

Happy Birthday, East-West!



East-West University celebrated its 43 years!



**Mr. Keith Spencer**, class of 2003, received Recipient East-West University 2023 Alumnus Award. Keith currently serves as the Vice President of Public Involvement with R.M. Chin & Associates (CHIN). He is active in a number of professional and philanthropic organizations including the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, Young Professionals in Transportation, the American Council of Engineering Companies, and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. Keith lives in the Chicagoland area with his wife Jessica and their two children, Madeliene and Keith.

Dr. Bilal Ansari,



**Dr. Bilal Ansari, MD**, was the keynote Speaker and a recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence. Since May 2003, Dr. Ansari is a member of the Michiana Hematology-Oncology, P.C. team, where he tirelessly serves as a Medical Oncologist. His research work on cancer can be found in the National Library of Medicine; he is a member of American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), Indiana Medical Oncology Society (IMOS), and Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA).



**Congressman Danny Davis** spoke about the importance of our work and told the story of EWU inception; trustees and donors attended to give their support. Teachers, students, and the administration team enjoyed the evening.

**Ms. Nirali Jignesh Thakkar**, class of 2021, received East-West University 2023 Alumni Award. Nirali has thrived as Lead Engineer (PCB Design Engineer) at Circuit Engineering LLC. In this capacity, her roles and responsibilities are both challenging and impactful. She works collaboratively in a team environment, reviewing and analyzing customer Gerber data and supporting documents to interpret electrical design requirements. Her work continues beyond design. She also conducts product testing to ensure that designs meet product functionality, certification, and quality requirements. Before her current position, Nirali was a Planning Engineer at Summit Interconnect Chicago, where she gained valuable experience and honed her skills. During her academic journey, at East-West University supervised by Ms. Kate Petek, Assistant Director of International Students, Nirali also served as an EWU Student Ambassador. This role allowed her to contribute to the university community and share her insights and experiences with fellow students. Her family life reflects her strong values and her balance between her personal and professional responsibilities. She is the wife of Jignesh and the loving mother of Jiya and Dhwhiti Thakkar.



**Mr. Reginald Lomax** received East-West University 40th Anniversary Award. Prof. Lomax is a lifetime Chicago resident. His formative years were spent in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood, where he was very active in the Boy Scouts of America and sports. After college, he worked in the airline industry with over 20 years of progressive management positions, and after obtaining an MBA from Roosevelt University he transitioned to the financial industry. Following in the footsteps of his mother, a 30-year educator, he entered into the education arena by teaching and lecturing at some of Chicago’s most iconic institutions of higher learning. He landed his dream position at East-West University, where he uses over thirty years of business management experience as EWU’s Program Director of Business:



Newspaper Developer - Shantera Mcgee,  
Milagros Ramirez- Reyes  
Faculty Advisor - Dr. Maria Polski  
Staff Writer - Tiffany Mendez



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# Interviewing Helping Professionals: Social work/ Psychology at EWU

By: Matio Williams

**Alondra Marques-Gonzalez**



**MW: How did you get into your profession?**

AMG: "As a kid I really enjoyed listening to stories. My grandparents would tell me stories about their previous experiences and I sorta viewed them as windows to the past that I can learn from. I did this because I was very interested in the mind and how it works. Then, as I started to get older I wanted to go to college and explore all different kinds of fields but the one thing that always stood out to me is the mind and how it works and how I could use that knowledge to help people."

**MW: What are some of the upsides of your profession of being a therapist to you?**

AMG: "I think some of the upsides of being a therapist is how rewarding it feels to offer people coping skills and see it being used to benefit their lives in a positive way. By giving people these skills I want to be able to make a difference in their lives and make it better because I view it as I'm a tool that is to be used to help them cope and feel better about the situations they seek therapy for."

**MW: What would you consider some of the downsides of being a therapist?**

AMG: "For me personally it's the risk of burnout. I feel like you take in so many emotions from your clients that you start to feel them as well. That's why I think it's important that just like they come to me about their issues that I go to therapy as well just so that I can cope and be ready to do my job and continue to take on those emotions and be able to make the patients feel better. This allows me to avoid the burnout because I'm also working to make sure I'm at my best when the moment arrives."

**MW: What's something in your profession you wish you could change/make better?**

AMG: "For me it's reducing the stigma surrounding therapy. I just want people to know that it doesn't mean you're crazy, it's just a place for you to open up and deal with your issues positively. Therapy is a safe place to talk to someone who is unbiased and can give you the help you need."

**MW: What keeps you motivated?**

AMG: "Wanting to set a great example for my siblings, learning as much as I can about techniques I can use to help people, and wanting to keep gaining experience through working with clients. The client's ability to be able to get through tough challenges makes it all worth it for me."

**MW: What advice would you give to potential future therapists?**

AMG: "To come in with a curiosity to know how the human mind works. Also, be open to learning and be kind to yourself if potential struggles arrive. And even more importantly get to know yourself and don't get torn down by what other people think because if it's really what you want to do then you should go for it."

**Thomas Moushey**

**How did you get into Psychology?**

"I started with an interest in high school and I had a lot of questions like why people do things that they do, why they think the way that they think, and act the way that they do? These questions arose in high school and I found them really interesting."

**What is your experience working with adolescents and adults? How often are these experiences negative?**

"I've worked with numerous adults in a number of different settings dealing with a myriad of issues including drug abuse and sexual assault. I would say that most experiences aren't negative but you do have to get a feel about where a person is coming from and trying to empathize with them."

**How do you establish rapport with your clients, and what strategies do you use to build trust?**

"I think I like to listen and try see the world from my clients perspective and I try to understand the world as they see it which in turn helps me build rapport with them and trust because this process helps me help them."

**What is an unpopular opinion about therapy that you agree with?**

"I think I agree with the unpopular opinion that it's not always as accessible as it could be and it's difficult for people to afford it. Some people in tight financial situations are at an unfortunate disadvantage because many have difficult financial obligations that can stop them from receiving therapy because of the money it costs."

**What advice would you give to someone who wants to pursue a professional career in therapy?**

"First, I would say to talk to a lot of people in the field because everyone's different, I would also encourage them to get to know the different kind of jobs this profession provides, and then I would tell them to find a way to volunteer and be able to gain some experience because it always helps, and if someone is really serious about psychology I would also like to say it's a good idea to explore different cultures, beliefs, and experiences because you never know who will show up for therapy and what their personal problem may be and learning about the different cultures can help you better understand yourself and your own biases while also being able to figure out a way to help people in spite of them."



**Dr. Beverly Carnes**

**Why did you choose a career as a sociologist?**

"I chose a career in sociology because I like helping people. I like the fact that I can use it to empower others and I love the fact that I get to help others reach and realize their full potential."

**What is the most rewarding part of being a sociology professor for you?**

"I think the most rewarding part for me is seeing people be able to realize their passions. I also think it's very rewarding when they reach their goals of getting careers in sociology because it proves that I had a hand in making a difference in their lives and that means so much to me."

**What have you found to be the best way to monitor the performance of your work and/or the work of others?**

"I've found that I can monitor the performance of my work as a professor and the work of others by seeing my students' writing and their ability to be persistent when things get difficult. This allows me to know if my students are getting anything out of my teachings and what I and they can do to improve in the future."

**What would you say to be your greatest strength as a professor and as a person?**

"I would say my greatest strength as a professor is that I'm able to teach my students from an experienced perspective which would allow my students to be able to get more information about sociology. I would say my career and experience in the workforce as a behavioral practitioner and as a worker at an hospice mental health facility is something I can use to give perspective on some of the things that can prove beneficial to aspiring youth who want more sociology information."

**What qualities must someone exhibit to be able to do your job effectively?**

"They would need a willingness to help others and the ability to be non judgemental. With these qualities and a masters degree in sociology of course they should be able to do what I do effectively."





## Jabari Jhonson



Hello there, Phantoms. I am a fourth-year graduate student pursuing a doctorate at National Louis University's Illinois School of Professional Psychology. My life's passion has always been to assist those in need. I was drawn to Clinical Psychology since there is a shortage of clinically educated professionals who are members of the BIPOC ( "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color" community. I want to inspire and treat those who don't have the tools or want to learn more about how to overcome obstacles. Finally, it should be understood that therapy is a fantastic outlet for everyone, and I say this because I receive therapy myself and understand the fear of exposing your life with a stranger, but the relief is worth it in the end.

## Staying Healthy

With Matio Williams



There are three lifestyle practices that I can include at some point that could enhance my fitness. Those three aspects consist of workout, consuming wholesome food, and getting the proper quantity of sleep. I might use workout as the sort of sport due to the fact it's advised by fitness professionals that adults engage in at least half-hour of mild bodily movement on most, ideally all, days of the week and that kids workout for 60 mins daily. So, with the knowledge of this information I plan to workout at least 60 mins a month on each day of the week, including weekends. Practicing this for the first month of my three month timeline to get more healthy may be crucial, as in this method I am getting extra workout than even what the fitness professionals

This is due to the fact it's stated by professionals that "Several fitness desires may be completed via a valid dietary plan. Not only does a well-balanced food plan offer extra energy, however it can also decrease blood stress and reduce the danger of cancer". With this knowledge I can concentrate on consuming healthier meals throughout this upcoming month to ensure I'm getting optimal dietary value. The very last stage of incorporating sports with a purpose to enhance my fitness might be enhancing sound asleep. This will be the third and final stage of this three month timeline, due to the fact having quality sleep enhances your mood, mind performance, and your overall fitness. So for the very last month I might display how much sleep I get and ensure they're at optimal ranges in order to get healthier and enhance my capacity to carry on in university activities and every other mission that grants me success. The largest key to preserving this three month timeline to get healthy is to manipulate my dopamine ranges. In this manner I can boost my motivation whilst my dopamine ranges are excessive or low by continuously reminding myself simply how crucial my fitness is and putting a routine that becomes nearly 2nd nature to me. This will assist my dopamine ranges to not be too excessive or too low due to the fact my body gets used to doing these activities, and it will be extra receptive to those practices as it does them often now. This consistency will persuade my body that those practices are crucial to make myself more lively and healthy and that would be the **distinction of sticking with those practices or**

## EWU Volleyball!

By: Aleia Clark



School can be very stressful, some people are undecided like myself and just trying to find a place in the world. I've never played a sport before but my friend talked me into it and I was stressed with everything going on with school and work, so I decided to give it a try. I joined the team right when it was getting started up, no coach, no Funding, but we had dedication. In the midst of starting the east west volleyball team, we ended up getting not one but two coaches who saw our commitment and dedication. We'd been practicing for a few weeks and had been participating in games with a women's volleyball league that comes in on Thursdays, friendly competition is good for you right? November 10-14th we had a fundraiser raising over \$2,000 dollars with Taniya Turner being #1 on the leaderboard, raising over the anticipated amount by \$3 dollars. Joining this team made me feel a part of something and made me more motivated to get more involved with my school, my fellow classmates, and teachers. And overall made

## EWU Poetry Corner!

### Growth?

By Graciela Longoria

I am more aware now  
More than before  
Yet , I still catch myself crying  
on my bathroom floor  
But to know why ,  
To look beyond my shore of  
tears  
yeah, I think I see it  
All my fears.

### Thin ice

By: Bryce Burnett

forests of branching trees  
arise  
extended with weightless  
footfalls  
shuffling heels on thawing ice  
spreading weight evenly  
one false move is the last one  
falling face first into frozen  
flames  
sheer cold  
arctic ablaze  
crawling or running  
it all ends  
the same







# East West Story Slam!



On November 15th EWU held our inaugural Story Slam! In this event students tell 5-minute stories from their personal lives. We had 80 students compete in the first round, with 10 finalists. These ten student storytellers represent six nations and three continents! The stories that were told are beautiful, some of them can make you cry, others make you laugh, still others thrill you and many deliver a powerful moral message. The students practiced hard.

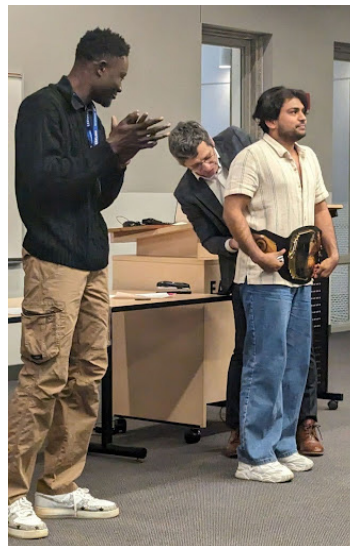
All the finalists received gift cards, and the winner, Shoaib Vahora, received a \$100 bill and a metal championship belt. Huge thanks to Dr. Bill Hillmann for spearheading this event, practicing with the finalists, MC-ing and setting an example!

## Story Slam Finalists and Where They're From:

Munkhsaikhan "Danny" Nyamdavaa (Mongolia),  
Alvin Garcia (Philippines),  
Mohammad Shoaib Vahora (India),  
Isaiah Rufus (Chicago),  
Felix Rodriguez-Nunez (Honduras/Chicagoland),  
Ekhiyah Gipson (Chicago),  
Brooklyn Taylor (Chicagoland),  
Dequwa Sanders (Memphis and Chicago),  
Mario Medessoukou (Benin Republic, Africa),  
Justus Neal (Brooklyn NY and East Side of Chicago).



## Student Winner!



## Student Reviews:

**Aksha Ghanchi:** Whenever I saw people who speak in front of the public, I increased my confidence. I think Shoaib and Danny both are the best! I noticed that some people listened to the stories carefully, and some people talked with others.

**Taniya Turner:** I felt happy paying attention to everybody's stories. I was happy to see how many people were fighting their nervousness like Bertie, King George IV. The best speakers were Alvin & I really can't remember the Indian guy's name but he won [Shoaib]. The story slam can be better by making people be quiet and pay attention. Have some restrictions. I observed that most people don't have manners. They kept having loud side conversations, some people were even on the phone talking while people were telling their story. I knew that people were rude. I just didn't expect that much carelessness. The only time it was almost complete silence was when the Indian guy told his story. It made me upset.

**Isaiah Rufus:** The room was FULL to say the least, it was like a competition. It gave off a very challenging and foreign feel and me being a finalist added to the atmosphere. I WAS THE BEST SPEAKER, I'm kidding, the competition was extremely tense. Everyone gave it their all and I feel like Alvin and I were (In my opinion) the best speakers. I really believe the story slam was perfect. It was set up nice, it was intriguing for the audience and the finalists. I am looking forward to the next story slam.

**Adnan Vhora:** I was curious to attend that competition. When I entered the auditorium I saw that plenty of students came there to cheer up their friends. I was happy to see that such activities actually happen in my school. 10 students tried their best to win, but the fact is only one person can be on number one, so we had to choose one person from all of them! I supported Shoaib Vhora, who spoke well according to me. He described his feelings in a way that everybody can feel. He won the belt and 100 dollar bill which sounds great. After that I also took some pictures with the belt and had fun there. I had a great and fabulous experience in this competition. Thank you.

**Misbah Ayaan Hussain:** This is my first time attending a story slam competition at East West University, and the entire auditorium was filled with students and faculty members present to boost the participants' confidence and appreciate their stories. In my opinion, everyone did exceptionally well, and the audience, serving as the judges, added a unique dynamic to the event. Overall, the room exuded a positive and inspiring vibe, uplifting everyone present. Personally, I believe Mario Medessoukou's story was the most compelling, although he did not emerge as the winner. His narrative encompassed elements of sadness, motivation, bravery, and valuable life lessons. Mario faced the loss of his father's attention, grappled with severe financial difficulties, leading him to become a drug dealer to support his mother. His journey involved battling alcohol and drug addiction, but ultimately, he learned a profound lesson. Now, he is at East West to pursue an education, aiming for a dignified and respectful future for himself and his family. While the story slam format itself seems effective, one potential improvement could be the use of a microphone with better audio quality for those seated in the back. This would ensure that every participant's voice is

**Do the best you can do until you know better. When you know better do better.**

# Stories from East West Students !

## Unlocking the Path to Lasting Happiness: A Journey Through Wisdom by Aiman Fatima

In a world filled with the hustle and bustle of modern life, it's all too easy to become ensnared by the glittering distractions of material possessions and fleeting pleasures. Amidst this chaos, it's essential to pause and reflect on the deeper wisdom that guides us toward a more profound understanding of happiness and fulfillment. The source of this wisdom comes from verse 57 of Surah al-Hadid in the Quran, which offers invaluable insights into the transient nature of worldly desires. It paints a picture of how God views the worldly life as a mere playground, a stage for temporary diversions that can distract us from our life's true purpose. The central message here is that material possessions, wealth, and momentary diversions do not hold lasting value. They are but transient distractions that can lead us away from our core existence. This timeless wisdom teaches us to look beyond the surface and seek out what genuinely matters. Consider a simple yet relatable example from daily life. Picture a parent taking their child to a store, where they playfully engage the child to keep them occupied while they tend to their tasks. This scenario mirrors how, even as adults, we can easily become entangled in temporary distractions, forgetting the profound purpose of our existence. This insight leads us to ponder the concept of entertainment. While entertainment can offer a brief respite from the challenges of life, it can also turn into an all-consuming obsession. The desire to appear attractive and perfect, particularly among the youth, leads to a fixation on grooming and seeking approval from others. This obsession often extends into the college years, where students prioritize grades and future career prospects. This dynamic emphasizes how our desires evolve but never truly replace one another. Our journey then takes us into the desire for recognition and the need to showcase our accomplishments and possessions. The pursuit of recognition and material wealth can overshadow essential values such as family and community. This underscores the importance of maintaining a balance in our lives. The analogy of farming from the verse emerges as a beautiful illustration of happiness and its nurturing. Just as a farmer diligently tends to the seeds they have sown, we must also nurture the "seed" of happiness within us. This nurturing requires patience and persistence, much like the farmer's tireless efforts. In the early stages, doubts and uncertainties can cloud the path, but as we witness signs of growth, our happiness flourishes. Just as a farmer watches over their crops, God watches over our progress, guiding us toward our goals. The transient nature of worldly desires is vividly depicted through the metaphor of farming. The anticipation and excitement in the pursuit of desires often exceed the pleasure derived from their attainment. Over time, material possessions and experiences can lose their charm. We also encounter the phenomenon of "turning yellow" from the verse where the initial excitement and love for something or someone can fade with time. True happiness transcends these transient desires and can only be discovered in a profound and sincere relationship with a higher power. In the final chapter of our journey, we delve into the significance of faith and a direct relationship with a higher power in achieving true happiness. Materializing this happiness necessitates an intimate connection with the divine, marked by the declaration of oneness of God. This deep and sincere relationship with the divine is the gateway to lasting contentment and inner peace. In conclusion, these timeless insights remind us to seek the enduring and meaningful aspects of life. They guide us away from the transient distractions that can so easily lead us astray. As we navigate the intricate path of existence, let us strive to nurture the seeds of happiness and recognize that our ultimate purpose lies in our connection with our Creator. In this wisdom, we find the key to unlock the path to lasting happiness, one



## Path: Embracing Individuality on the Journey of Self-Discovery By Mary Agnes Nassuuna

The concept of a "path" in our college journey is both universal and unique. We're all urged to tread this route, yet the destination remains unknown. The fear of the unknown, coupled with societal expectations, often leaves us apprehensive about the path we choose or the one chosen for us. In this article, we delve into the metaphorical "path" that college students navigate, exploring the challenges of comparison and the importance of staying true to ourselves.

### Part 1: The Fear of the Unknown

#### Navigating Uncertainty:

Entering college is akin to stepping into the unknown. The ambiguity of what lies ahead can be intimidating, but it's essential to recognize that this uncertainty is a shared experience among all students. Embrace the mystery as an opportunity for self-discovery rather than a source of anxiety.

#### Societal Pressures:

External pressures, whether from family, peers, or societal expectations, can influence the path we feel compelled to take. It's crucial to distinguish between external expectations and personal aspirations. Remember, your journey is unique, and conforming to societal norms might not lead to genuine fulfillment.

### Part 2: The Pitfalls of Comparison

#### The Comparison Trap:

In a world where everyone seems to be on a predefined path, the temptation to compare ourselves with our peers is inevitable. However, constant comparison can erode our self-esteem and divert us from our authentic selves. Recognize that everyone's path is different, and success takes diverse forms.

#### Losing Ourselves:

The pressure to conform to societal norms can lead us to lose sight of our individuality. It's easy to become entangled in the expectations of others and neglect our passions, interests, and unique strengths. Resist the urge to mold yourself into someone else's idea of success.

### Part 3: Rediscovering Your Authentic Self

#### Embracing Individuality:

The path is not just about reaching a destination; it's about the journey of self-discovery. Embrace your individuality, including your strengths, weaknesses, and unique aspirations. Authenticity breeds genuine success and fulfillment.

#### Self-Reflection:

Take moments to reflect on your goals, values, and the path you're on. What brings you joy and a sense of purpose? By understanding yourself better, you can make decisions aligned with your authentic self.

The college path is a journey of self-discovery, filled with twists, turns, and moments of uncertainty. Rather than succumbing to the fear of the unknown or the pressures of comparison, let us celebrate the diversity of our paths. By staying true to ourselves, we unlock the potential for genuine success and find fulfillment on our individual journeys.





# Our Students' Journeys...



## Hetshree Vyas

"Life", probably the most significant word that exists and yet it is full of uncertainties and surprises, both good and bad and so unique for everyone. Despite what the dictionary says, I don't think it can be explained under one single definition. The meaning of life differs for every individual. About 8 billion people on Earth and I'm pretty sure, each one if asked to, will define life in a different way. Everyone has a different story and different learning. Let me tell you mine.

My name is Hetshree Vyas and I'm from Gandhinagar, Gujarat. I belong to simple and decent family. We were a pretty happy family. Our days were full of giggles and laughter until the pandemic hit. Life millions of families around the world, it robbed us of our dear one: my grandmother. Although, being a tremendously strong woman, the root of our family tree that held us together, she lost her battle against COVID. The virus came into our lives like horrendous wave and washes away what we knew as our home, my grandmother. Our lives have never been the same ever since. As for me, I was shattered. I was really close to her and her absence, haunted me everyday. To add to all the anxiety, the news projected even more negativity. People all around the world were dying at such a rapid rate. It felt

like the entire population of the Earth would be wiped off from the face of it.

But as they say, "Every dark cloud has a silver lining", so did mine. I received the opportunity of a lifetime; a chance to study in the United States of America". It was a chance for me to have a fresh start, a chance to get out of all the darkness and build myself a future as bright as a spring morning. I held on to it for dear life and flew miles away from my family. I was moving far away from my family for sure, but I had their love and blessings accompany me. Not just that, I knew my grandmother was proud of me and smiling at me from up above. This does sound like a fairytale and a dream come true, but it also comes with its own set of challenges and hardship. Shifting to a foreign land, all alone, completely unaware of what it held for me. It was terrifying for me. The culture was vastly different and I knew nothing about the whereabouts. However, with time and obviously a series of mistakes later, I gradually settled down. I knew I had a lot of hope on me and could not let them down. I work extremely hard and thought about my grandmother throughout. I somehow felt her presence with

## How Life Got In the Way By Sherena Sanders

Well how do I start .....My name is Sherena Sanders. I am here to hopefully inspire someone today! I am a mom first and foremost and also a long time student here at east west, and I mean long time! I started here many years ago and then life started happening to me over and over. When I first started here my kids didn't exist, and my sister was 2yrs old. Ok let's speed it up .....my mom got sick and I took on the responsibility at a young age to raise my sister, so I tried my best to go school, work, and raise my little sister. I made my mom a promise I would make sure she was good and don't worry. Life again: I had my own kids - well, a set of twins - in 2004. Yep, they are 18 now. In 2004 mom was still sick, and I pushed as hard as I could, and eventually I had to withdraw. I returned and graduated with my associates in 2014, and this was also the same year I lost my mom ... My world just crashed on me, dark cold hateful and lost ..... I couldn't do anything being so depressed but I had to remember what I promised my mom, so here I am watching my sister Sherrell cross the East West graduation stage with her bachelor degree. Now I am facing how hard it is to return to school, but here I am, a mom of 5: 2 sets of twins and my little munchkin. I'm proud to be here returning, yet losing another person close to my heart, the only strength I had left: my grandmother. But I'm here and I won't stop until I receive my bachelors in English. I want to pursue a career with Chicago public schools to help assist special needs children. My advice is keep going, don't



## Embracing Diversity and Academic Excellence: My Journey as an International Student at East West University By Naila Khan

As an international student at East West University (EWU), every step of my academic expedition has unfolded against a backdrop of vibrant diversity and unwavering academic excellence. From the moment I set foot on the university grounds, I was enveloped in the warm embrace of diversity at East West University. The student body, faculty, and staff represent a kaleidoscope of cultures from around the globe. This multicultural environment enhances the academic experience, provides a unique opportunity to appreciate the myriad perspectives, enriches our collective journey. One of the most remarkable aspects of my journey at EWU has been the support and guidance provided by the faculty members. The professors here are not just educators; they are mentors who genuinely care about the success and well-being of their students. Their open-door policy encourages students to seek assistance, clarification, or even engage in insightful discussions outside the classroom. Our Student advisor Kate Petek and professor of English Dr. Maria Polski have consistently demonstrated exceptional support and dedication, going above and beyond to assist me in my academic journey. Their extra efforts and encouragement have significantly contributed to the vibrant energy of the school. I deeply appreciate their commitment to fostering a positive learning environment. The university's emphasis on practical learning has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey. The well-equipped laboratories, cutting-edge technology, and industry-relevant curriculum have allowed me to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. This hands-on approach to education has not only deepened my understanding of the subjects but has also prepared me for the challenges of the professional world. Beyond academics, East West University provides a plethora of opportunities for extracurricular engagement. From cultural events and sports competitions to student clubs and community service initiatives, there is always something happening on campus. These activities have not only helped me forge lasting friendships but have also allowed me to explore and appreciate the rich cultural tapestry of different traditions.

Adapting to a new country and educational system can be challenging, but East West University has a robust support system in place for international students. The International Student Affairs office serves as a reliable source of assistance, offering guidance on matters ranging from visa regulations to cultural adaptation. Orientation programs and cultural exchange events further contribute to a sense of belonging, fostering a community where diverse backgrounds are celebrated. As I reflect on my time at East West University, I am filled with gratitude for the enriching experiences and invaluable lessons that have shaped my academic and personal journey. The university's commitment to academic excellence, cultural diversity, and holistic development has not only broadened my horizons but has also equipped me with the skills and knowledge to thrive in an interconnected world.

In conclusion, East West University has transcended its role as a mere educational institution, becoming a home away from home—a place where academic excellence is coupled with personal growth. My journey as an international student at EWU included discovery, friendship, and appreciation for the power of education to transcend borders and build bridges between cultures.



# Our Students' Journeys...



## My Experience As An International Student By Asmath Unissa

My name is Asmath Unissa. I was born and brought up in India. India is a diverse country with various cultures and religions. I'm 24 years old and it was difficult for me to leave my beloved family, friends, colleagues and my country. As there is a saying that "to gain something we need to lose something," and I'm finally here in the most popular and one of the highly profiled countries(USA). The USA has diverse landscapes with diverse cultures, as far as I have seen the USA has the most incredible cities, fun festivals and events. The challenge that I faced was with the American dollar. I was still analyzing the things in terms of rupees rather than the dollars. Hence, it was difficult for me to assess the value of things in terms of dollars. As far as I have noticed The rules of the USA are very strict in terms of driving, pedestrian crossing, etc. The medical is very expensive here as the dentist charged \$100 just for cleaning the teeth which is very expensive compared to my native country.

The reason I'm here in the USA is to advance my education level and I hope that the education gained from the USA will enable me to secure a better job in the future. I'm currently a student at East-West university, Ms Kate Petek, The DSO of international students, she helped me alot in the process of admission and I'm about to complete my first quarter. I was delayed in the admission due to some transfer issues from another university and I almost missed my three lectures from all the four sub-

jects. But the professors of these universities are very humble, kind-hearted. They helped me out personally to cover up the syllabus. It took time for me to understand the various accents, there were language barriers, and different students with different cultural backgrounds. Prof. Robert Pitzele, taught me mathematics in a very simple and easy manner and he is so sweet. Dr. Bill Hillmann, a true gentleman, helped me during the confused stage of assignments. Prof. Zechary Swezy enhanced my confidence during my speeches and helped to overcome my stage fear. Dr. Adams helped me out where I was unable to understand the law of citation and about Plagiarism. Last but not least my most stylish Professor Dr. Polski, she is a very marvelous teacher who helps each and every student in one way or another. She is the most knowledgeable person I have ever met. I have the best professors. I'm not gonna forget them as

## To those who endureth to the end By Rose Lloyd-Williams

"The race is not given to the swift nor the strong but to those who endureth to the end." - Even if you're not the smartest, strongest, or most knowledgeable, God can give you good success when you depend on His grace. This is a popular saying in the African-American churches. It's used for encouragement. It appears in many of our worship songs. Starting September 25, 2023, this saying took on a deeper, personal meaning. My college career started at Roosevelt University. Life there was so overwhelming. The sheer number of students in the classes was mind-boggling. My grades suffered. I was LOST! Abandoning my dream of graduating college was out of the question. The small university down the street came to mind. From the minute I entered the building, I felt at home. My graduation journey on "East-West University road" started in January, 1988. My grades improved. My confidence was restored. I connected with more students. College life was great! My studies continued until 1990. Then LIFE got in the way. I decided to put my studies on hold while seeking full-time employment. The stipulation was any job offer I accept must include tuition reimbursement. I landed such a job with many opportunities to advance. My focus shifted from studies to career. I met and married my husband. I became the mother of 2 beautiful children. My focus shifted from career to motherhood. After 10 years, I resigned. Raising my children was my top priority. To me, there was no greater investment than in the next generation. In 2007, I decided it was time to pick up my studies. I returned to East-West as a full-time student. Working part-time, caring for 2 elderly relatives, raising 2 children, completing my homework....I was OVER-WHELMED!. In spite of the chaos, I performed better than any other time in college (all A's). Sadly, I concluded adding college to the madness at that moment was not the right decision. Fast forward to the year 2023. My life has changed dramatically. Some were good, one of my children had already graduated with a Bachelor's degree. Some were not so good. The dream of receiving my Bachelor's degree resurfaced. My initial response to pursuing my education was to list all the reasons why I couldn't succeed. I'm visually and hearing impaired. It's been years since I've attended college. Those moments of doubt were short-lived. I have God's grace and it is sufficient! In September 2023, I rejoined the East-West University family. It was one of the best decisions of my life! Yes, it has been a struggle. I am not the smartest nor am I the most knowledgeable. However, God's grace has brought me proficiency in all areas I lacked. My 30+ year journey will finally end soon. Thanks to East-West University, I and the class of 2024 are well prepared to face the world. The race is not given to the swift nor the strong but to



## By Joselyn Bernal

I would like to share that my time here at East-West University has been a great experience and I have met many amazing people throughout my short time here. I am a transfer student from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and I can say that I prefer the smaller classroom ratio rather than the 500+ auditorium lectures. I have learned so much from my professors here and I recently graduated with my associates degree this June. I am looking forward to achieving my bachelors degree in June 2024 along with the rest of my classmates and I also can't wait to see what else the rest of the year will bring and what new accomplishments we reach as a team but I am glad I chose to be here.





# What happens in Senior Seminar? HM491

## Books I read in HM491 By Yash Dholakiya



This Senior Seminar course has been a truly enriching experience for me because there are so many things that I hadn't learned in my past bachelor's studies, and I got a chance to learn all that incredible things in this course. First, I will talk about Ready Player One. It is related to the current world, an era where we have already started entering into a virtual world; Ready Player One is like a warning for us how we have to work with the artificial intelligence and virtual world so that we don't get that type of consequences later. Now I'll talk about Ready Player One book and movie, because I watched that movie a couple of years ago. After reading this book, I can say that Ready Player One book gives us a deeper understanding of the virtual world. In Ready Player One, Cline's description of the virtual world was mind blowing: he describes how the world will be after that kind of technology comes into the real world because right now we can see that there are so many people who like to play this kind games and eventually they lose that feeling that how real world looks like, and there are other people too who just want to escape from the real world and live in that kind of virtual world. I noticed that the book gives us deeper knowledge about 80s pop culture: movies, video games, etc. In our other textbook, I liked the approach to technology. When scientists have trained primates and other animals to use simple tools, they've discovered just how profoundly the brain can be influenced by technology. And this is what I have experienced in today's world: we are getting so obsessed with new technologies because, after all, I can say that all new technologies are making human life easier, because what is the meaning of new technology? Every new technology makes our life more comfortable and easier. After all this reading I can say that we have to be more aware of new technologies because those can have some serious consequences. Then we started reading the

book Enlightenment by Pinker. In that book he talked about how our society is developing through different charts and numbers. There is one graph about GDP and life satisfaction and about that, Pinker said that rich people in the country are happier, and people in richer countries are happier, and I agree with him. After all, I got to learn many interesting things throughout the course.

## Communication technologies: influence on the brain or on society By Mazidatou Abogourin

Technology is anything that was created to improve human lives and conditions. Communication technologies refers to mediums that facilitate transfer of information between two or more people. Oral speech or language was the first communication technology invented by humans. The invention of language has allowed humans to pass information and to express themselves clearly. Oral communication, like other technology, has improved certain areas of human brain function. People could only keep information in their memories during the time when speaking was the primary means of communication. As a result people at the time had to retain everything in their mind, which led them to have huge long-term memories. Knowledge was also transmitted through folklore and storytelling.

The need to track debts led to the invention of writing a hundred thousand millennia later. The development of writing has influenced our cultures in both negative and positive ways, resulting in the emergence of new genres and the refinement of old ones. Then, schools were built to teach people how to write and educate them on some of the new medium's accepted standards.

Printing helped humans to develop new cognitive abilities such as detachment and critical thinking, which altered the structure of their brains. Johannes Gutenberg invented printing five hundred years ago, a machine that produces books, posters, and newspapers. Printing allowed humans to make thousands of copies of books, texts and stories cheaply. The new technology brought in front of humans a large amount of information that they can take their time to digest and to make their own judgment, thereby, making it possible for them to follow and understand complex and nuanced arguments. It also allowed humans to develop abstract thinking: to deal with ideas rather than pictures. I believe it is the best communication technology that has ever been developed because it changed our world and totally led us to a whole new era (the Digital). The creation of the internet and computers fundamentally altered how we interact. Information became widely available and communication costs dropped significantly. We are all connected by the internet, and the world is getting smaller every day. We can now collaborate and maintain friendships with others worldwide. There are countless numbers of reliable and false bits of information available on the internet. Similar to earlier technological advancements, digital technology has enabled people to develop cognitive abilities, such as decision-making, problem-solving and visual processing.



## Real-life class By Maurice Truss

Senior seminar has been a wonderful experience class for me due to all of the real world conversations we have. We talk about how our society has developed over time from tribal to modernized people. Early in the class we read and discussed the details and results of virtual reality and how it could be related to an oasis. Ready Player One was an informative but entertaining book to read. It is informative because if you really take the time to analyze what's going on it gives a possible timeline where the world is completely poor but has Virtual reality as an escape route. Other things we discussed: Technologies these days can dull the brain instead of allowing you to strengthen your cognitive skills. Over time data shows that inequality has decreased from where it originally started, but still lingers around. I believe this class teaches us more about how we are, real world problems, and helps us focus more on bettering ourselves mentally.





# What happens in Senior Seminar? HM491

## Senior Seminar ( My Experience ) By Birat Paudel

Senior Seminar has been my favorite class so far. This class is the wholesome of university learning. From facts to fiction, it has brought to my thought process a whole new perspective of looking at the world. I have been a keen reader my whole life, devouring books, fiction and non-fiction alike. A worm inside a fruit, enjoying the flavor and resting inside of it best describes my passion towards reading. But never had I ever made genuine connection with the books I read. Maybe some books would help me understand the world better, but I always differentiated with fiction as something not so relevant with the real world but an escape from it. An escape from my worries, getting to live a life different from what I was living. After a few sessions with Dr. Polski and a couple fiction novels later, a whole new scenario developed inside me. I started to acknowledge that fiction novels, even with the fantasies they indulge me with, never actually lost connection with the real life I live in. They just explained the way the world worked in terms of fantasies. They recited to me the process of how technology actually worked. I am not talking about the creative engineers who made the said technology or the electric circuits that were included in the invention. But, how technology really worked in real life, how it infiltrated the naive mind of ours, creating outcomes that require some in depth knowledge of the society, pre-technology and post-technology, to be understood. The reading materials for this class, which included both fiction and nonfiction, helped me understand this world of ours in a different way, a way that is more real and true. I highly recommend this class, and also ask students in the future taking this class to actually understand the materials as important lessons about the world we live in right now.



## An exciting class By Parth Dharangdhariya

As an international student, I am at a phase where I am ingesting a lot of things at once. Which can be overwhelming but stressful at the same time. Looking at the broader picture, these are preparing me for the challenges I will face in the future. It is not easy at all to live on your own, manage finances, and maintain good standing as a student. However, I take it as a challenge, and it is actually helping me to experience the pressure people try to avoid. I believe we can achieve whatever we want if we set our minds to it. Senior Seminar has made me look over a lot of things and taught me some valuable things over the period. I did enjoy it more than any other class except psychology because it is my personal favorite topic. I have finished an entire novel for the first time in a long time. Ready Player One was an extremely interesting book to read. Although I quite knew the storyline because I had watched the movie before, it still surprised me till the end. I was quite shocked at how they changed the movie from the original text. I enjoyed reading the entire book, and it was a great experience for me.

In the other textbook, I have found some extremely valuable knowledge on how our social changes affected our cognitive skills. The best part was learning the timeline of how we evolved our cognitive skills and what factors determined it. The second most intriguing part was the discovery of the printing press because I didn't know much about the origin and expansion of the printing press, and how we jumped from visual skills to hearing skills to writing skills and to entering the digital era. Looking at our past, our world has changed drastically.

The third book 'Enlightenment Now' by Steven Pinker is a great resource. According to Pinker, the world is getting better. Pinker uses history and statistics to outline world trends that position progress within a broader context. With all the data Pinker has collected, he suggests the world is getting better. I want to agree with it; however, the world has its dark side. The data might not show it, but we are taking a path where people are not so happy. I agree they are excited but not as happy as people were before. More addiction to social media and all the junk on the internet is causing depression and hatred. Looking at the graph I was given to examine, I have found out that Pinker makes a valid point distinguishing between happiness and excitement. People are getting more excited because more attractive technology is being invented, however, people are getting unhappy at the same time. Altogether these data are helpful and can



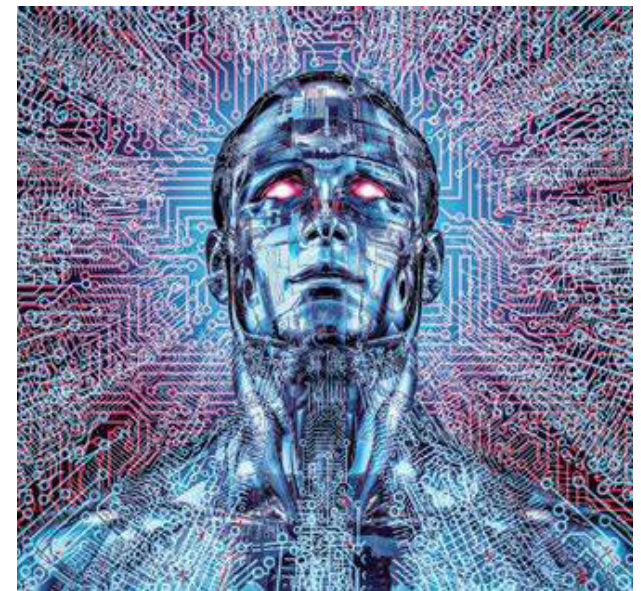
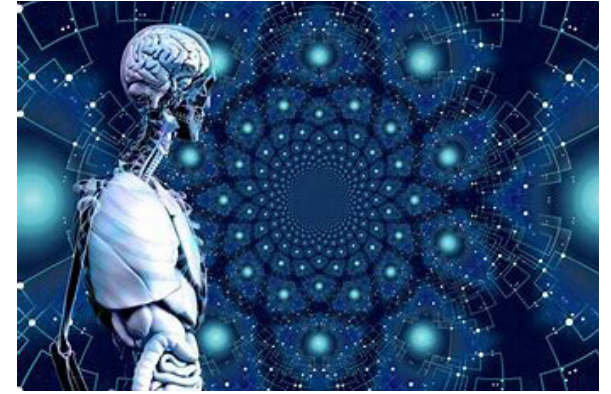
## By Jocelyn Bernal

Something I have learned so far in my senior seminar class is about how the different ways of communication technologies have changed society and affected the brain in many ways. I had never thought about how technology personally affected us as individuals or even how it has grown and changed society over the years. Throughout the beginning of the class I began learning more about the cognitive effects of technology on the brain and also how over the years it has only expanded and getting bigger and bigger around the world. I also didn't know how digital technology came around, I always thought that it was around since the beginning of time because as a Gen Z, it has been around since I was born and I never thought to see how I would survive without it. Something else that really caught my attention was how writing was invented and how it has evolved and been incorporated into technology. For example, something that I think is major and really surprised me was that at one point in time letters didn't exist and therefore schools also didn't exist, I had never done research on that but in my own world I believed school was always a requirement because I believed it was always around. I also didn't think that letters and writing was created, I believed it was just there. These key facts of history are really important to know and I personally believe it has also made me more aware, like how technology only gets more advanced but that just means there is going to be more problems along with that. Technology also created more jobs but at the same time it made other jobs less prominent and made a lot of the work easier to do with machinery and the use of the internet. This was something that I found interesting and very informative.

## Soul Seller Story

**Life Force** By Nat Wrhel

No one is invincible, not even the greatest starship captain in the universe. This thought crossed Sophia Larange's mind increasingly often. During her time as captain of the starship Pursuit, she had discovered more new worlds and forged more alliances than anyone else who ever lived, but there was one thing she could not conquer: the passage of time. Even with all the scientific advances of the past few centuries, no one had uncovered the secret to that. As Sophia realized that she was moving past the prime of her life, this fact became more and more worrisome to her. Someday, Sophia knew, she would be gone. She obsessed over the idea that, while future generations might remember the things she did, they would not remember her as an individual, and this prospect was too much for her to handle. As an attempt to combat this inevitability, she frequently composed journal entries, which she had never told anyone about. These detailed what she considered to be unique insights about the universe, ideas that no one else before had ever been capable of thinking. She hoped that someday, after she was gone, people would be able to hold on to some piece of her. She had to live on in some way. One night, while she was mapping out her ideas about the origins of human cognition, she heard someone entering her quarters. In a panic, she hid the tablet that held her journal entries. Her present company, Mara Rookson, may have been the chief scientist on the Pursuit, but even she was not allowed to view Sophia's insights. "Good evening, Captain," Mara began. "I apologize for disrupting your work, but I have made an important discovery that I would like to share with you." "Go on," Sophia replied, somewhat impatient. She hated to be interrupted. Mara sighed. This was huge, and she really hoped Sophia considered it worthy of her time. "I believe I have found a way to transfer the human mind into an android. People have been working toward this since the twenty-first century, and I think I've finally figured it out! Think of the implications this has for future space exploration. Using this technology, we would be able to send people on missions without the limitations imposed by human bodies. We could explore farther reaches of space than we ever thought possible!" "Do it," Sophia responded with no hesitation. This was obviously the answer to her concerns—she could continue living as the greatest starship captain, potentially forever. "What?" "Do it. I have been wanting to get out of this bodily prison for years. Make me into a machine," Sophia insisted. "I could, but there is one major problem with the technology," Mara went on to explain. "The process of transferring the mind into the android... well, simply put, it would destroy your soul." "My soul?" Sophia laughed at this. "Mara, you are a woman of science. Surely you aren't concerned with something as superstitious as souls!" "That's the other important part of this discovery. I have finally found a scientific explanation for the existence of souls," Mara responded. Sometimes it was very difficult to keep her cool when Sophia got this cocky. "As you know, energy, like matter, cannot be created or destroyed. The human soul essentially works as a form of energy. Do you really think our life force just disappears when we die? The soul is the essential part of humanity that moves on when each of us dies. That's why we've never been able to find a way to revive the dead; we can't put their souls back once they have moved on. However, the process of transferring your mind is so intense that your soul is expended during the process." Sophia still wasn't convinced. "Suppose the soul is real. Would that even matter if my mind is contained in a machine? It's not like I would die. Mara considered this. "No, not in the normal sense, but there would still be consequences. Your soul is a vital part of what makes you who you are, so without it, the android may not really be 'you.' Also, nothing lasts forever, not even your mind. Eventually, you will break down, and you will have given up any opportunity to experience whatever the afterlife may hold. Are you really sure you want to risk that?" "Let's do it," Sophia said. Mara still was extremely hesitant about this, but there was no arguing with Sophia; once she had her mind set on something, there was no stopping her. Mara led her to a secluded area of the ship, where there was a secret room that even Sophia was not aware existed. This room contained android bodies in various states of completion, in addition to what appeared to be a twentieth century person's concept of a teleporter. "You've been really busy," Sophia remarked. "Maybe this explains why things haven't been getting done on this ship as efficiently as they should." "Shut it," Mara retorted. "If you want this so bad, don't bitch about the work that went into it." She handed Sophia a thick pile of papers. "Sign all of these waivers if you're sure this is what you want." Sophia signed them, barely skimming through their contents. "Now go stand in the machine," Mara ordered. She could only hope that once this process was done, Sophia (or what was left of her, anyway) might be a bit more bearable. Sophia obliged, and as Mara started it up, she felt strange sensations unlike anything she had experienced in her life. It was like her entire body was barraged by tiny bullets, which grew hotter and hotter until it felt like her body was melting.





Eventually it got so intense that Sophia began to rethink her decision, but as soon as that thought crossed her mind, it was over. She looked around the room, viewing things for the first time with artificial eyes. It took her a few moments to get her bearings in this new state of existence. “What do you think?” Mara asked. “Is it like you imagined?” “Yes, this is good,” Sophia responded. She knew objectively that this is what she wanted, but she was having difficulty feeling any actual emotions about it. “If you don’t mind, I think I’m going to get back to work,” she continued as she left the room and headed back to the command post. Now Mara was left with the challenge of how to explain this to the crew. Eventually, she just decided to tell everyone that Sophia was out on a secret mission, and she had created this android to stand in for her in the meantime. Fortunately, the crew accepted this without too much trouble. Mara was relieved at this; she worried that if she explained what had really happened, other people would also want to transfer their minds to machines. She felt immense guilt over ever making Sophia aware of this possibility, and she would not sentence anyone else to the same fate. Life on the Pursuit continued generally as normal. Normal for everyone except Sophia, that is. At first, things were good. She was no longer preoccupied with the idea that one day the universe would be without her, and she was able to work more efficiently than she had in years. She especially appreciated the fact that she no longer had to deal with frivolous human needs, like eating or sleeping; she had moved beyond these things in favor of furthering her life’s pursuit of remaining the universe’s greatest starship captain. Sophia Larange had become unstoppable. As the years passed, new crew members came and went. In the past, this had always been a somewhat emotional occasion for Sophia, but now she just considered it to be yet another thing in the series of events that occurred on a daily basis. The same was starting to become true about discovering new planets or civilizations. These discoveries had always been what Sophia lived for, the whole reason she ever aspired to be a starship captain in the first place, but now they were just new data to record. Centuries passed. When she decided to undergo the mind transfer, Sophia anticipated that as time went on, her inorganic android body could be repaired endlessly, eliminating any concern that her mind would not be around forever. Unfortunately, technology evolves so quickly that, before long, there was no one around who still knew how to repair the androids of her time, nor did the correct tools or spare parts still exist. Sophia had not anticipated this outcome; she was now the first person in all of human history to become obsolete. She approached the scientists onboard the Horizon (the Pursuit had been destroyed about 270 years ago) about doing another mind transfer into a new machine. However, this effort proved futile, as mind transfers of this kind had been strictly outlawed. Sophia was not entirely opposed to breaking the law, but there was another problem: since she no longer had a soul, she would not be able to generate sufficient energy to transfer her mind again. Sophia now had to face the horrible truth she had been avoiding for nearly a thousand years: she was not going to exist anymore. Mara’s words repeated in her memory. “Nothing lasts forever, not even your mind.” She couldn’t remember the last time she had truly felt emotions, but now she was overwhelmed with panic and regret. What if she had kept her soul? Would she have been able to exist forever in some capacity, as Mara had suggested? Now she would never have the opportunity to find out. She could only hope that future generations would remember her, although without a soul to live on, she did not have any way to ever know if this would be the case. That was Sophia Larange’s last thought before she ceased to exist.

### Epilogue

Seven years after Sophia’s mind transfer occurred, Mara Rookson passed away as a result of injuries she sustained while repairing the Pursuit’s engine. She was correct about the existence of a soul that lives on forever. After her death, Mara became a part of the very fabric of the entire universe. In an instant, she had learned all of the things that Sophia had spent nearly a millennium trying to discover. By destroying her soul, Sophia had given up any hope of obtaining the one thing she desired more than anything.




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Nat Wrhel holds a MA in English, a BA in Theatre, and a BA in Philosophy and Religion, all from Truman State University in Kirksville, MO. Additionally, they have worked at professional theatres such as The Ohio Light Opera and Ozark Actors Theatre. They are an active researcher in the field of LGBTQ+ representation in media and have broken new ground with the thesis “The Acest of Aces: Representations of Asexuality in Fiction.” As an instructor, Nat focuses on critical thinking and encouraging students to delve deeply into topics of interest. Nat is currently teaching Writing from Sources and College Preparatory English

## Who Am I? By Norma A.Aguilar

Hello everyone, as you all know my name is Norma A. Aguilar. I have always told friends to call me Angie (short for my middle name) or Norma Jean (because I don't like Norma on its own, never liked my name), but it never stuck so almost everyone calls me just Norma.

Before I proceed to my Bio, first, I would like to thank Dr. Jain, Mr. Campos and Mr. Gonzalez for giving me the opportunity. I know that within the positive times, I have some big shoes to fill. Honestly, I do not have enough words to express the gratitude that I have. Especially when you have all made me feel very welcomed and super supported with all the help in my training. From what I've learned in this thing called "Life", is that you can never stop learning no matter how good you are at your job.

Even though she's not here, I'd like to give a special shout out to my daughter, Karissa for pushing me to take this offer even when all was telling me to say 'No' and many were against it. We also knew that many things were going to be sacrificed, especially my time with her and yet she believed in me and said that this was my moment to shine and grow, that she was my biggest supporter and cheerleader. But at the same time, she kept reminding me that I would be getting better pay and with that, I would be able to buy her all that she wanted because I was always broke with the old job (even funnier, nothing has changed). Another big thank you goes to Mr. Gonzalez for calling me and letting me know about this grand opportunity. Without that call, I don't think I would've ever had the pleasure of meeting all of you as well as working alongside some familiar faces whom I've always had so much respect for, Ms. Johnny Lyons, Ms. Theresa Valdes and of course Mr. Jorge Gonzalez. I wish I would've been here sooner to also have worked alongside one of my biggest mentors, Mrs. Claudia Silverman, may she rest in peace. She is one of the few people in my life that have molded me into the professional woman I am today.

So, I know I might have already let you know a little about myself in previous meetings, but just in case for those that may not have heard it at some point, I earned my Bachelor's in Communications, Media, and Theatre with a Minor in Theatre at Northeastern Illinois University in 2019. I married the following year on October 23, 2010, after waiting for a proposal the previous eight years and the nine months after graduation. My husband and I just recently celebrated our 13th year Anniversary. Like I said in the previous paragraph, I am a mother of a little beautiful, smart, talented, feisty, witty, etc., 10-year-old girl named Karissa Alexandra which is currently in 5th grade. I also have a Chihuahua Terrier Mix dog named JoJo who just turned three years old November 14th (The way he came into our lives, is one of my funniest, memorable stories. If you ever want to hear it, you know where my office is.). I am the proud daughter of immigrant parents and being an immigrant myself, I have always strived to achieve all my goals as much as possible to make them and my family proud but not just that, to be able to show my little one that anything is possible as long as you set your mind to it. I grew up in a humble home and saw how much my parents sacrificed for me to be able to have the education and career I have today. As a former student, I know how hard it was to work (3-4 jobs at a time) along with taking care of my little sister, mom and keeping up with my studies. I was never able to receive Financial Aid; yet with a mother that cleaned houses, a father that painted houses, and an uncle that stepped up to help, I was able to complete my Bachelors.

I am a DACA Recipient (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – The Dreamers Act) which I was blessed to have been approved for since 2012. Because of this, I am also able to work here. Unfortunately, I am still not able to travel outside the US without an Immediate Family Emergency, Medical, or Work reasons. It has been 30+ years since I've been back to my beautiful country and due to that, I've also had to endure the pain of losing three of my grandparents, which I had not seen since the last time I came here back in 1990. Now that I sit in a role that I never thought I would have a chance to work in, I can honestly say it has even humbled me more. I am passionate about what I do. I am eager to help those in need because I truly believe in a phrase that says, "Pay it Forward". My door is always open. If I can't help someone fulfill their request(s) or have the answer to their question(s), I will always make sure to find someone who can. "Teamwork makes the Dreamwork". By working together, never putting anyone down or feeling superior no matter what position you hold, together we can all make this community grow to its highest potential. What we give, show, and bestow upon our students will determine either positive or negative results each quarter.



**Faliure happens when you give up, Everything else is just practice**