

# Lauren Reiman

Honors Student

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## Welcome

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Thank you for looking at my e-portfolio! My name is Lauren Reiman and I am a senior at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am majoring in Statistics with a minor in Creative Writing. As a member of the Honors Program at MSU, I hope to develop my skills in leadership, research and global citizenship.

### Mission Statement

I believe in making a difference, whether it is on a personal or a global scale. Additionally, I believe in challenging myself to be the best that I can be.

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## Honors Program

The mission statement of the Honors Program, which can be found on the program's website, is as follows:

"The mission of the Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato is to create future leaders, researchers and global citizens by providing high ability and motivated students with exceptional learning opportunities, mentoring relationships, and a community of scholars that foster their development as future leaders in a global society."

Leadership

Research

Global Citizenship



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## Leadership

As an introvert, I had always believed that I would not be able to be a great leader, and to try being a leader meant fundamentally changing who I am. However, when I joined the Honors Program and took the [Honors First Year Experience course](#), I learned that anyone can be a leader, including myself. Everyone simply has different strengths. By taking the Strengths Finder assessment, I learned that two of my top strengths are "learner" and "responsibility." I thrive as a leader when I can improve and learn new things, and I value being dependable.

Through my experiences with [group work](#) in several of my classes at MNSU, I have been able to use my strengths as a leader, though in slightly different ways. In my Sensitivity to Disability course, no one leader emerged in my group, though a few people helped start a conversation to get ourselves comfortable with each other and our topic. I am not very good at starting discussions, but I had group members who covered this weakness well. In my Ordinary Differential Equations (ODE) course, all of my group members were passive, so I helped get them involved and steer our project in order to complete it. For both these experiences, it was important to have "leader" roles and "follower" roles in the groups. Had everyone in my Sensitivity to Disability course been followers, the presentation may not have been able to be completed; for my ODE course, had everyone tried to be leaders and take control of the project, this could have led to disagreements and the inability to complete a project we were all proud of.

[Hy-Vee](#), where I have worked at for several years, has a different dynamic than groups in my classes. Because there is a clear hierarchy among the workers, with several different tiers of managers, I have been exposed to different leadership styles. Three managers in particular had very different styles of leadership. As I developed my personal leadership philosophy, I noticed that while there are advantages and disadvantages to all three of the leadership styles, I preferred the one where my manager made sure that people's opinions were expressed and that people felt recognized for their hard work.

I have had to take a different leadership approach as [a coordinator for an upcoming exhibit for the YWCA](#). This leadership opportunity is different than other leadership opportunities I have had because I have had to use an authoritative approach, something that I struggle with. This experience reinforced that I prefer letting people contribute their ideas in a democratic way, because I tried to find a way to balance letting people contribute their ideas while still making most of the decisions for the project.

From my past and current experiences, I learned that I prefer leading with a democratic leadership style because, while it is not one of my leadership strengths, I do value creativity and allowing personal expression. However, I have learned that there are times when an authoritative approach must be used. Leadership is fluid; there is more than one way to lead a group, and the leadership style might change depending on the leader, the team, and their objective. Over the course of my undergraduate career, I have become more comfortable with different leadership styles and pushing myself into leadership positions that allow me to experience new roles, while staying true to myself as a person.



## Research

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As a curious person, researching new topics has always interested me. I love learning, and researching topics allows me to learn new things. However, before coming to MNSU, my understanding of the research process was limited to academic research papers that only used academic resources.

In my [First Year Experience class](#), I learned about information literacy and synthesis, and their importance to the research process. I learned how to find the best resources for my topic from online databases available through the library, and how to ethically source them in my paper. Using this knowledge, I was able to complete my [Honors European History to 1648 Food Project](#). For this project, I researched how social class might affect food availability in Elizabethan England. One of my main resources was a cookbook from the time period. As a result of this research, I learned how to not only use the content of a primary resource, but also its context—such as when and where it was published and who had access to it—to answer my research questions.

I have had a few key research projects in my classes that have helped me better understand the research process and develop my research skills. For my [ENG 101 class](#), I wrote a paper on how the Internet positively affects interpersonal relationships, especially among youth. By writing this paper, I learned how to find information pertaining to my topic and source it correctly, how to structure the information and make connections, and how to use resources from opposite perspectives on my topic to strengthen my argument. Additionally, I learned how to develop an effective thesis statement extending from a body of research. I used the skills I developed in my ENG 101 class and applied them to a research project about people with amputations in my [Sensitivity to Disability class](#). As I was researching, I noticed that there were not many scholarly papers that contained information about the daily life of people with amputations. Therefore, I had to find a different kind of resource: I looked at stories told by people with amputations and at resources for people with amputations. Because I had several kinds of resources—all very different in their perspectives—I had to organize the varied perspectives in these sources in an ethical way that would answer my research question and be respectful about my topic.

One of the most important research opportunities I had was when I worked on my [independent research project](#) with my mentor, Dr. Laura Harrison. Inspired by a statistical analysis of the representation of women in Hollywood films from the late 2000s, I worked with Dr. Harrison to develop my own research question: what is the representation of women in Hollywood films from 2016? I completed a literature review, conducted my analysis of three films, and presented my findings at the Undergraduate Research Symposium at MNSU on April 10, 2018. There were more steps involved in the research process than I had thought, and it was difficult deciding when I knew enough about my topic to begin my own analysis of films, but this research project helped me have a better understanding of how to develop and conduct research. Presenting my findings was stressful, but afterward, I felt proud of my hard work. This experience inspires me to seek out more opportunities for research.

During my undergraduate career, my understanding of research has broadened. Because of my experiences, I better understand how to develop my research, and how to find and ethically use resources from varying perspectives. Additionally, I've gained experience with presenting my research findings to the public. I look forward to future research opportunities I may find in my professional field and in my personal life.

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## Global Citizenship

Before beginning my undergraduate career at MNSU, I had not heard the term “global citizen,” nor did I know that it meant being someone who is aware of their own culture and its relationships to others. In my [Honors First Year Experience class](#), I learned about what it means to be a global citizen, including that global citizens gain knowledge and understanding of other cultural perspectives through interaction with culturally different individuals, and that they have an understanding of the link between language and culture. From this class, I began to understand how my cultural view is impacted by my background, experiences, and identity.

My [Honors Sensitivity to Disability class](#) helped me further my understanding of my cultural rules and biases, and I began to develop my knowledge and understanding of other cultures. For this class, I interviewed a woman who is deaf. Afterward, I reflected on the similarities and differences between her cultural experiences and mine. I learned about how her experiences are shaped by the prejudices and stereotypes of the culture with which I identify, and how I can try to stop prejudices and habits of my mind get in the way of an effective interaction with someone culturally different than me.

I learned more about my cultural biases and views working on my [independent research project](#). I researched the representation of characters in Hollywood films. By searching the answer for how culture impacts this representation historically and present-day, my knowledge and understanding and self-awareness of my culture has broadened. As a white woman, it is easier for me to find a narrative that represents my identity within my culture. Films have been and continue to be used to reinforce stereotypes. Additionally, cultural events strongly impact the representation of characters in film; for example, as a result of the backlash during the feminist movement, female characters were punished or killed, if there were female characters in the film at all.

Learning a second language has also helped me understand culture better. While [learning Spanish](#) on campus, I learned about the cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication between the U.S. and Spanish culture in both South America and in Spain. I have also noticed that language barriers affect the power relations between people of different communities; in my experiences in my Spanish classes and community, those who speak eloquently in a second language are seen as being smarter and more powerful, while those who struggle are seen as being less smart and less powerful, despite knowing two or more languages. This has a big impact on my confidence speaking in my second language.

I noticed this was true for the international students I am currently working with as an [English language partner](#) for the Language Partners Program on campus. English is their second language, and I help them with their English skills while learning about their cultures and sharing my own. Their cultural backgrounds are different than my own, and by asking each other complex questions about each other’s cultures, we have bonded over our similarities and differences.

During my undergraduate career, my understanding of global citizenship has broadened. Because of learning a second language, researching culture, and my interactions and developing relationships with culturally different people, I have become a better global citizen. I am excited to learn more about other cultures and continue to understand my own in the future.



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Looking forward to answering your email!

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