International Political Economy at Fordham, my time here has been dedicated to completing my minor in Art History—a shift that has allowed me to explore new ways of thinking and broaden the intellectual framework. The highlight of my experience so far has been my tutorials. Oxford's tutorial system offers an unparalleled chance to direct my own studies; my tutor gives me real freedom to pursue my inquiries while challenging me to think more deeply and contextually. I've spent hours digging through college archives, tracking down pamphlets in the Bodleian library system, and writing one to two essays a week based on what I uncover.

It has been a blast, and unlike anything I've ever done before. In just a few weeks, my research and writing skills have grown tremendously. There are moments when I'm sitting at my desk flipping through books, transcribing records, or discussing ideas with my tutor, and I can't help but smile. It feels genuinely magical.

I am excited to return to Fordham next year, especially to my friends in Honors, and to bring this experience into my senior year. I am eager to continue building on what I have learned here, particularly as I begin preparing my senior thesis.

Study Abroad

Outside of my art-historical studies, I've had the chance to join the student arts magazine—the longest-running student magazine in the UK (established in 1892)—where I am contributing feature articles, as well as getting involved with the finance society, which has been a great way to further grow my professional skillset while away.



Francesca Stella (FCRH'27)

Major: Political Science

Minor: Spanish

Host Institution: University of Granada

My favorite part of my study abroad experience has been getting immersed in different cultures. Living in Granada has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the historical impacts of the various religions that have ruled Spain at different times, as well as the lasting cultural influences they have left behind. Eating authentic food, speaking the language, and visiting important historical monuments (such as the Alhambra) have allowed me to better understand the culture and history of Granada as we know it today, and the ways in which things have changed over the centuries. Traveling while abroad has allowed me to get a better understanding of different regions, traditions, and practices as well.

Taking classes in Spanish and being surrounded by native speakers has allowed me to become more confident in my Spanish abilities, which will help me in my personal, educational, and future career endeavors. Many of my classes discuss cultural competence and the need for intercultural communication, which is crucial for any career in public service. One of the main reasons that I chose to study abroad in Granada and to live with a family was to strengthen my conversation abilities in Spanish.

2025 Summer Internship Fellows

With the support of the FCRH Honors Program, several students receive summer internship fellowships, enabling them to complete unpaid internships at nonprofit organizations. This fellowship provides students with an opportunity to gain professionally rewarding experiences in organizations that serve the common good.



Isabella Alcantara (FCRH '26)

**Major: Political Science;
Latin American and Latino Studies**

Host Organization: International Rescue Committee

The International Rescue Committee supports newly arrived refugees and migrants through resettlement services including education, legal aid, medical care, and social support.

Within the IRC's Youth Education department, I worked as both an Administrative Intern and a Youth Peer Mentor for the Newcomer Youth Summer Academy (NYSA), a program designed to help refugee and immigrant youth transition academically, socially, and emotionally into the NYC public school system.

Professionally, this internship deepened my understanding of the challenges nonprofits face, revealing how even the most well-intentioned programs are often limited by funding and resources when serving marginalized communities. At the same time, it reaffirmed my passion for nonprofit and humanitarian work and strengthened my sense of purpose moving forward. As I write this, I plan to continue my journey at Fordham through pursuing an Accelerated Master's in the Humanitarian Studies program—an opportunity that feels all the more meaningful because of this experience.



Andrés Caballero (FCRH'26)

Major: Psychology

Host Organization: Friends of Jonas Bronck Academy

Founded in 1997 as an alternative to traditional junior high schools, Jonas Bronck Academy is a Bronx school that seeks to equip its students with academic and character building skills.

Francesca Stella (FCRH'27)

Major: Political Science

Host Organization: Sanctuary For Families

The Sanctuary for Families is a non-profit organization providing legal and clinical services, economic empowerment, and resources to families in need.

I am so grateful that, as only an undergrad, I have now already had extensive experience with legal writing, which affirms my desire to go to law school and work in Public Interest law. Being able to work on cases that deal with immigration law, family law, LGBTQ+ law, housing law, and more has given me the inspiration to do this in the future. I am extremely grateful to Sanctuary for Families, specifically the Community Law Project, as well as the Fordham Honors Program, for making this experience possible.

Isaac Muir (FCRH'26)

Major: Art History; American Studies

Host Organization: Theater Y

Theatre Y is a Chicago-based performing arts center dedicated to making theatre accessible to all, regardless of geography or income.

The way in which this opportunity contributed to my personal and academic edification, as well as the conception of my career and post-graduate plans, cannot be overstated, and yet while this experience was rigorous and thought-provoking, the work did not have the infrastructure of financial abundance that other internships do. This is why the Honors fellowship, which allowed my summer work to function as a paid internship, was essential. Because of Honors, I was able to take part in an opportunity that moved my career ahead by opening up powerful networks in the work I am interested in while strengthening my commitment to the values I form connections around.

Hannah Valencia (FCRH'26)

Major: Sociology

Host Organization: Part of the Solution

Part of the Solution is a Bronx-based nonprofit dedicated to providing both short- and long-term services—like nutrition and social support—to Bronx residents in need.

Ultimately, I hope to pursue a career in a communications-related field, such as marketing or public relations, and this internship has provided me with a strong foundation for that path. Indeed, under my manager's guidance, I have cultivated a versatile skill set through diverse responsibilities across internal communications, social media, and public relations. Whether drafting board bulletins, monitoring engagement metrics across social media platforms, or writing press releases for key events, each task has provided meaningful, hands-on experience aligned with my long-term professional goals.

SAC Events

This semester, the Honors Student Activities Council organized a wide array of activities and events for Honors students. Below are a few highlights of recent SAC-led activities.

Bear Mountain Hike



The SAC Health and Wellness committee organized a hike to Bear Mountain in November. Students took a Ram Van from the Bronx to the Bear Mountain State Park, located approximately fifty miles north of New York City. They went on the Major Welch Trail and sections of the Appalachian Trail, enjoying the scenic view along the way.



Visit to the Bronx Museum of the Arts

Students visited the Bronx Museum of the Arts, a contemporary art museum that celebrates the Bronx and its diverse communities. Specifically, students attended an exhibition dedicated to the sculptural practice of Reverend Joyce McDonald.

SAC Events

Chinatown Food Tour

As part of the Chinatown Food Tour, students visited a variety of Chinese restaurants, including a dumpling shop, a noodle shop, and a bakery.



SAC Dodgeball Team

The SAC Sports committee organized an Honors dodgeball tournament at the Lombardi Fieldhouse.



Honors Fall 2025 events included

- Puzzles and Pizza
- Fall Fest
- Cookies and Tea in the Botans
- Bronx Night Market Walkover
- Jackbox Night
- Halloween Movie Night
- NYC Marathon Watch Party
- Career Center Headshots Event
- Roblox Night
- Ice Skating in Bryant Park



Honors Faculty, Fall 2025

Computer Science
Nikitas Kounavelis

Economics
Mary Beth Combs

English
Diane Detournay
Shonni Enelow
Moshe Gold
Corey McEleney

History
Mattie Armstrong-Price
Samantha Iyer
Grace Shen
Kirsten Swinth

Mathematics
Cris Poor

Philosophy
Judith Jones
Lauren Kopajtic
Bligh Somma

Physics
Stephen Holler

Political Science
Olena Nikolayenko

Sociology
Orit Avishai

Theater
Michael Zampelli

Theology
Michael Peppard
Alexander Perkins

FCRH Honors Program Team

Dr. Olena Nikolayenko is the FCRH Honors Program Director and Professor of Political Science. She received her PhD in political science from the University of Toronto in 2007 and was a post-doctoral fellow at Stanford University before joining Fordham in 2009. Her current research focuses on civil resistance and labor activism in repressive political regimes, with a regional focus on Eastern Europe. She can be reached at onikolayenko@fordham.edu.



Emily Caro (FCRH'28, Political Science and Spanish Language and Literature) is FCRH Honors Program Administrator. Within Honors, she is also a student leader in the Student Activities Council and a member of the FCRH Honors Program Advisory Council. Outside of those commitments, she serves as a University Ambassador for the Rose Hill Society, a content editor for the Fordham Political Review, a member of Dance Co-op, and is part of the social media team for Fordham's Spes Nova chapter.



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FCRH Honors Program

Program Highlights: Fall 2025

