

Memory, The Mother of All Wisdom First Year — Insight



“Insight, I believe, refers to the depth of understanding that comes by setting experiences, yours and mine, familiar and exotic, new and old, side by side, learning by letting them speak to one another.”

**Mary Catherine
Bateson**

**A Gift of The Class of 1988 for The Class of 2013
As You Enter Your First Year at Mount Holyoke College**

Welcome!

You have joined a remarkable institution famous for pioneering the education of talented, earnest, idealistic and effective women. You have been asked to join this formidable, rich tradition because others have noticed your unique qualities and deemed you ready for this incredible journey.

Congratulations — you have earned this opportunity!

Your first days on the Mount Holyoke campus can be both exciting, disorienting and intimidating. We, your sisters in the Class of 1988, remember those first few heady days at Mount Holyoke well. We remember the sudden shock and wonder of joining a diverse community, knowledgeable of unfamiliar traditions that may seem quirky or quaint at first. We remember wondering how we would fit in, whether we would succeed or fail, and whether we had made the right choice for our education.

Take a deep breath and smile. We can assure you that these challenges and insecurities are weathered in due time, and that most of you soon will find that Mount Holyoke College has earned and will retain a very special place in your heart. Many of us found our best friends in college. Many of us found our passions in life or the inspiration for our life's work. Most importantly, most of us found ourselves.

As a gift to you, we will share some of our memories, thoughts and guidance at the beginning of each of your four years at Mount Holyoke to help you face each year's challenges and rewards with a sense of perspective. Consider yourselves lovingly adopted!

We are proud of each of you, and eager to join you in four years when you walk in your Laurel Parade, one of those wonderful Mount Holyoke traditions, prior to your graduation. We will be there to cheer you on!

**The Mount Holyoke College
Class of 1988**

Our Favorite Spots on Campus Include ...

I loved walking up the worn marble stairs into the library. It made me think of the many generations of women who climbed those steps.

Just outside the library at closing with the snow falling ... nothing more peaceful and natural.

Lower Lake in the fall when all the leaves have changed and their vibrant colors are reflecting in the water.

I love every square inch of the MHC campus! My carrel in the library holds the most memories and the library reading room is inspiring.

Walking down the stairs and through the garden next to the amphitheatre in spring, a small bit of bliss in a hurried schedule. Also the waterfall on Upper Lake first thing in the morning when beginning my sunrise run in fall — crisp air and leaves soaring in color. Seeing horses on the path.

The small, beautiful tower room in the library with the stained glass windows ... I think it's the Stinson Room? I loved it because it reminded me of a miniature Gothic cathedral.

The dock on Upper Lake. Very peaceful.

The bridge to North Mandelle and the walk around Lower Lake. It was great to hear the waterfall and to watch the seasons change as they reflected in the water.

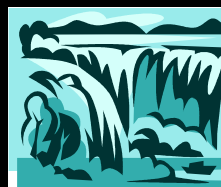
The Japanese Garden, on the roof of Eliot House. It was an incredibly peaceful place.

Shattuck's Physics Library. Oh so pretty and now gone.

The greenhouse. It was green and alive when everything else was frozen and white.

The area at the top of the amphitheater near Mary Lyon's Grave. The campus seems to unite there, and the view in every direction is beautiful. Also the views along both lakes.

The 5-mile loop around the golf course and Upper Lake running - beautiful anytime of the year. Skinner Green—I loved crossing it any time of year. In the winter, I remember stepping off of a



The Spirit of Place

snow bank to get to class and I sunk into the snow up to my thigh. In the fall it was surrounded by the colors of fall.

Chapin Hall for video parties. Willits for ice cream and popcorn.

The art loft in Dwight. I used to work in the Alumnae Office and would sometimes have to go upstairs. This area seemed like a little urban loft somewhere, compact and cozy, with great art work everywhere.

I love the library because when I walked into that room with my parents while I was looking at colleges, it was exactly at that moment that I realized I wanted to go to Mount Holyoke. The hushed room, with its soaring ceiling and carved angels holding books above my head just oozed learning and tradition. Whenever I go back to campus, I have to visit that room.

As a dancer, I used to spend a huge amount of time in the Kendall dance studios for classes, of course, and then in the evenings we could reserve them for our own use. I would bring a bag full of tapes and vinyl records (!) and work on my own choreography; it was a perfect respite between dinner and studying. I'm glad I realized how blessed I was to have those facilities available to me and to take advantage of them.

The smokers in the library. Can you believe they used to let us smoke in an actual building on campus - and in a library??

I loved eating brunch with my friends at Willits. I loved lingering after dinner in the dorms with friends.

The Radio Station, any place where I could enjoy the company of my friends. Mount Holyoke was the first place where I really felt like I belonged. Being smart, studying and doing your work did not make you an outcast. I was finally with bright women who cared about things and articulated their beliefs with well-reasoned arguments.

Our Favorite Spots on Campus Include ...

I always loved (and still do) Eliot House. The Japanese Garden is beautiful, and the lounge in Eliot House was always quiet - a great place to hang out and to study.

Upper Lake, for the away-from-it-all feeling.

Lower Lake. I loved sitting on the benches or watching the falls. It was a great place to be alone without feeling alone.

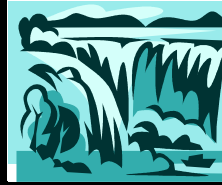
Abbey Chapel, singing together in the choir, especially during Vespers.

Abbey Chapel - I was married there!

Wa-Shin-An, the teahouse and garden at Eliot House - I try to attend a tea ceremony every time I visit campus.

The beautiful Class of 1988 stained glass window in Blanchard, which we dedicated in memory of several classmates who left us at far too young an age. It was our Senior Gift to the college, which we finally saw completed at our Year 2 college reunion.

The little things mattered to me. I was a blue collar kid, who arrived on campus never having seen it before (in fact I had never been north of Washington, D.C. before arriving at MHC). So some of the things that I had seen in brochures really resonated with me — the waterfall on Upper Lake, the window seats in MacGregor, the handsomely appointed common spaces in the older dorms. As a southerner, I appreciated the power of social discourse over food — if I had a magic wand, I would wish that all of you had the chance to enjoy the in-dorm family style meals that we enjoyed in the 1980's. So much of our education occurred at those dining tables. The "outside class" education was so remarkable — I found that when I went to an Ivy League school for junior year that it was surprisingly very easy to make good grades. MHC was so much more intellectually challenging and fulfilling than my Ivy League experience. (In fact, I loved bringing friends down from Dartmouth to make them jealous. Those chocolate chip pancakes alone sent them into a spin.)



The Spirit of Place

My favorite spot on campus was and remains Abbey Chapel. I love being alone in the large chapel, especially when the lights are off and sunlight is streaming in through the stained glass window. It's not just beautiful, it's breathtaking.

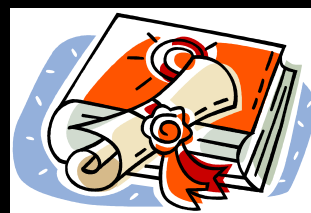
Our Majors—What We Loved and Hated, And Other Academic Advice

My major was anthropology which is a terrific department at MHC. It really helped open my eyes to the world.

I started as a Biology major and changed to a Psychology and Judaic Studies double major. I enjoyed taking classes at U Mass regularly to meet the Judaic Studies requirements. I do wish I took a Student Teaching lab class so I could have received a teaching certification.

Politics. But I'll share a nice little secret. I did love certain aspects of political science (cultural anthropology, nation-building and nationalism, comparative politics) but the normal run-of-the-mill American politics seemed a bit pedestrian to me. I discovered quickly that politics was such a broad field, and qualified for cross-credits in so many other disciplines, that I could easily fulfill my major's requirements by taking a broad range of other classes—for example, economics, complex organizations, international relations, history, religion, American studies, Women's studies, anthropology, philosophy. Technically I majored in politics — but I really majored in full-blown, mind-blowing, all-over-the-map liberal arts! This should be even easier for you now that MHC allows minors — in the 1980's, we had to double major!

Art History. If you take Art History, also take a studio class or join a craft club. You will understand so much more of the art when you participate in its making. If you take a foreign language, don't be afraid to sight read or just try to speak. Twenty years after college I still use my German and even some Latin. The ability to just think in another language is often much appreciated by the native speaker. You can usually communicate what you want to say by listening and working with each other. Plus it is a great way to meet friends and people. Another piece of advice-- come motivated and willing to work at even the hardest of classes. You can do anything. I was allowed to take a graduate Art History class during my junior year at Williams. I had to work very hard to keep up. While I was in the class a Van Gogh painting came to the Lab for repair. I was allowed to carry this painting from the storage area to the Lab. WOW! This was the first really big AHH HAH! moment in my major.



Choosing a Path

This past Spring, I went to the Getty Museum, and the painting was on display. With permission, a colleague took my picture near the painting. However, the guard said I was too close. When I told him I had the privilege to examine the painting 20+ years ago at another museum his jaw just dropped. It was really funny.

I loved majoring in History at MHC and learning to discover the past using tools like oral histories, material culture, and music, as well as documents. Classwork and internships prepared me for my first job at a local history museum -- and then my "career" jumped all over the place. And that's cool, because I had an outstanding liberal arts education to back every new endeavor.

I came in as a Chemistry major and that didn't change. However, I took A LOT of classes in the Religion department- so many that I could've double majored had I gone back and taken the required intro courses. I wish I would've allowed myself to do that.

I came in expecting to be an English major, and then found that I was not enjoying my classes. I took a History class because I met Jonathan Lipman, and wanted to take one of his classes. I would end up as a History major! I also discovered that the Religion classes I was taking, just for fun, were nearly a major, and so I declared that major, as well.

American Studies. I liked the creativity and challenge of it. I disliked that (1) nobody knew what it was and (2) it sounded light, like ice-cream without the flavor--which was misleading.

I was a double major: American Studies (History, Politics, Literature) and International Cultural History (I had so much world history, I had to call it something). I loved the variety of classes, learning about issues, choices and consequences throughout history. Being an Am Stud major made it hard to go abroad Junior year, but I had a terrific junior year at Wesleyan. Turned out my GPA was higher

Our Majors—What We Loved and Hated, And Other Academic Advice

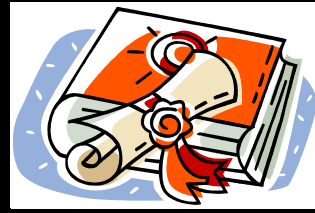
abroad Junior year, but I had a terrific Junior year at Wesleyan. Turned out my GPA was higher at Wesleyan than at MHC... when the grades didn't count!

I loved Biology ... but I couldn't get out of labs in time to make crew practice. I didn't have time to focus.

I loved learning about the culture in Art History. You couldn't talk about the art without knowing the history, politics, music, science. They were all intertwined.

After college, I went back to school to complete more sciences. I was curious about how stuff was made — the chemistry of paints, printmaking, paper making.

As a History major, I loved to research, but wasn't crazy about pulling it all together into a paper.



Choosing a Path

What We Would Study If We Could Do It All Over Again

I used to study all the “practical” stuff in the middle that I was somewhat good at doing — English, History, Politics. Now I would study the two ends of the spectrum — the allegedly impractical stuff that I love (Studio Art, Theatre Design, Dance, Riding) and the seemingly hard stuff for which I lack natural talent (foreign language, Economics, Math, Physics, Music). I would be both braver and more self-indulgent. You only get an advanced liberal arts education once in your life, ladies — see it for the rare gift that it is.

Engineering (structural or thermal).

Photography.

Geography or Religion.

Mathematical Economics, or I'd get a Master's Degree in Public Health and concentrate in epidemiology.

I would still major in American Studies, but I'd take some classes in Economics and Physics.

I would get an MFA in creative writing.

International Relations.

Art History, African Studies or Education.

Economics and International Relations.

Biology, Art, Politics, Women's Studies. The truth is, I was afraid as a student at MHC, and I avoided the subjects that scared me. I wanted to do well, and so I avoided subjects that I thought would be too challenging or difficult. I wish I could do it all over again. I would make very different choices now.

Anatomy and Physiology.

English again but I would double major in Psychology.

Studio Art would be added to my IR major.

Studio Art or organic farming.



The Path Not Taken

Anthropology, Fiber Arts.

Nothing - I love weekends, though I would study very differently.

I guess if I had it to do over again. I would've taken a Music or Theater class, another English class, History classes. I completed my major during my Junior year at Williams. So Senior year I took classes which were challenging electives-- German, History, more Art and Art History.

Our Favorite Campus Activities and Clubs

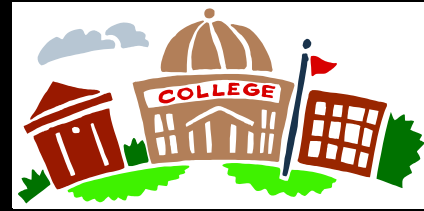
Primarily, I was involved in dance concerts through the dance department. I loved working on new pieces with faculty and fellow students. We were encouraged to work with students from Smith and UMass as well, which was lots of fun. I got to do a lot of modern dance I might not have otherwise tried.

Blue Key Guide - giving tours and pointing out all the good Mt Holyoke had to offer helped me to remember what a special place it was. Student Advisor - I liked mentoring the underclassmen. So many others, but those are the two that stand out.

I tried a little taste of so, so much. Early on, I gave up tennis and started playing rugby. One of the best decisions of my life. Rugby taught me that I was a stronger and smarter athlete than I ever dreamed in high school. And the camaraderie was priceless. As a freshman (yes, we used to call it that), I joined the Winter Term Board and played flag football. Flag football is a great way to form a good relationship with some professor that you are in awe of — Tony Lake was our quarterback, and I know that he helped a senior with her CIA application. During Winter Term, I met a lot of friends outside of my dorm (we set a Guinness World Record for the largest Trivial Pursuit Game). As a soph., I oriented first years and became an SGA Senator. I joined two influential SGA task forces - Student Evaluation of Faculty Teaching (I formed great faculty relationships) and Action on Academic Issues. SGA taught me about budgeting, compromises among diverse groups and speaking out for student needs. My advice is to do something about what bugs you, don't just sit around complaining! I was a Blue Key guide and wrote features for the newspaper sports page. I was a Student Advisor, class officer and enjoyed Law Society. With all of that, there is so much more that I wish I had tried!

If you stay for Junior Year, get involved with Junior Show. It is an amazing bonding experience and those who go away Junior Year will regret missing it.

Radio Station, Student Government, Jewish Student Union, Debate Team. I got to explore different aspects of my personality and make a wide range



Expand Your Horizons

of friends doing things I liked doing. My activities helped me overcome shyness as well.

I was very involved in one of the two protestant student groups on campus, and loved spending time with women who shared the beliefs I'd grown up with. It was a surprise to me to come to campus to find out I was "progressive" and "liberal!" Our little group (the Abbey Chapel Council of Deacons) ran the protestant Sunday services in Abby Chapel. I grew up with these women, and I am still friends with most of them. I learned to bake bread with this group, and think of them each month when I bake bread for my current church community.

I joined crew. But I really should've focused on my education. My major changed from Bio to Art History. I learned tons on the team-- especially cooperation. 8 people making 4 repetitive motions (a stroke) times 30 strokes/minute times 12 minutes to go for 2000 meters.... the dynamic connection where everyone is moving and thinking in one unit.

I read the news on the campus radio station WMHC - it was fun to read the morning news in my flannel jammies. Flag football - I loved MHC's homecoming weekend. Five College Dance programs - I liked to visit other campuses, working with so many dancers and choreographers.

Planning and having parties--big and small. I loved making my creative ideas into reality. And we had so much FUN.

I was (and still am) a religious person (maybe that's why Eliot House appealed to me). I was part of several groups on campus centered around religious/spiritual life. I was also part of the (then called) Lesbian Alliance. I think both groups appealed to me because I could find other women who shared some of my outlooks and find support. Also, they were fun.

What advice would you give your 18 year old self?

Just get through the first month. :)

This is going to be harder than you think, and what you will benefit from is not what you suspect.

Try to relax and enjoy life.

Take advantage of the Five Colleges.

Boyfriends at this stage are overrated. Be sure to spend plenty of time with your girlfriends; exercise, eat healthy!

Take a year off; don't listen to your parents.

Relax; don't be scared. Take more Math classes.

Take Art History your freshman year.

Relax. It's going to be okay. Take risks, do risky things. This is your chance to try new things.

It's okay to blow off an orientation activity to go see a Red Sox game!

Study the things you like and forget about what you think might be good for your job prospects. Other people aren't as smart as you think they are and you're not as dumb as you think you are.

Go out more, have more fun, make more friends, get more involved with the entire community.

Take time off to mature and get serious or go somewhere else.

Travel, study abroad and don't think that there is always time for that later.

This is just a gawky phase!!

Have more fun, believe in yourself and learn time management!

Pay attention, be brave, talk less and listen more.

Do as many activities as you can. Take as many classes as you can. Go out of your comfort zone. Begin to make decisions based on what you want, not what Mom and Dad want.



In the Beginning

Don't be afraid to fail. If you want to be an IR major, go headlong into it. Don't worry about comparing yourself to these women who went to private school. If you want to write, take those courses. Take poetry. Take 5-college courses.

Don't test out of baby Bio ... take it and get an A and give yourself time to settle in to college life and classes.

Learn to adjust to change: it is the only consistent thing in life. Spend more time with Mom.

Drink less; study more.

Enjoy the moment and stop worrying about the future. Take some Art History classes because you'll fall in love with museums when you visit Italy.

In academics, try to find the balance between arrogance or overconfidence (you lose your ability to learn and stretch) and fear or doubt (you freeze and miss opportunity). If you have an academic weakness, do not skirt around it. This is your best chance in life to spend some extra time on it in a safe, encouraging environment and develop your skills. Tell the professor straight up that the class is a challenge that you want to conquer - ask for help! Be brave enough to not always play only to your strengths (take pass/fail if necessary). Most ridiculously successful people have learned how to fail, recover and learn. Find fun, interesting, inspiring ways to get the basics down, i.e., tackle difficult material, write well, argue well, use tools and technology, work outside of your comfort zone, learn from diversity/experiences that might differ radically from your own. And make time for things that feed your soul — it is okay to take that art or theatre or music class even if you intend to be a doctor or lawyer or CEO. Don't be "too cool for school" — find a way to become involved in some group of activity that matters to you. Experience both leading and following. Become a part of something big, and drive it to new heights!

What advice would you give your 18 year old self?

Take as many Art History classes as you can. You'll appreciate museums so much more once you do.

Take advantage of every service career services has to offer. They're there to help and it's hard to get the same kind of attention/service after you graduate.

Take road trips. Go to Dartmouth for Winter Carnival, go to the Head of the Charles in Boston, pick apples at Atkins. These are the things you'll talk about with friends years and years after you graduate.

Don't think for a minute that you might be missing out because finding guys is a bit harder---it's so much better to not have them around to create drama. Focus on developing your female friendships. There will be plenty of time for men.

Take classes at Smith, UMass, Amherst.

Treat yourself to a backpacking trip through Europe with your friends after you graduate. It will make you feel like you can do anything and give you the confidence to tackle the world. Also, it will be hard to get time off once you start working.

Remember that although you're special and very capable, you still have a lot to learn. Don't be arrogant and assume you're better than others because you're well-educated. Be humble and work very, very hard.

Stay out of the sun, exercise and eat healthy. Develop a healthy lifestyle early.

Focus on your distribution requirements first. Even if you are 100% certain you will be a Biology major and that was your reason for choosing Mount Holyoke, your goals may change and you may really find Sociology or Philosophy, or any of a host of other interesting subjects you never had the chance to study before, holds even more interest for you. It is better to learn this early on before you box yourself into something you may regret. There is nothing worse than falling in love with Art History your Senior year when it is impossible to take that class on Impressionism that you would give your eye teeth for only to be shut out because you fo-



In the Beginning

cused on something else and never took the prerequisites. Take the time to explore and enjoy learning. You are building the foundation for the adult you will become. If you do not love what you are studying, keep looking for what impassions you, and then figure out how to turn it into a career that impassions you.

Do not take classes or select a major based on your parents' goals for you or let them push you towards a major that leads to a career path of their choosing. Though they mean well, you are the one who has to live with the decisions the rest of your life, and you may be in a place in your life where you can't afford to change gears once you realize their chosen path for you was not the best one for you.

Relax, chill out, have fun. Don't worry about your GPA - take courses that are risks. You'll very likely never have the chance to do such free exploring again. Take advantage of it! Take Art! Take Physics! Take Botany! Take whatever peaks your curiosity. Oh, and save a distribution requirement until your Senior year. It's a nice break from upper level courses to be back in something a bit more basic AND you'll be amazed at how much wisdom and experience 2-3 more years of school can make.

It'll be okay! AND go ahead and go to that Red Sox game.

I was sorry that I was only at MHC for 2.5 years. Out of the 60-70 of us that came in February, many of us did the same Junior year abroad or another exchange. Lots of us have stayed active in college. I guess my best friends have been MHC women, but I have connected/reconnected with them after graduation.

Don't waste your time worrying; it will all work out.

Go ahead and apply for that scholarship or that grant. And learn about personal finance before you graduate - perhaps through a January Term class.

What advice would you give your 18 year old self?

I think the most impressive thing for me about MHC and graduation is the tradition, it is so beautiful. The fact that at our 1988 Graduation there were six women back for their 80th reunion. 1988's 80th reunion will be in 2068. 2013 will have their 80th reunion in 2093. I guess the best advice is to realize that if you live everyday as if there is no tomorrow that you won't be disappointed. Anna Quindlan offered advice something to the affect of "live life as if it was terminal illness."

For those students coming to MHC it may be larger or smaller than where you left high school. It may feel like more of the same or very different. The main thing is to find your niche -- be yourself.

I came to MHC as a Feb Freshman. All of us were stuck with rejected roommates. I wish I had been strong enough/smart enough to ask for a different roommate.

Dorm and living situations should teach you a lot about conflict resolution. If you have a dicey situation with a roommate, really try to resolve the conflict as adults. If you can not, seek another solution — life is too short to be saddled with undue negativity. But try hard before you give up.

Find a spot where you like to study. Make it a habit. It doesn't have to even be on campus. You will focus better.

Make sure you talk to your neighbors and professors. Text messaging is not a good form of communication as you walk between classes with others. Mount Holyoke allowed me the opportunity to just approach people I thought were interesting. Sometimes people were busy or didn't want to take time to talk. But where this has paid off, is after graduation in the work force. I have no problem calling people in my professional organization to seek a referral or advice. Most often, they are pleased to assist a colleague.

Reach for the stars, you can do it!



In the Beginning