

12-2015

## Corey Ennis Honors Portfolio

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*Minnesota State University - Mankato*

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### Recommended Citation

Ennis, Corey John, "Corey Ennis Honors Portfolio" (2015). *Honors Capstone Portfolios*. Paper 8.  
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# Corey Ennis

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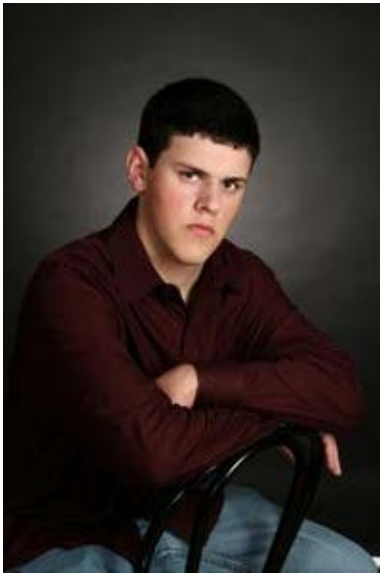
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## Welcome

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I am an honors student at Minnesota State University-Mankato. My current major is Cognitive Science with an emphasis in Biology.

## An Introduction of Me

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I was born on November 23th, 1993. I grew up in Inver Grove Heights, MN, a suburb of St. Paul. I graduated from Simley High School in the class of 2012. I enjoy playing basketball and hanging out with friends in my spare time. I hope to have an exciting experience while studying at MSU.

## Mission Statement

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I will always strive for excellence in my academic studies and in the other areas in my life. I will demonstrate honesty and determination to achieve my goals and be the best person that I can be, and I will work to help others do the same.

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# Corey Ennis

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## An Introduction to the Honors program

The Honors program is an opportunity offered at Minnesota State University-Mankato to students that have shown that they can handle a more intense workload entering college. The Honors program offers students a chance to interact more closely with professors through smaller class sizes and LC events that bring students and faculty together. Honors courses offer a more comprehensive experience in covering higher level material, as well as offer more support for students in succeeding. While it can be a great deal of work, the Honors program allows students to take advantage of unique opportunities not available to other students that can help them better their futures and their careers.

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## Leadership

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## Leadership

As I have progressed through my college experience, I have learned how to become a leader. It has not been easy, and much of what I have learned came from a mix of successes and failures. However, each of these things has been important in helping me grow. The many different experiences that I have participated in have shaped who I am as a leader and helped me to build upon my leadership skills. From my early courses such as [FYEX](#) to more recent classes like [Leadership in Context](#), I have been able to demonstrate and build my skills. Most importantly, these experiences have helped me develop a philosophy that I use to guide me as I attempt to lead others. In developing my own leadership philosophy, I have learned that some of the most important leadership qualities to my form of leadership are to both empower those around me and to be confident in myself. Through some of my experiences, I have learned to use these qualities in order to be the best leader that I can be and continue to grow in the process.

One of the most important parts of leadership is to be able to empower those that are in your group to work together to complete a task or goal. I have learned this in working on many group projects over the years in college, but perhaps the most important experience I have had in working in groups was working with some of my peers creating the constitution for my student organization. Last year, I was approached to work on putting together a club for my major. The club was to be named the Cognitive Science Student Organization, or [csso](#) for short. Along with a few of my peers, we started to write a constitution that would discuss the guidelines for our club. I decided that the best way to complete the document was to split it up into sections and have each person write a few of the articles, and then meet up once they were finished in order to check for errors and put it all together. I knew that by asking the others to each take responsibility for part of the constitution, I was asking them to dedicate time to something in addition to the schoolwork that they had to do already. In order to do this, I made it known that I really needed their help and that the only way this would work is if we each did our part. I tried to make them feel important, and let them know that the work that they did was necessary for our success. In doing this project, I learned that in order to make the best project as a group, I have to make sure that all the members in the group feel that what they are doing is important and that they are a valuable piece of the group.

Another important part of leadership is having confidence in your own abilities. A leader that projects confidence in what they are doing can make the group feel better about getting behind that leader. In working on the Cognitive Science club, I have learned that I need to have confidence in myself in order to truly get my points across. In attempting to put together our first meeting, I had to speak to some of the professors involved in the department. When I spoke with them, some of the members were also present. I attempted to talk about the things that we were going to do with confidence, stating the ideas that we had about the group that we thought would be successful in drawing new members. The staff was rather impressed after I had discussed our goals, and the other members felt good about our ideas. I know that in the future I must speak with confidence and know what I am talking about. By doing this, I can help to empower my group and make them feel good about our task, which is part of doing a good job on the task.

In learning about myself and my leadership abilities through these experiences, I have created my leadership philosophy. I believe that in order for me to be a successful leader, I have to empower those around me, to show them that they are important to the goals of the group. By doing this, the other members of the group will feel that what they are doing matters and therefore create a better project or complete a goal with better quality. I also believe that in order for the group to feel good about what we are doing, I have to be confident in my leadership in order to get the best out of each member. By following this philosophy when I am in a position of leadership, I believe that I will get the best effort out of the group and complete the goal to the best of our abilities.

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## Research

In my time at Minnesota State University, the most important skill that I feel that I have learned is how to do research. I have wanted to do research as part of my career for a long time, and building my skills in these areas has been crucial for me to chase my dreams. Over the course of my studies in early courses like [FYEX](#) and [Sociology](#) to later classes such as Leadership in Context and others, I have learned and improved my abilities in information literacy, the research process, and disseminating my results. All of these skills helped me to create a project that I could be proud of and enabled me to contribute to the knowledge of my field, and will help me to be a better researcher in the future.

I learned about [information literacy](#) early on in my studies. In my sophomore year, I took a course on the subject through the Honors program. In this course I learned how to find information that I could use from different sources and how to use that information to bolster my arguments. I also learned how to ethically use information that may be controversial as to ensure that my research has integrity. These skills helped me greatly in finding important information for my historical research project with Dr. Corley in my sophomore and junior years. With the knowledge that I had learned about information literacy, I was able to find important facts about the French Revolution and Robespierre, which was the topic of my project. I searched through many different historical accounts of the events and was able to find the information that I needed in order to build a foundation for the arguments that I had regarding the topic, which made my project even more informative and impactful.

Another aspect of research that the [research project](#) with Dr. Corley helped me with was really refining my skills in going through the steps of the research process. In doing my project, I had to diligently go through each step, such as looking through texts in the library, talking with my project advisor about some of my information, translating some of the texts into English, and putting all of the important facts into a form that I could use in my paper, in order to make sure that I had all the information that I needed and covered all of the considerations established for rigorous research that I needed to make my project something worth sharing. Along the way I learned that to do good research, you have to focus on your work and be willing to put in the time. I spent many hours searching for facts to use for my arguments, and more time putting these facts together into a paper and presentation. I quickly learned that if I was not willing to give all of this time to my work, it would not turn out the way that I wanted it to and not be as good as I knew that it could be. Putting all of this work into my project also gave me a great sense of accomplishment after it was completed. Determination and focus are definitely necessary to complete a project of any meaning or value, and afterwards they will provide a great feeling that what you have done is worthwhile.

Disseminating my research after all of my hard work was one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. I presented my research twice, first at the spring 2015 Honors Conference and then at the spring 2015 Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS). I gave two oral presentations to small groups of both students and professors, and I felt that each went pretty well. However, one important lesson that I learned in these presentations was to know your audience before you give your

presentation. At the Honors Conference, I was grouped with other presenters that had topics focused on historical events, so the audience consisted of professors and students interested in these sorts of topics. They already had a sense of some of the background information coming into the session. On the other hand, I was grouped with a variety of topics at URS, so most of the audience did not really know about the background of my topic. This meant that I had to take some extra time in order to explain the context of the different situations I was discussing, some of which the audience did not really pick up on. I learned that in different situations you have to frame your presentation to fit the people in the room. Sometimes you will have to explain more of the background. Performing these presentations was very rewarding, and they taught some important lessons about the audience that I hope to be able to use in my career.

I think that all of the skills that I have learned in my time at college have really allowed me to create a project that helped to extend some of the knowledge in my field. I took a relatively unstudied perspective to an issue that had been debated about by historians for centuries and did my best to find all the information that I could about it through my skills with information literacy. I took this data and used it to support my arguments, putting it all together into a research paper. I then disseminated this paper in an oral presentation that I gave at two important conferences. I feel that my research, if further spread about the historical communities, could start to frame the discussion about my topic in a new way and provide a different way for people to look at the topic. I also expanded much of my own knowledge, as learning about Robespierre and the French Revolution was fairly new to me at the time and learning all of these things about history opened up a whole world of research that I had never even considered. In any case, this project allowed me to put all of my research skills to use and gave me hope that I could do it again in my professional field.

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## Global Citizenship

Before I started attending Minnesota State University, I would never have thought that I would really be spending much time with people of other cultures. I figured that I might interact with some people of different backgrounds in my classes and as friends, but not any deeper than that. However, over the last four years I have had the pleasure of working with people from all over the world in a variety of different environments. However, from my early experiences in [FYEX](#) and the Wacipi [Powwow](#) started to open my eyes to how important and interesting learning about other cultures can be. These experiences have been some of the most important things I have ever done in my life, and they have helped me to understand my own culture and the cultures of others, realize and come to an understanding of the differences between my and others' cultures through communication, and learned about the different aspects involved in learning another language. These experiences and skills have helped me to become a better individual and will hopefully assist me in my future career.

I can honestly say that learning about other cultures has allowed me to learn more about my own culture than I ever thought I could. By studying other cultures and talking to people from different backgrounds, I was able to understand my own culture and how it influences my interactions with others. Some people are very lively and open about themselves and their culture, whereas others are more reserved in what they talk about. I have found that I fall somewhere in the middle, and this is just one of the many rules I have discovered about my own culture in talking with other people. I have also discovered that I have some biases in terms of how I observe other cultures. This was very apparent when I began my service learning with the [African Student Association](#). Going into the experience, I was nervous that I would not be welcomed or would be seen as someone intruding on their private space. I was surprised to learn that I was wrong, and that they were excited to have me there and show me how their organization worked. I was glad to have been wrong in my biases, and as I continue to work with people of other cultures, I hope that many more of these will be erased. I also hope to learn more about myself from these experiences, and how my own culture influences my interactions with people of other cultures.

In working with the African Student Association, I was able to really grasp some of the different elements of their cultures. I was able to interact with different members each day, and it was interesting to see what kinds of things about their cultures were important to them. I was able to see that they were all very proud of their heritage and the different countries of Africa that they came from. In their own interactions I saw how passionate they were in talking about the state of their home countries and what their different values were. I got to see first-hand just how special their cultures were to them at the African Night event in the spring. I was able to watch a variety of different performances that highlighted the countries represented, such as dances and musical acts, and saw just how much work they put into their performances and how much they cared about them. This experience really demonstrated to me just how proud these people were of their cultures, and it helped me to understand the different aspects of them by which they lived their lives.



Communication between people of different cultures has been interesting to me ever since I became involved in these different intercultural experiences, and I think that this has been demonstrated a great deal in my work with the Intensive English Language Institute tutoring sessions. I have been tutoring two students during my sessions, and these individuals come from very different backgrounds. In teaching them more about the English language, I have been able to see how they interact, and it has really opened my eyes to how different cultures communicate. Since they are not completely fluent in English yet, their dialogue is often slower than and simpler than if I were to speak, but they have the same kinds of interactions that I would have with my friends. They laugh and make jokes, and they help each other with problems that they are having. I would say that this experience so far has enabled me to see how cultures share similarities and differences in communication. I know that everyone communicates differently, so I have begun to alter the way that I speak to others in order to accommodate their needs. I know that this will be an important skill in my future career where I may interact with people from all over the world.

I think that [learning Spanish](#) and taking Spanish courses in college has really helped me to develop as a person. Going into the classes, I felt nervous because I was not very good at speaking, and I thought that others may think less of me for it. Looking back, I realize that this could be how someone immigrating to the United States may feel at first. They are often coming to a new place where they may not speak the language and not know any of the people. I now understand how stressful that this could be for someone, and whereas my experience was in a classroom setting, this equates to someone's life. I also learned a lot about the Spanish culture in the courses, such as the different interactions between the people and how they live their everyday lives. I know now that these interactions are just as complex as those of the people in the United States, and I think that this has expanded my view of the world. Taking these classes was very important to me, as they not only taught me a new language, but also gave me a different perspective on the world that I live in and how the people interact with one another.

Completing the global citizenship competency of the Honors program turned out to be one of the most important things I have ever done. It opened me up to a world of different intercultural experiences and allowed me to discover more about myself as a person. It also helped me to gain a new perspective on the world and better interact with others in my own culture as well as other cultures. I know that I will be able to use the knowledge I have learned to interact with people in my future and further develop as a citizen of the world as a whole.