

12-2018

Bard Free Press (December 2018)

Bard College

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Bard College, "Bard Free Press (December 2018)" (2018). *Bard Free Press - All Issues (2000-2018)*. 136.
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Bard College
FREE PRESS



DECEMBER, 2018
ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, NY

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letter from the editor

Bringing the Bard Course Catalogue to Life

Noah Hoagland

Hello Readers,

Thanks for reading, and thanks for being patient with our irregular publishing schedule as we have put together this magazine issue. It has been hard work for our small team, but we're proud of what we have put together and we hope that you enjoy it.

When I began to think about how I wanted to write this letter, I got to thinking about the very beginnings of newspaper publications, after the rise of the printing press in Germany. People started writing and publishing their own news in pamphlets and gazettes, telling of trade, war, and politics. Sometimes they were just one side of a page, crammed with articles. Sometimes they were little pamphlets, not too dissimilar from ours. There were no bylines, for fear of government persecution. Often, one person wrote and published their entire publication on their own.

It has not been the easiest semester for the Free Press. We have put off printing for over a month due to lack of content. There are committed writers and editors who have taken on a lot of the work. Just a few weeks ago, I tried to convince my fellow editors that I could write two or three pieces in order to allow an earlier release. Thankfully, they talked me down— today the idea that an entire paper is written by one person is not only ridiculous but also totally unreflective of the community it serves. We want to keep writing and producing our newspaper with you. We believe that good journalism is important to our community, and we know that there is a space for this kind of work at Bard.

Because it is the duty of a newspaper to reflect its community, and because we are essentially a newspaper that is written and published by the community that it serves, we decided that we needed to be honest about the difficulties we have had recently with producing the kind of content that we want to deliver to you. So, if you read the Free Press, if you like it or you really don't, and you want to help us make this work, let us know. We are a dedicated few, and we welcome whatever it is that you have to give us. You can always email me directly (rh7996@bard.edu) with comments, and our meetings (7:30 on Tuesdays in the Fishbowl) are open to all.

This is all to say that we appreciate our readership, and we want to hear from you. This issue contains a wide variety of different types of reporting, and I think that you'll find that it is worth the wait. Please let us know what you think. It is so important to me (and, to all of us) that the Free Press is a platform for the entire community. Any ideas, any engagement, is always appreciated.

Best,

Rachel Hodes
Editor-in-Chief

The mass of classes offered to the student body every semester is produced by an extensive collaboration between teachers and administrators called the Bard College Course Book. For students, a college course book can seem like an inexplicable and unclear task that requires significant research, communication, and paperwork over a long period of time. But, when broken down, the Bard Course Book is a relatively intrinsic three step process that focuses on the needs and interests of the student body in any given semester. My research and interview with registrar Peter Gadsby provided useful insight into the full extent of the course book creation process.

When discussing what must be offered each semester, the faculty view the requirements for students, in addition to the popularity of existing courses. For example, a small minority of students would actually enjoy taking organic chemistry, but at some point in pre-med students' academic career, they must know how all those zig-zag structures of carbons actually work. In the first step of the course book, the faculty of each department meet to discuss classes that should and can be offered based on the available professors. When a new faculty member is hired, the new teacher can propose a new class. The evaluation goes as follows:

Is the course beneficial? Is it redundant? Will students want or need to take it?

The programs at Bard seek to sketch out a list of possible courses for the division to then evaluate.

The second step concentrates on the prevalence of the new and old courses within the academic division as a whole. These divisions are comprised of many subjects under the same umbrella. While it seems all neat and organized when the courses are approached based on popularity and desire, it can get convoluted due to necessity and availability within the college community.

As a first year at Bard, I can honestly say that I have little comprehension of how the moderation process works or what the distribution requirements are; I was mostly

hoping it would fall into place. However, in the context of the Bard Course Book, the division assesses the relevance and plausibility of new classes and availability for old. With a new course, the division evaluates how a new class -- let's say it is a class on propaganda-- fits within distribution and moderation requirements. In terms of desire, I believe a propaganda class would be extremely educational and beneficial. In terms of requirements, given there is an appropriate professor to teach the course and an eligible time, this class could be suitable for the requirements MBV, HA, SA, DJ, just to name a few. In addition, professors judge the continued relevance of classes that are already incorporated within the curriculum, and the availability of a professor. This second step allows the divisions to produce a full schedule to then be sent to the Curriculum Committee (CC).

The Curriculum Committee is composed of representatives from each division and has consistent meetings to ensure a masterpiece of a course book for the student body. Once the second step has completed its democratic procedure, the final step ensures fluidity and variety in the course book. The CC allows for a holistic process among the faculty in complete consideration of all factors in a semester.

As the process comes to an end, it has been nearly 11 weeks and ideally no blood or tears have been shed in the making of the curriculum. The CC uploads a complete and (hopefully) flawless schedule for the students to then frantically scramble over as they plan for their next semester.

First Years Struggle to Find Work Study

Sage Swaby

Students work part time on-campus to contribute to their educational and personal expenses.
Photo: Austin Dilley

Federal work study is an important part of many college students lives. The federal student aid program allows students to work part time on-campus to contribute to their educational and other needs. During Language & Thinking, first year students are not allowed to actively search and acquire work study jobs until the school year officially begins. This is due to the fact that one has to complete L&T before being considered a full time Bard student. While this makes sense, it is frustrating to students who want to pounce on opportunities as quickly as possible. First years do not have any experience with the work study process and who to contact for job opportunities. When the Career Development Office (CDO) held a workshop for all first years, outlining how to use Handshake and what to do once you get a job, there were limited opportunities.

Spencer Vazquez '22 is an example of a student who receives work study but has no job. He says, "Work study at Bard seems sadly disorganized at the administrative level, and a lot of work study students are ultimately left to fend for themselves. Not only are there simply not enough jobs on campus, but the Career Development Office focused too much energy

on Handshake—which, ironically, doesn't even list all available work study positions. In the future, I would love for the CDO to provide a survey to incoming first years with work study, asking them about their interests and providing a list of all open positions based on their responses. Low income and first generation students especially rely on work study, and it would make all our lives a little easier if it was less of a free-for all." Vazquez raises a good point regarding Handshake; many jobs are not listed on the website. There are only so many jobs available to first years as many cater to upperclassmen, who already have a familiarity with the process. The process for first years could be more concise in the manner of detailing how to contact jobs that are not listed on Handshake.

Breenique Bogle '22 says "It's hard for first years to get jobs because we do not know our schedule for the first three weeks of classes. Our employers need to know our schedules before we begin working." Bogle got her job as soon as the semester started, however she began talking to the director her first day at Bard and during L&T. Many first years do not think to do this as they wait for the school to assist them with the job process. Bogle was building

connections before she knew her schedule or of Handshake. While the CDO is working hard to make sure students are employed comfortably, the process for first years could be much smoother. Every first year with work study who wants to work should have access to a job opportunity.

Carol Hosier, coordinator of student employment, is where campus employment starts and ends. She says the first thing a student should do if there are no work study jobs available to them is to "see [her]." She will give students ideas as to where to look, putting their names on a list and then emailing them when an opportunity becomes available. Hosier agrees that unfortunately, Handshake plays a small role in the work study process. The platform is new to Bard from last year. Hosier says that she tries to stress supervisors to post their jobs on Handshake, as it is a huge help to students.

Many first years do not know that they can go to Hosier for assistance with their work study problems. She believes the campus cen-

ter can be utilized to advertise the student employment website and her services better. The Career Development Office has sent four emails, from the beginning of Language and Thinking to mid-September, to students with drop-in hours. Students had an opportunity to learn about finding and applying to campus jobs, ask questions, and better understand the work study program. Hosier was available at all four workshops.

While many first year students struggle with work study, they are not aware nor know where to look for the services available to them. Students had a way to meet with Hosier as well as learn more about the work study program. However, Handshake is not utilized well and the only advertisement for these drop-in hours were through email, and nowhere else. If services catering to work study were more heavily advertised and students did their part with reaching out to anybody that could possibly help them, Bard could work towards squashing students frustrations.

Q & A: An Interview with NephewCube

Thea McRae

Who is NephewCube?

Aviv Porath: I mean we jammed a bit last year but we've been together for a few months now. A lot of the stuff is like cool covers from like all kinds of places. Some of them have been like weird songs or compositions that I have written. People have been trying to give our style a lot of different names, but we like to self define ourselves as a mix of funk, Middle Eastern music, Progressive Rock, Blues, Alternative. I think in general the vibe of the band is that its like music thats kind of off, like it works, but its kind of off. I feel really bad for our drummer because a lot of our songs, the rhythms are really weird and kinda unorthodox.

Jonah Wilson: Like a rhythmic stumble.

Jacob Cummings: Just a lot of tumbling.

AP: The analogy that we have been using to explain to Jacob has been like, imagine youre falling down the stairs and your butt is going

from stair to stair, thats the average pace of a NephewCube song.

JC: I'm the drummer, and it fucking sucks to be honest. Aviv is busting out all these rhythms that I cant comprehend at first, and I have to be the guy thats leading everybody else rhythmically, and I've gotta like, know shit about the way things are supposed to sound, and its hard, man.

AP: You're doing great.

JC: Thanks bud, yeah it is really fun though.

JW: If you're off it sounds wrong, if we're off it sounds like we have attitude. We have that luxury, you dont.
How did you come together?

JC: Aviv made us.

AP: Jacob and I met

through music stuff, and we started to jam once in a while. And I'd be like "Yo, check out this really weird riff," and he'd be like "Alright!" and we'd like jam out to it. And we tried to make a band last year, but everyone was always too busy. (Continued on pg. 7)



Light Shed on Bard's Financials with Form 990

Rachel Hodes

As a nonprofit, Bard College is required to submit Form 990 to the IRS yearly. This form, along with an audit of the information it contains, is publicly available, and can be viewed on various databases such as ProPublica and GuideStar. The form details net asset and expenses for the college, as well as some information related to salary, operating cost, and donations accrued through the course of the year.

The unconventional nature of Bard's financial situation is clear from the data it has shared. The college received \$82,867,366 from fundraising, gifts, and grants between 2015 and 2016. Of that, \$362,255 came from fundraising events (such as the CCS Gala), and \$3,026,653 came from government grants. On the 990, the other \$79,478,458 is listed as "other contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts." For comparison, on the same line item, Vassar College listed \$19,791,999, and Skidmore College listed \$32,872,744.

Some of the funding associated with this line item comes from grants the college receives from other organizations and 501(c) charities, such as the Carnegie Corporation and Soros' Open Society Foundation, both of which have awarded Bard College grants within the past two years. These grants can range in amount and restriction— some must be used for specific programs or with designated intentions. For example, a 2016 grant from the Carnegie Corporation awarded \$1,500,000 for the establishment of a new Center for Early College.

A portion of the money associated with this line item also comes from individual donors, on whom Bard is unusually dependent. An audit of Bard's 990 data (also available publicly via ProPublica) listed the value of gifts and donations as a revenue of \$41,204,477 for

the same year. This data cannot be confirmed by the 990 information, nor can it be broken down into individual donors, because Bard is not required to report or distinguish this kind of information. However, this would constitute roughly half of the money reported on the line item for "other contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts."

The college has, historically, been extraordinarily capable of funding itself on an unusual model of high levels of gifts and donations, as the 990s from years' past show. Still, the college's long term debt, according to the public audit, came to \$154,243,938 by 2016. That year, Bard extended their line-of-credit to \$39,000,000.

In October of 2015, the public audit reports that some members of the Board of Trustees loaned the college \$21,000,000 to aid in paying back debt, with \$11,000,000 of that money used to reduce bank financing. At the time of the audit, the Board was looking to long term restructuring in order to reduce debt and reliance on donations and individual gifts.

Bard's endowment is made up of assets and donor gifts. These donor gifts may be unrestricted (that is, the college can use them at their own discretion) or restricted (gifted with the specific instruction of use in the college's endowment). In 2015 and 2016, the college borrowed money from its endowment. They borrowed \$101,645,000 and \$96,147,000 in those years, respectively. A spending policy outlined in the audit limits the spending rate of the endowment for future years, and the Trustees plan to pay back the borrowed money.

Many see the college's finance model as unsustainable. In 2016, Bard's credit was downgraded by Moody's due to limited cash flow and rising credit lines. At the same time, the institution, and specifically President Botstein, has remained vocal about the college's unique philosophy on spending, which focuses more on funding projects and educational ventures than building a larger endowment.

This philosophy is also evident in the Form 990, which shows that Bard granted \$64,141,898 to "individuals in the United States," and \$6,191,710 to "governments, organizations, and individuals outside the United States." This is comparable to Vassar's \$61,180,179 and \$758,863 on those line items respectively, despite Bard's substantially smaller endowment of \$267 million to Vassar's 1.083 billion.

Amber Billey Brings Something New to Stevenson Library

Lilly Stewart



Amber Billey believes the way things are organized, and not just that they are organized at all, has a huge impact. In the basement of the Stevenson Library, she works to make Bard's half a million volumes and journals more accessible. One of Bard's newest additions to the Library staff, Amber Billey is the systems and metadata librarian and manages the library's catalog.

Although Billey has only been at Bard for one year, she has a long history with the school. In 1999 she applied to the college, and although she attended Pratt, when she joined the Library staff she discovered that she still has a valid Bard ID number. Her wife graduated from Bard in 2003, and Billey confesses she always loved the Hudson Valley and Bard in particular. She understands that although Stevenson is small, "It's big enough that it's still an exciting collection," Billey says.

Billey loves making art, and in college

she pursued woodworking and welding, tasks which gave her the precision skills needed for complex data entry. She works to make accessing books as easy and comprehensive as possible.

An important part of her job has been updating the 20 year old database to a more current one, and tackling the hundred year old Library of Congress cataloguing system. The outdated system uses language to catalogue books which Billey works hard to change. In her ten years as a librarian, her biggest points of research are with this issue. She wants the Bard library catalogue to use the same terms that people feel comfortable using themselves, replacing dated categorical terms like "Insane" to "Mental Illness."

Coming from Columbia University, Billey is excited about being able to spend more time with students and work with them one on one. Billey feels that due to its smaller, tighter-knit atmosphere, Bard allows her to do the

work she is passionate about, in improving the design of databases to be more socially inclusive and just. "As a queer, masculine woman," Billey understands that it is her responsibility to bring an inclusive perspective to the Bard library, so no one in the community feels stigmatized or excluded. Billey is part of the editorial board for Homosaurus, a thesaurus for LGBTQ digital collections. For her, this is a fun and rewarding part of her job, because it allows her to put her years of research into action.

An average day as a librarian at Bard consists of answering tough questions from students and being able to help them get the resources they need to be successful. Billey feels this is "one of the most liberating things you can do, because literacy is power." She wants every Bard student to know about all the resources they have available to them, not only in the form of real-life librarians, but with the inter-library loan. If there is a book, journal, or article that a student needs that can't be found in the Bard library, it can be accessed thanks to Bard's participation in a consortium of nearby

(Cont. from pg. 4) Jess would come along too, and then this year Jonah came along.

Who writes the music?

All: Aviv.

AP: Basically its like cool songs that I have made, and once we start playing together things work, or they dont work and people add onto it.

What is it like to be a live band at Bard?

Jess Belardi: I think if you seek it out, there is a lot of that here. And I think people dont necessarily seek it out unfortunately. But I know a lot of people who regularly go to events, but that might be just because I am a part of that community, and just because I play music. There is definitely a strong music community, but that might not be apparent if you just roll up to SMOG on a Friday.

AP: There are so many bedroom musicians, really good ones at that, but thats the problem honestly, everyone is doing their own thing, so performances end up being really small. So I like the chance to have on campus artists perform, it helps to make people visible, for musicians and non-musicians.

Why do you think people stay in their bedrooms?

JC: Personally, I have so much stuff going on, that I dont know if I have time for anything except for band rehearsal and even then I have to cancel on people sometimes because I have stuff going on, and I would imagine that other

libraries. Through either ConnectNY or Iliad, a student can request an article or book to arrive within 24 hours. Billey believes this is one of the hidden gems the library offers.

Most importantly, Billey wants to make the studying and research process for students more comfortable, not only through improved design of databases and careful cataloguing, but also in a literal sense. The library staff is working to have more comfortable chairs, senior carrels, and spaces for group studying. Overall, Billey wants the library to be a more student-centered space. "We are more than just a passive collection of books," Billey says. "We are a living organism to do your work, and get it done." She works every day, fueled by several cups of tea, to make this a reality. "Most places have a lot of people who do what I do," she says, but what makes Bard perfect for Billey is that she is able to give closer attention to students, fellow staff, and of course, the hundreds of volumes she oversees every day.

people have stuff going on as well.

JB: No we are all just sitting here, just waiting for you to come to our rehearsals, like the Truman show.

AP: I don't want to throw some shade, but Bard kids dont talk to people. Everyone is very much in their own world and antisocial, musician or not, which is sad. I don't know about you guys, but this is a small school and everyday I see people here that I have never seen in my life. and thats really weird. That's a larger, separate issue, but I think it ties into what we are talking about.

JB: I do think that when you have a band, it's easier to put yourself in a situation where you can perform, and it's much harder to take the initiative and organize as a solo act. There have been times where I have wanted to do DJ set with people, but organizing that had not been as easy to do as I feel like it is in a group where we're like "Alright, we are going to play this show."

AP: Peer pressure at its finest. Pressure that makes diamonds.

Where is NephewCube going?

AP: I will say, we have so many song ideas. We are going to be making a lot more songs. We have a lot of cool songs we are going to be making in the coming months.

What is something important that you want our readers to know?

JW: The music is only going to get better.

horoscopes: finals edition



Sagittarius: It seems like keeping up with your many friendships has been distracting you from getting on that grind. Time to put that phone down (I heard there was a great NYT article about there this week) or, even better, cancel all your friends!



Capricorn: Fuck bit coin, the next best cryptocurrency is Bard bucks. Start investing now.



Aquarius: Those crystals aren't gonna help you write that 10 page paper, are they Aquarius? Foster a relationship with JSTOR, it will be well worth your efforts.



Pisces: The stars told me to tell you to make a to-do list.



Aries: Your adventurous spirit is at an all time high this month, Aries. Make sure to lock your doors just incase you get too excited and start sleepwalking or something.



Taurus: It seems like your inner and outer lives have been getting in the way of being productive this week, but that's okay. Find your balance by live streaming while studying.



Gemini: Whatever you do, now is not the time to start gambling. Maybe try out knitting or something instead.



Cancer: even though this season makes you want to get cozy, this is the time for you to really crawl out of your shell. Streak in the dark of night for best results.



Leo: it's all about revolution this month Leo. A call to anarchy. Burn down all the trees at The Corner.



Virgo: Main word of advice for you, my dear dear friend is to just pound. Perfection is the enemy.



Libra: Procrastination in the form of reenacting the Baddie Collective Burlesque show is hurting your study schedule. Now is the time to hunker down, Libra.



Scorpio: for the most rejuvenating study break, fill your tub with whipped cream and just bathe. A lil chocolate drizzle will do the trick.

Spring 2019 Barb College Course List

28526847	ANTH 983 SEARCHING FOR THE SUBTERRANEAN: SOCIALLY-ORIENTED SPECIES BELOW THE SEA
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This course seriously considers the existence of humanoid creatures living in the ocean—see mer-people, Poseidon and his minions Aquaman, etc... A portion of this class will be spent researching below sea-level societies from credible sources like Walt Disney's ATLANTIS and Walt Disney's THE LITTLE MERMAID. In addition we will complete over 1000 hours of sea exploration together. Students will maintain a field journal and audio-recorded log over the course of the semester as part of a final project and for the purposes of legacy should they fail to return. I'm not saying we're look for Atlantis or whatever, but...

