

# SENIORS OF DISTINCTION

*2021*



RowanUniversity

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
& SOCIAL SCIENCES

## PROGRAM

Dean's Welcome  
Guest Speaker - Michael Hedayat  
Office of Alumni Engagement  
Presentation of Awards

### What is the Seniors of Distinction Award?

Every year our programs have the tough task of choosing one student who stands out among their peers in the major—a student who not only demonstrates academic achievement but represents the best in the discipline. Receiving the designation of “Senior of Distinction” is indeed an honor but also a responsibility. We expect our Seniors of Distinctions to make an impact as they progress through their careers and serve their communities. We also urge our Seniors of Distinctions to stay connected with Rowan, with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and with their department or program so that we can celebrate their successes!

## A MESSAGE FROM DEAN NAWAL AMMAR



Congratulations on being the Seniors of Distinction class of 2021. You are a Class like no other. You not only excelled in your academic careers but you outlasted during unprecedented circumstances. For two and half semesters you transitioned to working remotely and some of you attended classes in-person but with a reduced capacity. Despite the extraordinary circumstances you persevered and stood out completing your degree. By now you know that success requires sacrifice. Pele, a Brazilian/Portuguese soccer player, one of the greatest players of all time and labeled “the greatest, once said, “Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and

most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.” Undoubtedly the lessons you learned to earn this distinction will serve you as you begin your journey of advancing society. Meanwhile, don’t forget the small ways you can help make the world a better place like asking someone how they are, and really meaning it; giving up your seat to someone on the bus or train; allowing someone else their time to shine; spending less time online; focusing on the positive and having fun.

We are and will continue to be proud of your perseverance, consistency, and hard work.

I wish you all the best in your life journey wherever it takes you, and don’t forget to get in touch with us to let us know the great and small things you are doing.

## DEPARTMENT CHAIRS/COORDINATORS



**Chanelle Rose**  
Africana Studies



**Katherine Turner**  
American Studies



**DeMond Miller**  
Disaster Preparedness &  
Emergency Management



**Zena Meadowsong**  
English



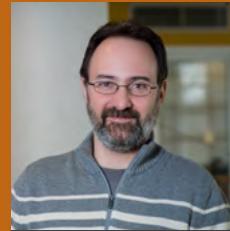
**Janet Lindman**  
History



**Sharon McCann**  
Human Services



**Kelly Duke-Bryant**  
International Studies;  
Area Studies



**Mike Weiss**  
Law and Justice  
Studies



**Joy Wiltenberg**  
Liberal Studies



**Marilyn Manley**  
Modern Languages &  
Linguistics; Spanish



**Ellen Miller**  
Philosophy;  
World Religions



**Lawrence Markowitz**  
Political Science;  
Economics



**Harriet Hartman**  
Sociology;  
Anthropology

## MICHAEL HEDAYAT



Michael J. Hedayat is an attorney practicing in New Jersey and New York. Michael received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Rowan University. During his undergraduate enrollment, Michael successfully completed the University of Virginia's Semester at Sea program while traveling through ten countries in Africa, Europe, and Asia.

He studied law at New York Law School; through the University of Oxford; through Tulane University Law School's Rhodes Program in Greece and completed his Juris Doctor degree at the Florida State University College of Law. While at FSU Law, Michael was formally recognized for his distinguished Pro Bono Service with the Second Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. He also served as a Clinical Counselor at Florida State's Business Law Clinic.

After graduating Michael was honored to be the first judicial law clerk for the Honorable Avis Bishop-Thompson, J.S.C. at the Bergen County Vicinage in New Jersey. During his clerkship, Michael was certified by the New Jersey Administrative Offices of the Courts as a court mediator. Interestingly, Mr. Hedayat was sworn into the Bar of the State of New Jersey by his sister, Kathrine E. Hedayat, who also practices as an attorney in New Jersey.

His practice is limited to serious personal injury matters and medical malpractice. He is admitted before the federal and state courts of New Jersey. Michael is admitted before the state courts of New York as well as the United States Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C.

## AFRICANA STUDIES

ALEXIS THOMPSON

*A*lexis embodies the Africana Studies program's core values of educational excellence, civic engagement, and social justice. Majoring in Psychology and minoring in Africana Studies, Lex developed an activism framework that addresses the generational trauma of Black communities and works to create healing and liberation. They proudly identify as a Black queer non-binary femme who centers their activism and advocacy around intersectionality and reproductive justice. As president of Generation Action, a student organization that focuses on reproductive justice issues within various communities, Lex shared their expertise during a roundtable discussion with Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman and Congressman Donald Norcross as it relates to Title X and the Gag Rule. They've also participated in other conferences, such as the 2020 International Model African Union Conference, and an internship with Planned Parenthood. Lex plans to heighten their activism by joining a nonprofit advocacy organization that centers their activism values while also exploring other avenues that involve advocacy and grassroots organizing.

## AMERICAN STUDIES

ANTHONY CAMACHO

*A*nthony is commended by multiple professors for his enthusiasm in classroom discussion, his careful and conscientious research and coursework, and his intellectual curiosity. In Zoom meetings, Anthony kept up the energy, was always well prepared for class, and eager to help other students understand the material. He was happy to share his techniques with others, including navigating research tools. He works hard and shows improvement, both within courses and during his time at Rowan, demonstrating that he takes feedback to heart and is truly committed to learning. This hard work has put Anthony on the Dean's List every semester since Fall 2018. He has achieved these academic pursuits while working full-time as a CVS manager, developing positivity and "people skills" along with customer service and team management abilities. Anthony's goal is to teach elementary school and eventually enter administration. He credits the American Studies program with helping him grow "as a citizen of the country."

## ANTHROPOLOGY

DOMINIC FARGNOLI

*D*ominic has been chosen as the 2021 Senior of Distinction in Anthropology because he has proven to be a student who fully integrates his Anthropological training with the skills drawn from other disciplines and life experiences to map for himself an exciting academic career path in the Archaeological sciences. A native of Blackwood, N.J., Mr. Fagnoli has been active in the classroom and the professional community. From his training in scuba diving in difficult conditions to his internship in field survey and mapping to his hands-on analysis project utilizing artifacts in the Museum of Anthropology at Rowan University's collections, Mr. Fagnoli has fashioned for himself a skill set and research trajectory that we anticipate will carry him through graduate degree work and onto an exciting career as a maritime archaeologist.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

JUSTIN ELIOPOULOS

*I*n May 2021, Justin Elipoulos will earn a BA in Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management. Justin is eager to serve in his community. As such, for over two years, he has been an EMT, a volunteer firefighter, as well as a member of Bergen County's Special Operations Group (EMS Division). When COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, he was one of the first responders involved with the response operations in his community as residents became ill. He used his training as a first responder and academic preparation to make a difference in the lives of many. His dedication to service and commitment to continuous training, emergency exercises, and preparation, his responsibilities increased with a promotion to Lieutenant of the Corps in charge of training new EMTs and ordering supplies during this pandemic. He is passionate about emergency services and emergency management; he intends to further his education in these fields with plans to enroll in Rowan University's Emergency and Threat Response Management Master of Science degree program and continue expanding his knowledge, training, and professional certifications in EMS, Firefighting, and specific Independent FEMA courses.

## ECONOMICS

### EDWARD HUDAK

Edward is enrolled as an Economics and Computing and Informatics double major, while also pursuing two certificates of undergraduate studies: Management Information Systems and Blockchain Technologies and Cryptocurrency. In his time at Rowan, Edward has been an integral part of the research process: first by working as a research assistant with Dr. Offenbacher of Civil Engineering, and then by working with Dr. Kapri of Economics after securing the Mukhoti Research Scholarship. He has served his community by acting as Philanthropy Chair of Rowan's Men D1AA Rugby Club. Edward has been an active member and participant in multiple student organizations, including the Economics Society of Rowan, the Rowan Blockchain Studies Group, and the Rowan Student Investment Group. Edward has also contributed to Rowan's growing e-sports program by founding Rowan's Rocket League B team.

## ENGLISH

### MOLLY WOREK

Molly exemplifies the English Department's commitment to academic excellence and intellectual curiosity. Pursuing a combined advanced degree program, she graduates with a BA in English, a Masters of Science in Teaching, and a minor in International Studies. Her wide-ranging interests and areas of expertise always result in imaginative engagement with literary texts, sharp and insightful participation in class discussion, and skillful analytical writing. Molly stands out as a true original, distinguishing herself as a member of Rowan University's Intercollegiate Equestrian Team; a 2021 Retired Racehorse Project trainer; a riding instructor in Japan; an aspiring English as a Foreign Language teacher; a small business owner; and as Miss New Jersey Petite 2020. Her sense of purpose—whether reading a poem, teaching students, contributing to her community, or pursuing new skills—is remarkable and her potential boundless.

## HISTORY

### DENIS LONG

Denis is a History major at Rowan with minors in American Studies, International Studies, and a Certificate of Undergraduate Study in Public History. As a member of the CHSS Reps, Phi Alpha Theta, and SGA Senator for the Rowan Improfs, Denis has made it his mission to excel at Rowan as an academic and as a leader. Some notable accomplishments in his academics include his inclusion on the Dean's List and Chair's List. He is the recipient of various scholarships, most notably the first to receive the Edward and Stella Michals Memorial Scholarship, and he participated as a presenter in the McNeil Center for Early American Studies' Undergraduate Research Workshop at the University of Pennsylvania in April of 2019. Denis plans to further their studies in graduate school to fulfill his wish to become a public historian and help educate the public on the importance of learning from the past to create a brighter future.

## HUMAN SERVICES

### CHRISTINA DIMATTEO

Christina is a senior at Rowan University majoring in Human Services with a minor in Psychology. She is a member of Tau Sigma. She currently works at Jefferson Health- Washington Township as a per diem emergency department technician. In addition, she is completing her field experience hours at My Father's House in Gloucester City. Christina graduated from Camden County College with her Associates in Human Services and a minor in Addiction Counseling. Christina has a passion for helping individuals find the tools and resources they need to better achieve their goals. In her free time, Christina enjoys spending time with her family. She intends to complete her master's in social work at Syracuse University.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**KYNAAT MOOSVI**

**K**ynaat is an International Studies major in the Global and Comparative Perspectives concentration, and she is pursuing the honor's concentration and a CUGS in Arabic. A speaker of multiple languages, she also knows Urdu. Kynaat participated in Rowan's Model United Nations course last spring, and even though the pandemic forced the cancellation of the simulation, she prepared to serve as a diplomat representing Bolivia as part of Rowan's delegation. This spring, she is completing her Senior Seminar course, conducting comparative research on the recent rise in nationalism in India and the United States. She has considered pursuing a career at the United Nations after graduation, where she would like to work on women's issues, but lately, she has become interested in working for an international humanitarian organization that advocates for and supports refugees. She is a member of Sigma Iota Rho, the national honor society for International Studies.

## LAW AND JUSTICE

**ALEXIS KRILEY**

**L**aw and Justice Studies would like to recognize Alexis Kriley as our 2021 Senior of Distinction. Our faculty have been inspired and impressed by Alexis's academic accomplishments with her double major and minors, all while serving in many roles as a student leader, athlete and maintaining her passion and commitment for serving others during her time at Rowan. Alexis has been recognized as a Rowan Scholar-Athlete of Distinction, served as President and Treasurer of the Law and Justice Honor Society, President of the Criminal Justice Preparation Club, and as a senator for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. She has also been involved with both the Philosophy and Political Science honor societies, Prof Academy, Outstanding Women Leaders Group, and volunteers often with Philabundance. She completed internships with both the Diplomatic Security Service and the Federal Air Marshal which she credits with leading her to pursue a career in federal law enforcement! Congratulations, Alexis!

## LIBERAL STUDIES

**DEBRA POOLOS**

**D**ebra (Debbie) Poolos is a first-generation, non-traditional, transfer student with a major in Liberal Studies (sequences in American Studies and Women's and Gender Studies) and a minor in Psychology. While Debbie began her academic journey later than some, she brings her rich life experiences and enthusiasm to every class. She is passionate about supporting first-generation college students and participated as a First Generation Panelist at the first annual First-Generation Symposium. After a recent career change from insurance to local government (in finance!), Debbie is excited about the future. Debbie will come back to continue her studies at the graduate level and is working to find her next spark of inspiration to guide her next steps.

## MODERN LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS

**ERICH MAAS**

**W**e are very proud of Erich Maas, our chosen CHSS Senior of Distinction for the Major in Modern Languages and Linguistics (MLL). Erich is an outstanding student who will graduate in spring 2021 with his MLL Major, including Concentrations in Japanese and Chinese, a B.S. in Computer Science, and a Minor in Mathematics. He has also already begun his M.S. in Computer Science at Rowan. He has demonstrated passion and dedication to his chosen fields through his work at Rowan as a tutor for courses in Japanese, computer science, and computer programming, and also as a Learning Assistant for Computer Science labs. To complete his requirements for MLL, he studied abroad in Tokyo, Japan during the spring 2020 semester with KCP International. In the future, his career will combine his two chosen fields – he is interested in working in the areas of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and machine translation.

## PHILOSOPHY

### GIANNA HILL

Gianna Hill is an Honors College student with majors in Philosophy and International Studies and minors in Spanish and Women's and Gender Studies. She has received numerous awards at Rowan, including the Sigma Iota Rho Honor Society for International Studies, the David Clowney Scholarship for top Junior Philosophy major, and Rowan's President's Scholars of Excellence. She serves as President for three Rowan organizations: Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, International Pre-Law Society, and Rowan Homeless Outreach. Gianna has served as a mentor for the Honors College and has volunteered and worked for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Gianna plans to attend law school after graduation and hopes to have her own practice centered on creating legal access for others. The Philosophy and World Religions Department is very proud of Gianna's accomplishments and contributions to the department and university community. We look forward to hearing how she uses her intelligence, passion, and commitment to service in the next chapter of her life.

## POLITICAL SCIENCE

### KEVIN MCCARTHY

Kevin McCarthy has distinguished himself throughout his tenure at Rowan. For the last three years, Kevin has been on the executive board of the Student Government Association, where he serves as The Assistant Vice President for Governmental Relations. He also played a key role in the RowanVotes initiative, a university-wide effort to get students registered, informed, and mobilized for the 2020 election. Kevin is a member of the Rowan EMS team and has been throughout the pandemic. Kevin also works with the Wellness Center conducting COVID testing. Even with all of that going on, Kevin has managed to keep up with his studies. He is on track to earn two BAs, one in DPEM and the other in Political Science. As a Political Science major, Kevin earned membership to Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Honors Society for Political Science.

## SOCIOLOGY

### PHOEBE LEACH

We distinguish Phoebe Leach among our talented cohort of seniors in the Sociology program for her stellar grade point average, for her potent sociological imagination, for her investment in connecting theory and practice, and her extraordinary service to others. For two years, Phoebe has complemented her course of study as a double major in Sociology and Psychology by working with young people who present with severe challenging behavior at a residential facility and Rowan University's SAFE Behavior Lab. Phoebe recognizes how social forces marginalize particular populations, and she seeks to employ her interdisciplinary set of skills to serve and empower these populations. Later this year, she will commence the Master of Social Work course of study at Rutgers School of Social Work. As a social worker and an advocate, Phoebe will enrich lives, advance social justice, and bring credit to her undergraduate alma mater.

## SPANISH

### MA GUADALUPE BALLESTEROS JIMENEZ

We are proud to honor Ma Guadalupe Ballesteros Jimenez as our chosen CHSS Senior of Distinction for the Spanish Major. Guadalupe is an outstanding student who will graduate in Spring 2021 with her Spanish Major, Education Minor, and Certificate of Undergraduate Study in French. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and Kappa Delta Pi, the International Honor Society in Education. She plans a career as a Bilingual Teacher and has demonstrated passion and dedication to her chosen field through her extensive work as a tutor and volunteer with AmeriCorps, Pathstone.org, and Unidos para la Familia. With these organizations, she has tutored Spanish, ESL, Mathematics, Writing and Reading, with a focus on serving members of minority groups. Additionally, she completed an internship at Unidos para la Familia, where she tutored in Spanish writing for Hispanics preparing for the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and GED diploma.



**Contact:**

Phone: 856-256-5840  
Web: [chss.rowan.edu](http://chss.rowan.edu)  
Email: [chss@rowan.edu](mailto:chss@rowan.edu)

Office Hours:  
M-F: 8:30am - 4:30pm