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Spring 2014  

University Honors Program Portfolio Proposal  
“Ticking Time”

Guiding Topic  
Just looking at a clock, it appears that the hands, which above all else show us the time, can on the surface be given credit for doing all the work of a clock. The real driving force of a clock, however, is beneath the face, where the gears propel the hands, ticking away the seconds. How have the small gears inside my life come together and helped me move forward and function?

Rationale  
To summarize and make sense of my undergraduate career, I’ve chosen the metaphor of a clock. A clock is more than just “doohickeys and thingamajigs.” There are real, working parts behind the face of a clock, propelling the hands forward, and helping display an accurate time. A pendulum clock, one of the first recorded methods of keeping accurate time, is comprised of seven major pieces. Each of the pieces work with the others to help users know the time, and a clock would simply not function properly if any of the pieces were removed or damaged in any way. For this reason it is perfectly fitting to compare each of my artifacts to a piece of a pendulum clock.

Behind the scenes in a clock, the major component that helps the timepiece work is the gear train. This part is made up of three gears, which all move together to help move the hands of a clock and provide an accurate timepiece. During my four years at college, three major gears moved me forward.

The first of these three gears is the Niner Times. I spent my entire college experience working in an editor position with the newspaper. Through this experience I was given opportunities to work behind the scenes at a publication, and see the final product as mine and my fellow editors’ efforts came together to produce the publication. Being given the opportunity to see the entire process, and to have an instrumental hand in the completion of the task, was one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career. For that reason, my first artifact is the front cover of one of my favorite issues of the Niner Times from the 2013-14 year.

The second gear is the final paper for my COMM 3130 “Public Advocacy” course. This paper identifies and explains my personal echo chamber, or the types of media that I absorb that contribute to and reinforce my personal thoughts on political issues. Through this paper, I had to look at news sources I frequently go to, and the input my family and friends had on forming my thoughts toward issues. The paper also required me to look at peer-reviewed sources to cite the larger communication processes at work in my personal echo chamber. Through this paper, I was allowed the opportunity to see how big of a part the media plays in shaping the view points of people.
The third gear is symbolized by the short story I wrote for my fiction writing class. During my freshman year, I was involved in an emotionally and physically abusive relationship. Sophomore year, I took introduction to fiction writing for my English minor. Through this class, I was given the opportunity to write everything that had happened in a way that helped me come to terms with it. As I wrote the piece, taking real experiences and adding additional components for the plot and readability, I helped myself see that I was in so much better of a place than I thought I was. Being given the ability to craft my experiences in this form made it easier for me to come to terms with it and to move past it.

Another important piece of a clock is the escapement. This piece is the part of a clock that makes the ticking noise, and forces the gears of the clock to move. The escapement of my college career isn’t a what, but a who. Ciera, who was the news editor of the newspaper while I was the assistant news editor, taught me how to find my voice and became my mentor throughout college. She helped me decipher how to make my voice heard, make my ticking noise count, and put me on what was the right path for me.

The pendulum of my college clock is represented by my mezuzah. The pendulum of a clock is a weight on a rod, which is suspended in a way so that it can swing freely, using the force of gravity to keep time. In my life, my mezuzah, a symbol of my faith, is the natural force which keeps me grounded.

For the power source of the clock, the mainspring that pulls the cord to power the pendulum is my dad. The mainspring typically is the piece of the clock that winds up, which stores energy to be released by the pendulum. My dad has always been a source of ideas for me, helping me work through problems and coming up with answers to questions I hadn’t even known I needed to ask.

My clock face is represented by the final paper for my WGST 4165 “Sociology of Women” course. Throughout the course, I was introduced through essays, poems and a novel the way that different elements of a woman’s life some together to create her world. The final paper takes into account everything I learned during the course and puts them into terms of how they come together to form the version of me that is public and on display.

One major piece of the clock is missing here, and that is the hands. The hands are the physical representation of time, of change, of growth, and of me. The hands are the messenger, letting viewers know the time. Without the hands, a clock would be useless, because we as viewers would be unable to read it. For this reason, the hands are me, my writing, and this portfolio as a whole. The hands couldn’t possibly just be one piece, because the hands require all of the other pieces to function.

Throughout my time at UNC Charlotte, I’ve learned a lot about what makes me tick. My undergraduate career has had its ups and downs, yet through it all determination and persistence connected all of my experiences. Each individual aspect of my last four years is important in creating what has been the time of my life, and without a single piece,
everything else would fall out of whack. I’m a believer in fate, in the underlying connectivity of every piece of the puzzle, and in the value of looking at how things have changed over time.

**Materials**
- Artifacts
  - Niner Times front page PDF
  - COMM 3130 final paper
  - Short story document
  - Photo of Ciera
  - Mezuzah necklace
  - Photo of my dad
  - WGST 4165 final paper
- Computer with Internet access
- Time

**Schedule or Timeline**
Following the syllabus of HONR 3791

**Committee**

**Project Advisor**
Aaron Gwyn, Associate Professor of English, Department of English, UNC Charlotte

**First Reader**
Julie Hicks, University Honors Program, UNC Charlotte