

VOL LV ISSUE 1

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# Harvard Independent

The Student Weekly Since 1969

AUGUST 30, 2023



# MASTHEAD

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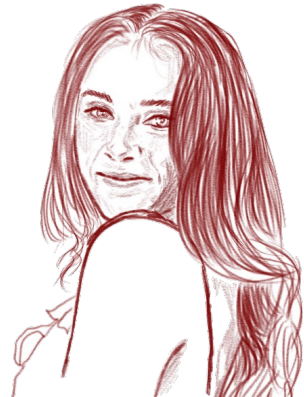


# MEET THE MASTHEAD

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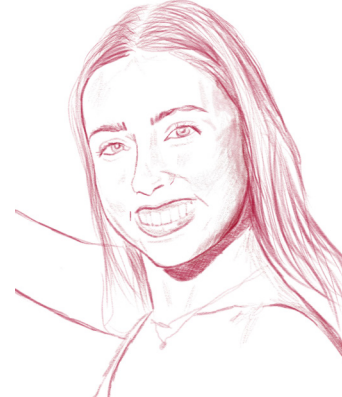
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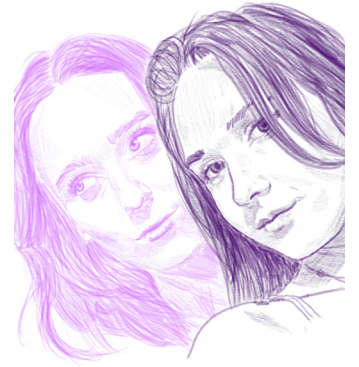
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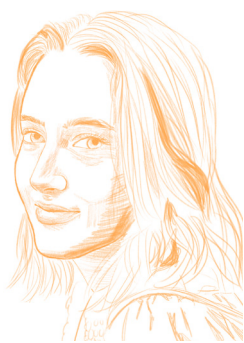
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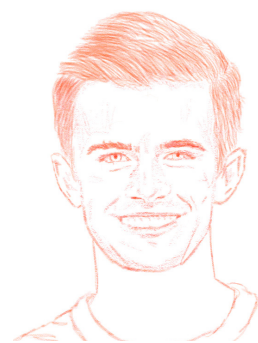
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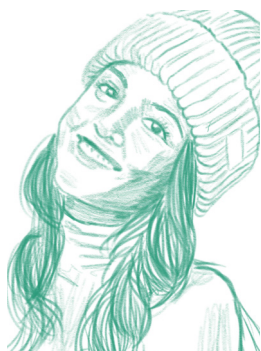
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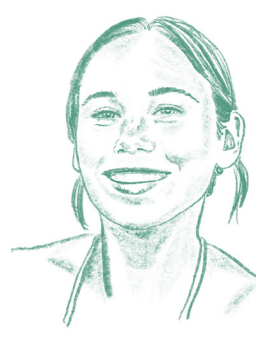
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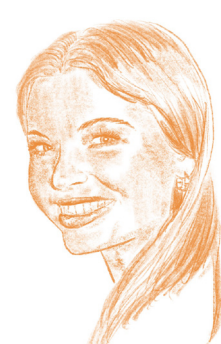
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# THE PRICE OF PRACTICALITY

*How opportunity costs change once you leave the Harvard bubble.*

BY MARBELLA MARLO '24

This summer, I interned at a bank. I lived with six MIT students: three incoming seniors (four, including myself), and three recent graduates. The majority of us worked in finance, whether it be for a summer internship or having a full-time job, and the final roommate was a software engineer. The difference between being a student and an intern was stark, as were the perspectives on life from my Harvard friends and those that I worked and lived with.

One weekday night, when a lucky handful of us were home from our deskjobs and the others were getting ready to embark on yet another 13-hour office day, we were entertaining our usual evening routine: preparing our pre-prepared Trader Joe's dinners, coming back from the gym, and debriefing our days, searching for anything that could help us distinguish one day from the next. This particular evening, one of my younger roommates was asking a recent college graduate for advice on her classes.

I concentrated hard on the conversation, making out what I could of the cacophony of numeric class names and my roommates' respective opinions of them. From my understanding, 18.435J was *obviously* more applicable to real-world investment strategy than 18.510, and 15.068 would better suit you for 15.074J than 15.007J. Obviously.

I was dumbfounded. I don't think—and perhaps it's my idealistic and ignorant perspective of my education—that I've ever chosen a class based on its utility. In an interview for an OpEd I wrote my sophomore year, my advisor Keith Raffel urged me to not consider my college education as a stepping stone towards the next internship or professional opportunity, but rather to enjoy and embrace all that Harvard had to offer. From my understanding, our conversation surrounding the myopic ambition that led to this calculated college experience was unique to Harvard students—or those at similar universities.

Perhaps my experience at Harvard has been blissfully ignorant, allowing me to dive head-first into numerous history, English, and theory-based courses to satisfy my desire to discuss diverse perspectives and ideas. But my encounters this summer with roommates, coworkers, and other similarly positioned students my age harshly drew me out of this trance. The real world is tainted with the obligation of practicality.

Traditionally, banking internships require a manicured background of finance, accounting, and statistics and are opportunities that most of my coworkers had been preparing for the majority of their academic university careers. (It is a privilege of

Harvard, I must add, to be able to study non-finance majors and still be met with finance opportunities). Dozens of introductory conversations exposed the fact that I was one of the few humanities majors (I can remember one other student in my intern group of 50+ who studied philosophy). Each other student, like my roommates, elected their course loads and majors based on something much more practical to the work we were doing. Finance, real estate, accounting—I even met someone who studied *supply chain*.

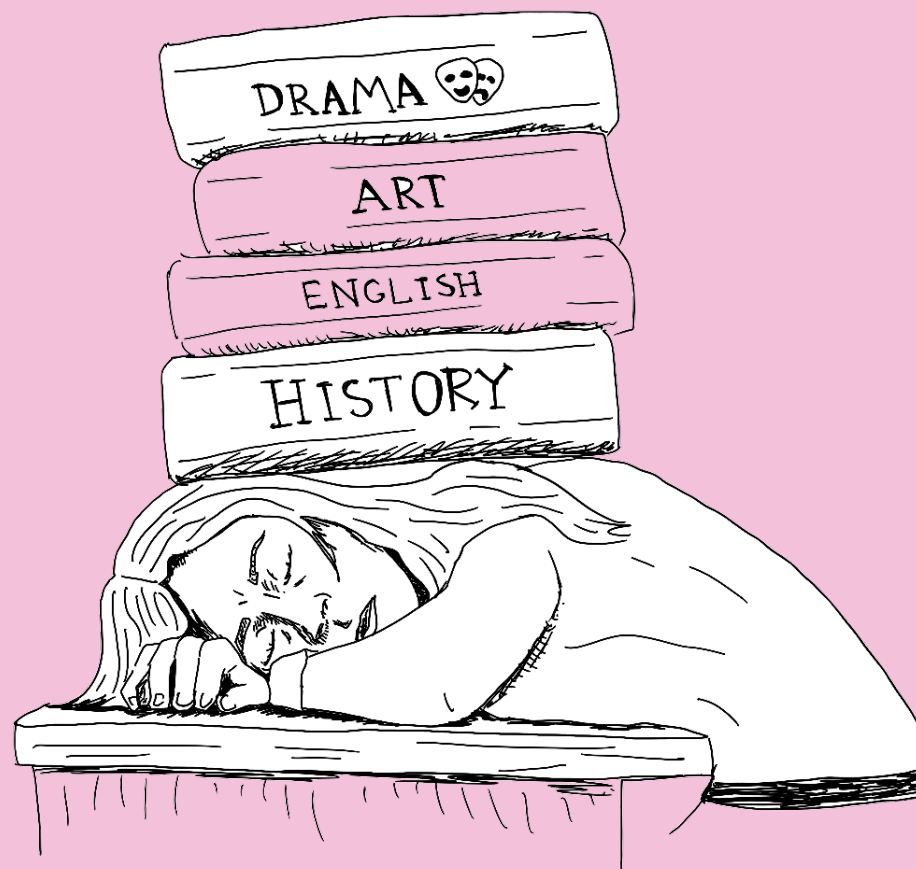
In conversation with my older brother—a Harvard '22 economics concentrator who now works at an AI startup, I reflected off my social and professional observations from my peers. Few had hobbies outside of work, and every single conversation, whether it be at dinner, drinks, or even Sunday morning brunch, revolved around work. His response: "Sometimes I wish I went to MIT. It's just so much more practical."

It's true. Harvard's liberal arts education offers very few pre-professional academic opportunities. Its lack of pre-law, finance, and political science programs forces students to engage with theories and subjects that don't necessarily give them applicable technical skills for a corporate setting. In a way, our four years at Harvard—even if a student studies majority economics, computer science, or statistics courses—are shielded from the realities of corporate obligation.

An alternative approach, and one that is much more common just two miles east at MIT, focuses on providing students said skills to *solve* real world problems, such as those of corporate America, rather than learning about the different methods to approach, analyze, or manage them. However, technical programs at schools like MIT which focus and support the election of specific majors, while likely giving graduates a more defined sense of their determined career path, can easily fault in their disregard for pure curiosity.

Another night, my roommate became rather confused by a comment I made. Sitting at opposite ends of the kitchen table working, I remarked that it felt like I was doing my readings at the dining hall—something that monopolized most school nights and garnered a strangely charming sentimentality. Why would I ever spend time doing work on an assignment, he wondered, if it did not directly and immediately impact my grade?

I thought my response needed no explanation; I study history because I love it, even



if it seems to offer little practical value. But I think that is something that Harvard has taught me to cherish—readings, writings, and conversations that might not provide any active use but a reverence for academic curiosity and the centuries of wonder that came before me.

The unfortunate reality is that to be able to dive into subjects or fields of interests for the mere sake of doing so is a luxury that few people can enjoy. Speculating the meaning of consciousness in a 12-person social studies seminar will *not* prepare you for your management consulting case interview, a reality that filters out most students who dedicate their college careers to ultimate financial prosperity. What it will do, and what that numerous studies have revealed, is develop students with the ability to communicate, empathize, and consider alternative perspectives—all relatively soft skills, but vital to productive work and team environments.

But the opportunity costs between curiosity and lucrateness are found everywhere, not just in a college summer apartment. Reading novels versus personal finance books, listening to music versus informational podcasts, and working at a job that caters to genuine interests versus a bureaucratic one determine the make-up and class divisions in the world we live in. Those who professionally pursue their passions of less productive enterprises are in a way, punished for not contributing more to the economy.

Few kindergarten children, when asked what they want to be when they grow up, answer financial advisor, private equity investor, venture capitalist, or any of the other niche professions that both govern our global economy and are so highly sought after at my age. This shift in life purpose then becomes one of practicality rather than genuine curiosity. And there is no direct person or community to blame, other than the mere value that our world places on certain professions. Maybe one day we can live up to our kindergarten dreams without worrying about the opportunity cost of doing so.

MARBELLA MARLO '24 (EDITORINCHIEF@HARVARDINDEPENDENT.COM) IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY DAVID LI '25



# THE “RIGHT” WAY TO DO ADMISSIONS

*Lawsuit duo forces Harvard to reevaluate its admissions process from the ground up.*

BY **LAYLA CHAARAOU** '26

“Affirmative action for the privileged.”

U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s June 29th tweet following this June’s overturning of affirmative action by the Supreme Court brings up a both necessary and unprecedented question. Calling out Harvard’s legacy admissions process in her post, a practice which the Justice Department recently launched an investigation into, Cortez seemingly equates the two disputed processes to each other—if you take down one, you must take down the other. While the tweet primarily underlines the hypocrisy of the Supreme Court, it also demonstrates the complexity of the data, raising the ultimate question of if there even is a “right” answer to admissions.

Affirmative action has sought to ensure that students of color receive fair treatment in the application process, specifically addressing systemic barriers such as underfunded districts and a lack of resources. Achieving a diverse student body not only promotes impactful educational experiences through the intentional exposure of a variety of perspectives and lifestyles, but it also gives more opportunities to otherwise indirectly excluded college applicants. The removal of affirmative action makes this difficult.

In response to the reversal of affirmative action, the demand for the abolishment of legacy admissions is being put under the spotlight, a practice that prioritizes the admissions of students and relatives of a school’s alumni and is wildly unpopular amongst public opinion and party lines. In Harvard’s case, white applicants are the beneficiary of legacy admissions: 70% of legacy and donor-related applicants are white, and these students are “six to seven times more likely to be admitted to Harvard than non-legacy applicants,” according to an article released last month by the BBC.

Following the trial from Students for Fair Admissions, Harvard is now being sued by Lawyers for Civil Rights, a Boston-based group that “works with communities of color and immigrants to fight discrimination and foster equity through creative and courageous legal advocacy, education, and economic empowerment.” Their motive for the lawsuit aims to combat the fact that “up to 15% of admitted students” at Harvard are of Donor and Legacy Preferences, and that these preferences “advantage white applicants” and “systematically disadvantage students of color,” as stated in the

lawsuit.

It makes sense, and even the 6-2 majority opinion written by Chief Justice John Roberts seems to agree that legacy admissions are unfair.

“A benefit provided to some applicants and not to others

necessarily advantages the former at the expense of the latter,” the opinion reads: a development that legacy admissions easily unveils. Harvard has not provided a clear answer about its approach to legacy admissions. The university offered to continue to “review aspects of their admissions process” in a statement to CNN, hoping to remain “dedicated to opening doors to opportunity,” but has not spoken of legacy admissions yet. However, other practice, such as Wesleyan College and MIT.

Yet several factors discourage institutions like Harvard from giving up donor and legacy admissions. In addition to contributing to a strong alumni network and community, the intentional inclusion of legacy and donor applicants, according to a 2017 study conducted by the Committee to Study Race-Neutral Alternatives, preserves the “generous financial support,” that enables expansive financial aid policies. Harvard fears that removing legacy admissions would diminish engagement and support amongst alumni, despite many studies finding minimal evidence that legacy preferences are more likely to donate or that Harvard would be worse off financially without them.

In a world where admission and access to education still excludes many races and socioeconomic classes, removing affirmative action while preserving legacy admissions will perpetuate the stigma, especially around elite institutions, that only the most privileged applicants deserve an advanced education—a reputation that these institutions have been working hard to reverse. It is a “textbook example of systemic racism,” as written by James Murphy in a new report by Education Reform now, and legacy admissions hinder a college’s ability to effec-

tively commit to and achieve diversity.

Since the Supreme Court’s ruling, Harvard has made slight adjustments to its application process. Removing its initial optional supplemental essay, Harvard has implemented five required short response questions into its Common Application, in time for the Class of 2024 admissions cycle. Such questions include “How will the life experiences that shape who you are today enable you to contribute to Harvard?” and “How do you hope to use your Harvard education in the future?” These questions are intended to give students an

common  
app

opportunity to additionally expose their identity and personal experiences in light of the Supreme Court decision. Harvard should not stop here.

Additional essay prompts will not suffice in the pursuit of protecting racial diversity on Harvard’s campus. They cannot guarantee that diversity will effectively be recognized and welcomed, especially in light of the fact that Harvard’s loyalty to the privileged still stands. Instead, real, concrete changes need to be made to actually ensure that Harvard’s promise to “foster a diverse student body” and “advance a culture of belonging” is not being broken.

A commitment to diversity cannot exist if an institution is also committed to classism. As seen with the removal of affirmative action from California schools in 1996, rates of diverse admits will likely drop, ultimately impacting access to higher paying jobs and career pathways. If the Lawyers for Civil Rights beat Harvard, the institution ought to remove legacy admissions out of a genuine recognition of its injustice and not because they were obligated to do so. If Harvard continues to defend the controversial practice of legacy admissions, then we all must ask ourselves; who is it *really* benefiting?

**LAYLA CHAARAOU '26 (LAYLACHAARAOU@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WANTS COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TO BE FAIR, DIVERSE, AND NOT BASED ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE A BUILDING WITH YOUR LAST NAME ON IT.**

**GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26**





# HEY HARVARD, JUST SMILE AND WAVE

*Harvard's deceptive attempt to positively court public opinion.*

BY KATY LIN '26

In response to this summer's Supreme Court decision rejecting race-conscious admissions, Harvard has dutifully committed itself to image-building and damage control. From President Gay's reassurance that Harvard will continue to commit itself to diversity to administrators affirming that Harvard must always be "a place whose doors remain open to those to whom they had long been closed," our school continues to brand itself as guardians of opportunity. Admissions and inclusion appear borderline synonymous in Harvard's textbook, yet its track record seemingly tells a different story.

By proactively triaging the federal decision to ban affirmative action, Harvard has effectively campaigned itself as a do-gooder institution—guarding deserving, yet disadvantaged students—and becoming a benchmark to which other colleges may compare themselves. The danger arises when reporting from major media outlets and alignment from liberal-leaning organizations, in an attempt to criticize the court's decision, have also inadvertently reinforced this narrative: Harvard has acted as a progressive bastion in its race-conscious admissions, and they are now being punished for it.

Seth P. Waxman '73, former US Solicitor General who argued in Harvard's defense during the case, affirmed this generous view of Harvard in front of the Supreme Court. A diverse class can result in a place where "stereotypes are broken down, prejudice is reduced," he exclaimed. But how fair and inclusive can a university that prides itself on selectivity be? After all, Harvard received 56,937 applicants for the Class of 2027 application cycle. Just 1,942 were admitted.

Waxman argued that our "country depends on having leaders who have enjoyed wide exposure to students as diverse as the nation itself." Yet, there are nearly fifteen times more students at Harvard from the top twenty percent of the income distribution (67%) as there are from the bottom twenty (4.5%). More students from the top one percent make their way onto campus than the bottom sixty. Even then, it's reported that half of low-income students at elite universities like Harvard still come from wealthy high schools, allowing admissions officers to look no further than what appear to be feeder schools to boost their socioeconomic diversity.

Instead of enforcing transparency of these economic distributions, Harvard continuously turns to their (admittedly generous) financial aid policies in defense. For example, after Justice Thom-

students making up 80% of Harvard's class, Waxman simply responded with the fact that 20% of students and 70% of underrepresented minorities pay nothing. Waxman's diffidence does not only fail to dispute this claim of a lack of socioeconomic diversity, but perhaps even highlights it.

There are thousands of potential applicants with incredible work ethic and intellectual curiosity who do not benefit from sufficient support networks to excel in high school or even consider schools like Harvard as an option. Many high-achieving low-income students, often those who live outside of America's largest cities, feel that admission to elite schools is "out of their league" due to the lack of guidance counselor support and interest from college recruiters. Many well-qualified high school seniors that come from underprivileged backgrounds, as a result, will not even apply.

This university has always prided itself on its insularity. Students are coddled, constantly told how special—and very much not like everyone else—they are. Former President Bacow's convocation speeches frequently remind us of this—telling everyone in 2023 that each student "has been awestruck by this place," and in 2022, that we were admitted because we "want to change the world." According to him, "On any given day, you will have more opportunities to learn than most people get in a month or a year or a lifetime." Harvard, by virtue of its selectivity, has always reinforced its elite status.

This begs the question: for what reason do so many look to Harvard's policies as markers for how progressive this country is? Forbes ranks Harvard among the top ten most progressive colleges, ranking the university on factors including affordability for low-income families, ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity, and freedom of speech.

Yet contrary to the rags-to-riches narrative that we so commonly wish to believe in, this social and economic mobility does not happen as frequently as it should. According to a 2017 study by The New York Times, success stories in which the poorer students are able to become rich and powerful adults (moving from bottom to top quintile) makeup 1.8% of the Harvard student population. The classmates of ours that eventually become major politicians and business leaders, more often than not, were already wealthy to begin with.

Despite its constant sense of exclusivity, Harvard does enable many students to climb the proverbial ladder and build the next generation of global leaders. This ability to generate success subsequently translates into a responsibility to ensure that success is equal and diverse.

It is no wonder that criticism against Harvard's hypocrisy and elitism often turns into criticism against affirmative action. This mismatch between the university's rhetoric and its campus makeup are undeniable. In a post-affirmative action world, those frustrated with an irredeemably unfair system fraught with undue preference for the wealthy or well-connected have continued to push against Harvard. After all, if critics were allowed to question the legitimacy of admission spots held by students of color, why could that spotlight not shift to overwhelmingly advantaged students instead?

This tidal wave of support for Harvard from proponents of race-conscious admissions has already begun to turn. With the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights' investigation into Harvard's preference for legacy admissions, the strategy Harvard has successfully employed for decades may crumble. Instead of the progressive defenders fighting off conservative complaints, the university may soon need to guard their advantages it gives to its large population of disproportionately wealthy and white legacies.

Harvard's self-built pedestal, one that has stood as a measuring stick for "equitable" admissions on the right side of history, may no longer work. But, despite fears from students and onlookers that admissions will become wholly race-blind, this reality may not manifest as fully accurate. For what it's worth, Harvard is—or at the very least, appears to be—both committed to preserving a diverse campus and identifying (to some extent) the role race plays in educational opportunities.

In accordance with Chief Justice Roberts' clarification that the decision will not "[prohibit] universities from considering an applicant's discussion of how race affected his or her life," the university has added a required short answer to their application, prompting applicants to explain how their life experiences will contribute to a diverse student body.

It may not be fair to disparage the merit of Harvard as trying to do better entirely. It's clear that to some extent, this university believes in the words it says. However, students on campus and outlets looking in should not let unfounded criticism from others create blind loyalty—Harvard doesn't need it.

**KATY LIN '26 (KATYLIN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES FORUM FOR THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY CANDACE GARDNER '25**



# THE URGENCY OF RELIGIOUS ILLITERACY AT HARVARD

*Healing global division starts with religious education.*

BY AMIYA TIWARI '26

Harvard prides itself on its liberal arts education model, which, according to its mission statement, “begin[s] in the classroom with exposure to new ideas” and “new ways of understanding.” Harvard executes this mission through the College Curriculum—up to 12 required courses that encourage students to engage with topics relevant to the human experience, such as ethics, civics, arts, language, and technology. Why, then, does Harvard fail to encourage students to try a religion course?

Understanding religion is central to understanding the world. As an aspect of all known human societies, religion has been a keystone of people’s relation to, or misunderstanding of, one another across human history. Before entering the real world, Harvard students must come to appreciate how faith impacts it. The ability to grasp the complexities of religion and how they apply to cultural, civic, and daily life should be a superpower that Harvard students bring into their various career paths.

Given Harvard’s mission to “educate the citizens and citizen-leaders for society,” the College is doing its students a disservice by failing to emphasize the study of religion, which could be done through an incorporation into the College Curriculum, regularly informing students about opportunities within the department, or promoting discussions about the study of religion on campus.

More important than furthering Harvard’s mission, studying religion combats religious illiteracy. Religious illiterates lack basic understanding of the world’s faith-based traditions, fail to grasp how religious traditions evolve and are influenced by their sociocultural contexts, and are ignorant of the vital and indisputable role that religion plays in society. It is a dangerous quality that is all too common in our national and global communities.

Diane Moore of Harvard Divinity School made the argument that religious illiteracy is ubiquitous because, typically, the primary sources of information about religious traditions are one’s personal experiences—or lack thereof—with faith, as well as the media. Widespread religious illiteracy is exacerbating existing divisions. Between

2020 and 2021 in America, hate crimes against Sikhs more than doubled, and as of 2022, antisemitic incidents are at an all-time high. In India, Hindutva—a political ideology advocating for Hindu supremacy—is on the rise.

In the worst cases, religious illiteracy threatens democracy, which cannot function properly while citizens distrust one another and harmful stereotypes run rampant. While we remain widely religiously illiterate, respect for pluralism and diversity cannot blossom—a dangerous truth in a diverse society. However, as college students, we have the opportunity to engage with religion in a unique way, becoming better-informed, positive contributors to democracy in the process.

**RELIGIOUS ILLITERATES LACK BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD’S FAITH-BASED TRADITIONS, FAIL TO GRASP HOW RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS EVOLVE AND ARE INFLUENCED BY THEIR SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXTS, AND ARE IGNORANT OF THE VITAL AND INDISPUTABLE ROLE THAT RELIGION PLAYS IN SOCIETY. IT IS A DANGEROUS QUALITY THAT IS ALL TOO COMMON IN OUR NATIONAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES.**

Professionals in religious literacy make this point best. Moore says that teaching about religion is “an important dimension of educating for democratic citizenship in the context of our own multicultural, multi-religious pluralism.” In his course “Understanding Islam and Contemporary Muslim Society” last semester, Professor Ali Asani expressed that taking a religion course “fulfills a moral and civic responsibility” that students have to become educated citizens.

According to Moore, one manifestation of religious illiteracy is the belief that religion should be a “‘private’ affair distinct from the secular ‘public’ sphere of political, economic, and cultural life.” This misconception fails to differentiate personal devotional practice from the academic study of religion. It currently plagues Harvard students, reducing the likelihood that most students will consider studying or openly talking about religion’s impact on society.

Interfaith interaction between religious student groups is low, and the few organiza-

tions that are dedicated to pluralism, such as the Harvard College Interfaith Forum and Harvard QUIRC, are relatively small, not receiving much buy-in from larger religious organizations. For the non-religious, many students experience a profound estrangement from religion that can make discussions about faith—whether in academic or personal settings—uncomfortable.

It is crucial for us as college students to challenge the misunderstandings caused by religious illiteracy. Religious instruction impacts our community, deepening peer-to-peer interaction—students will be encouraged to reckon with on-campus religious diversity and engage in interfaith collaboration. Importantly, emphasizing the study of religion would help to dispel the hesitancy or discomfort that often accompanies discussions of religion in everyday life.

Harvard might not emphasize the study of religion to the extent it deserves, but this does not mean that students should follow suit. While there has not been indication that religion will be added to Harvard College’s course requirements, I urge students to consider enrolling in a religion course. If not for your own interest in global religion, I encourage you to do so to further your commitment to democracy, deepen your understanding of the world, enhance our campus culture, or increase your capacity as a leader in whatever career you intend to pursue. Don’t miss the opportunity to establish an understanding of the world around you unlike any other, facilitating the betterment of your life and lives of those you impact.

Endnote:

*Religion is only one among many elements that profoundly shape the human experience; sexuality, ability status, racial identity, and many other pervasive pieces of life are also vital for students to understand. I did not choose to advocate for the increased development of religious literacy to deny the importance of these other topics.*

**AMIYA TIWARI '26 (AMIYATIWARI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) TOOK A RELIGION COURSE LAST SEMESTER THAT INSPIRED THIS PIECE, AND SHE SINCERELY HOPES THAT EACH READER WILL CONSIDER DOING THE SAME.**



# THE INDEPENDENT: A COUNTERPOINT WRITTEN IN HISTORY

*A visual and oral reflection of the Independent's role on campus.*

BY LAYLA CHARRAOU '26, ELZA KIMBALL '25, AND MARBELLA MARLO '24

“We’d have issues that had the [Students for a Democratic Society] in one article and the Young Republicans in another,” said James Vaseff, 1984 Harvard Graduate School of Design LOEB Fellow and early contributor to the Harvard Independent.

Vaseff used photojournalism to further one of the Indy’s foremost missions: to deliberately provoke university-wide commentary and controversy. Morris Abram, Jr. ’71, Roland (Rollie) Cole ’70, Richard Paisner ’70, and Mark Shields ’70 founded the Indy in 1969 to serve as a space to cover both sides of campus issues, such as the turmoil and impact of the Vietnam War in student activism. Over the past fifty years, the novel counterculture newspaper has continued to give all Harvard students a platform to share their (often opposing) political, cultural, and artistic viewpoints.

As Paisner described in a 1970 article for *Harvard Magazine*, the Indy made its readers question their own opinions, debate new topics, and feel



Queue the Indy. Organized by Indy President Morris Abram, Jr., the first mission of the newspaper was a response to a general dissatisfaction with *The Crimson*. In an interview with *The Crimson* regarding the *Independent’s* founding, Abram discussed the Indy’s founding. “*The Crimson* in 1969 was very good in many respects,” he said. “The impetus [for founding *The Independent*] was to try to breathe some air into the system and to invigorate a spirit of debate.”

In his 1970 *Harvard Gazette* interview with Paisner, founding publisher Mark Shields explained, “There were widespread feelings that [*The Crimson*] had allowed a radical perspective to color its news columns.” After garnering enough funding and public support, the Indy pledged to contradict the mainstream.

On August 13th, 2023, Shields, Paisner, and Vaseff joined current Indy editors to discuss the initial and perpetuated spirit of the newspaper and how, over the past fifty-three years, the newspaper has maintained its role on campus as a counterpoint. In conjunction with the interview, Vaseff provided a plethora of original Indy photos from the 60s and 70s, including landscapes from Cambridge, Boston, and original ads from inside *The Harvard Independent*.

In the wake of radical student response to America’s involvement in the Vietnam War, *The Harvard Independent* was founded to represent and circulate discourse that *The Crimson* failed to publish. Its first content directly responded to *The Crimson’s* coverage of Harvard students who opposed the Reserve Officer Training Corps. On April 9th, 1969, students seized University Hall and were evicted by the police 15 hours

later.

Rollie Cole explained that during the building takeover, he was kicked out of the basement of Lamont Library while doing research for an economics professor. “The coverage of the event,” Cole wrote in an email, “appeared to me and others as so focused from a single viewpoint that we felt the campus needed more expression of alternative viewpoints... Although [*The Crimson*] was not the most radical, it was way to the left of the ‘median’ among the student body at the time.”

In reflection of Harvard’s campus environment during the spring of 1969, Paisner recalled the takeover of University Hall, the march through Harvard Square, and even the release of tear gas in his room at Lowell House. “It was truly an astonishing time... even looking back 50 years, it’s hard to believe,” Paisner said.

53 years later, Shields’ sentiment remains the same. “We knew there was a real hunger for official news sources... And *The Crimson* was not very interested in publishing Op-Eds, or letters to the editor... So having a point-counterpoint section, or basically having your variety of news was a good concept for a paper,” he said.

“For me, the appeal of the Indy was not to be the opposite of *the Crimson*,” Paisner continued. “It was not to be a place where the only thing you heard about was right-wing stuff. It was really to try to get... people with different views to opine on challenging issues. And I think the Point / Counterpoint thing was the quintessential,” he said.

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comfortable expressing their own stance when it contradicted the majority. “A major theme of [Mark Shields’] pitch was ‘Counterpoint’—an editorial-page feature bringing together students and faculty, radicals and conservatives, in debates over current campus controversies,” he wrote, contextualizing the Indy’s role as a platform for more comprehensive political and social discourse.

In the late 1960s, it was clear to the founders that Harvard students had an appetite to legitimize and validate their passions for advocacy. Still, the college did not offer a platform to put their opinions

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To respect the spirit of the *Independent's* founding mission of political autonomy, the newspaper was established with the principle of refusing donations from parties with any pressing political association. Today, the Indy continues this commitment to publishing a diverse array of viewpoints, operating solely from the donations of alumni and associated contributors, in addition to funds raised by the Indy's business staff.

Shields noted that the founders were obliged to turn down large sums of donations if the benefactors wanted to instill a political agenda. "There were some potential donors who wanted to have a specific viewpoint and were outraged that there'd be a Counterpoint section, whether it be people on the far left, who would actually be allowed to write a section."

In addition to soliciting funds from prospective donors, the original Indy members employed numerous advertising techniques to sustain the paper. Cole explained that Shields and Abram acted as the primary fundraisers. Every Wednesday before print, they would work from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm to layout the paper, write headlines and captions of the articles, and organize ads and photographs for the printer.

"Years later," Cole added, "the Indy created a T-shirt saying 'Thank

ness team, is responsible for raising the necessary funds to cover operating expenses. These include office rent, printing and publicity costs, merchandise, and other initiatives to keep the spirit of the Indy alive.

Over the past fifty years, the role of the Indy has shifted very little. Though not necessarily centered on the same political content, the *Independent* has intended to serve the student body as a place where writers are free to pitch article ideas and publish opinions entirely on their own without feeling censored or held back by



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Vaseff continued, in regards to the monumental transition of news and discourse to social media, that "it's all emotions and it's very thin...there's no chance to sit back and let it settle in and have some depth to it."

"That's a little frightening," he added. "Many of these people are talking about these things without having any historic roots to it, and that's a little frightening. Whether it's culturally, economically, politically ... they just don't know what's been there before."

As journalists, there is a responsibility to understand where the world is today. The Indy's legacy will continue to live on through its mission to "push for the new [and] resist the temptation to settle," as Paisner urged it to do. By fostering a community that pushes the boundary of culturally acceptable opinions, the Indy presents itself as a forum that is not confined to social norms and is truly **independent**. "I think that's probably what has kept

us going for 50 years," Paisner continued. "This sense that there's a spirit to it, which is an *Independent* spirit."

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**IMAGES AND GRAPHICS COURTESY OF JAMES VASEFF**

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what may be the "norm."

"For tradition's sake, if there's a certain amount of lack of openness, politically on campus," Paisner noted, "We would probably want the Indy to go back to old times and push for openness." While the state of Harvard's political campus looks much different now than it did fifty years ago, the importance of comprehensive discourse, notably in an academic or activist setting, has not lost its significance.

"Having aggressive discussion of ideas is a critical way for us to move ahead as a society and as a species," Shields asserted. "We've learned ... that it is an arousing of emotions that creates progress, which is a problem. Currently, there is a real focus on arousing emotions versus having a discussion of key ideas. I would hope the *Independent* can contribute to the discussion of ideas and probing ideas and covering them and not lapse into just arousing emotions."



God for Thursdays', which I took to mean the 'work' was done and the paper was out." While most of the content and design formatting is now done virtually, The *Independent* still publishes every Thursday morning during the academic term.

As was the case in its founding years, the often unsung heroes of independently-funded student newspapers, the busi-



# HOW I (ETHICALLY) USED CHATGPT LAST YEAR

*How students can use generative AI within Harvard's guidelines.*

BY JONAH KARAFIOL '26

This past July, Maya Bodnick '26 wrote an article titled "ChatGPT Goes to Harvard" for former Indy member Matthew Yglesias's '03 Substack *SlowBoring*. Bodnick feed ChatGPT essay prompts from all eight of her classes and asked her professors and TAs to grade the resulting writing as they would any other student. At the end of the year, the AI earned a cumulative GPA of 3.57.

Despite ChatGPT's strong performance with Bodnick's course load, it is not—and *should* not be regarded as a catch-all for school assignments. Not only does ChatGPT-generated writing sound formulaic and tone-deaf, it also fails to sufficiently solve basic math problems. When mathematician David H. Bailey asked ChatGPT to prove four well-known mathematical theorems, it came up zero-for-four. Moreover, claiming GPT-produced work as one's own exposes myriad ethical issues, from both outright plagiarism to a disregard for the work of professors and school administrators.

Despite these drawbacks, ChatGPT is a powerful and revolutionary tool that can be adopted for positive use. By working within Harvard's guidelines—which primarily call for academic integrity and safety from phishing—for generative AI, there are a couple acceptable ways to use generative AI models like ChatGPT to improve your learning experience at Harvard.

The first possible way to take advantage of ChatGPT is through supplementary summaries (not replacements) for course readings. Last semester, I took a Philosophy class on the history of human ethics. The assigned readings for the course were lengthy, dense, and often difficult to understand. Aversion from these readings was no option either, as it was part of the course to learn how to interpret sections of texts like Confucius's *The Analects* and Kant's *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Additionally, each class began with a brief quiz on the assigned readings.

Here is where ChatGPT comes in. The service was trained on a wide range of texts written before 2021 and had already processed numerous passages about the texts I was assigned, allowing it to compile both a general overview and more thorough analysis. After I completed the

readings for each class, the summaries that ChatGPT provided sufficient information to help me better comprehend what I had read and help me follow along in lectures. It could confirm whether or not my own interpretations of the text aligned with the authors', or if not, I could offer a new perspective to class discussions.

One of my other courses last semester was Hist-Lit 10: Introduction to American Studies. The course's only graded assignments were two 1000-word essays and a 3500-word paper, all three of which had vague prompts that made meeting a word count

provide GPT-3.5, a subset of the model that can better understand language, with a starting point to direct its users to possible and relevant sources, ranging from newspaper articles to research papers. While the sources provided by ChatGPT are in no way a finalized list (and students should most definitely investigate their legitimacy, accuracy, and relevance), it can pose as an encyclopedia again, directing students to expand their research.

Students can successfully use ChatGPT to clarify concepts learned in the lecture. In a similar manner as a tutoring session, ChatGPT can act as a platform to listen to follow-up questions or a soundboard for new ideas. During a previous statistics course, I found myself confusing which situations—stories, as my professor called them—called for which formulas. I used ChatGPT to walk through example problems, and many of the generative AI's explanations were on par with those in the textbook. Other possible uses for the technology include explaining economics concepts, language conjugations, and

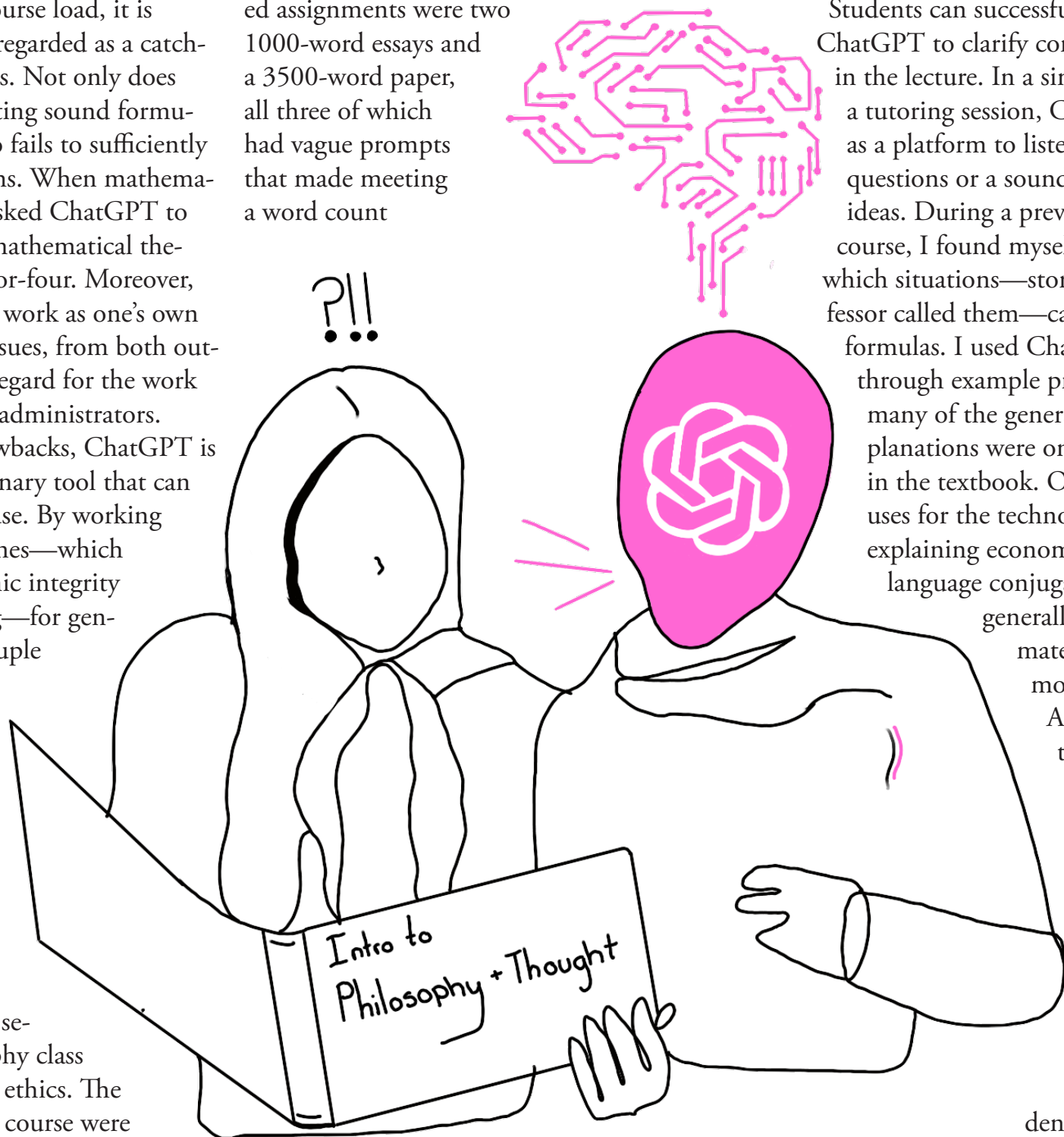
generally making study materials and time more efficient.

All of this is not to say that you should use ChatGPT to avoid readings or cram for tests. I was able to use it to become a more efficient student, not to cheat.

I believe that, if used wisely, we can greatly improve class curriculums, grading styles, and the processes we've traditionally used to comprehend material without as much information so readily available. I encourage you to do the same—instead of straying away from GPT out of fear for its abilities, embrace it, and see how it can help your experience at Harvard, too.

**JONAH KARAFIOL '26 (JONAHKARAFIOL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES FORUM FOR THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY ISABEL EDDY '24**



difficult. Such open-ended questions are often difficult to answer without external perspectives initiating idea flows, making way for the perfect opportunity for an AI chatbot. When asking ChatGPT about questions similar to my essay topic, it would suggest a list of ideas where I could start my research. Reading the list of ideas felt like talking with students about their ideas, and even if I would deviate from the GPT-generated responses, they often helped me get over writer's block.

ChatGPT's utility when writing essays does not end there. Students can



**EATING & WORKING:**  
**Don't Go To Blackbird Doughnuts, Go To Flour Bakery + Cafe**

Before people get upset, we're not saying that the Smith Center is not a good place to get some work done. We love the Smith Center. However, we think that Blackbird Doughnuts is forgettable and should be replaced.

Blackbird Doughnuts has one of the most limited menus anywhere on campus. The doughnuts are sugar-coated, candied, and filled with artificial flavors that leave you in search of the bathroom. In addition to their subpar food, their coffee is comparable to that of a Motel 6. Tucked away behind the elevators of the Smith Center, the atmosphere feels barren and desolate. While Blackbird is a serviceable coffee and doughnut shop, many other options are better and less expensive.

Waking up late in the morning with a pounding headache, the best spot on campus for breakfast is Flour. Their food can be pricey but is some of the best in the Square. Their BLT or breakfast sandwich with bacon are both classics and consistently put a well-worth-dent in my bank account. Their iced coffee with a splash of oat milk is both strong and rich, getting me dialed for a long day of work. Their homemade pop tarts and banana bread are both gourmet renditions of worldwide favorites, and on top of having great food, Flour has a lot of natural light and extensive seating. Throw on some headphones, and Flour is the ideal spot to grind away all of your work on a Sunday morning.

**LATE NIGHT BITE:**  
**Don't Go to Pinocchio's, Go to Falafel Corner**

The Pinocchio's line regularly snakes between crowded tables, through the front door, and down Winthrop Street. Every seat seems perpetually occupied, and drunken voices echo so loudly you can barely hear your own thoughts. Two slices can run you upwards of eight dollars, and their toppings vary greatly from night to night. Some evenings, we've waited in long lines only to be stuck with two disappointing veggie slices. When it is not overcrowded, Pinocchio's has a certain charm to it. The walls are covered in autographed pictures of celebrities, and the workers take their time to joke around with each customer. But when you take all of that away, it really is just pizza. The night-time rush often hides the photographs from view and forces the employees to forego their banter with customers. If all you're going to get are a few slices of veggie pizza, there are simply better options in the Square.

Alternatively, Falafel Corner is a hidden gem that rarely has a line. A quaint restaurant nestled next to Charlie's Kitchen on Eliot Street, Falafel Corner holds a special place in our heart—we both made the trek from Matthews down to the Middle Eastern joint almost every night of our second semester. After our dozens of visits, when we head over to get our shawarma, the owners greet us as we walk through the doors. Before we can say a word, they throw our usuals on the grill, ring us up, and by the time we climb the five stairs to the register, take our extras off the bill. While

most people order to-go, we sit in the basement—it's quiet and oddly cozy. Boxes of old belongings are stacked in the corner—a tennis trophy, assorted artwork, and other tchotchkes.

Our go-to order is the mixed roll-up with garlic paste and hummus. First, they place chicken and lamb shawarma. Then, they wrap the pita in parchment paper before toasting it right in front of you. The warm pita, the well-seasoned meats, and the spectacular sauces make the dish my favorite way to cap off a night out.

**SIT-DOWN ASIAN FOOD:**  
**Don't Go to Santouka, Go To Nine Tastes**

Santouka is an unjustly more common destination. To an average passerby, Santouka appears to be one of the best places in town thanks to the volume of customers outside their doors. However, their food tastes unseasoned and oily, and is not worth its steep price. Santouka's seating is cramped,

**DATE NIGHT SPOT:**  
**Don't Go To Jefe's, Go To Zinneken's**

Jefe's is certainly a memorable date spot but for all the wrong reasons. Conversations buzz around the overflowing first floor. The restaurant is too loud to hear anything anyone is saying, and it is common to want to bail before we even get to the front of the line due to people slurring their words as they order, or forgetting entirely what they want to eat. We never want to be there longer than necessary. Their food is delicious and the employees are generous with their portions, but it is indisputably the worst date night spot in the Square. When taking someone out to eat, you are not only sharing a meal with someone but also an experience, and choosing to share this experience at Jefe's will almost certainly make it a negative one.

Instead, we recommend Zinneken's, a small bakery on Mass. Ave that offers freshly baked Belgian sugar waffles and an array of toppings, from berries to imported chocolate and even ice cream. The ideal date spot is a welcoming place where you and your date are the stars of the show. Zinneken's lends itself to this ideal perfectly with its minimalist interior, straightforward menu, and cozy atmosphere. The wooden tables and floor-to-ceiling windows make Zinneken's feel comfortable and familiar. And, if a coffee date is more your speed, they serve some of Harvard Square's best.

**FOR A BOWL:**  
**Don't Go To Lamont Library, Go To The Stairs Outside Your Dorm**

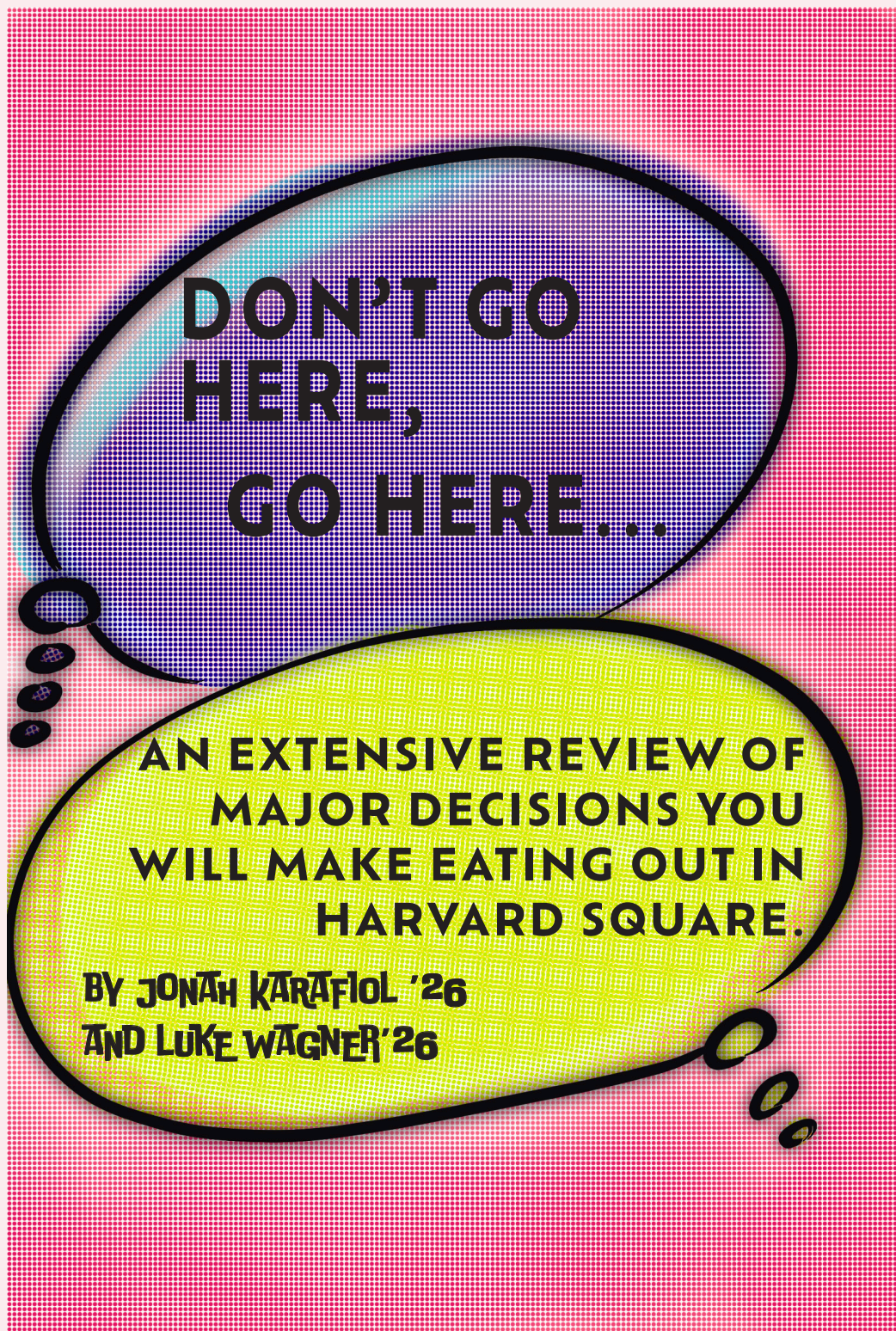
Many residents of the Yard smoke behind Lamont Library to evade proctors, Securitas, and the HUPD. Students in search of seclusion scale a fence before dropping into a courtyard with two stone benches. These students are willing to go to great lengths for privacy, without realizing that a much more convenient option is that the tips of their fingertips.

Last semester, we could see people smoking from my window at least once and often two or three times per night. Dorm step seshes provide the delight of seeing friends trickle into the dorm, providing the chance to catch up with them. Smokers with high tolerances also do not have to carry all their materials with them in case they want another bowl—they can pack another from the comfort of their own room.

While it can be fun to visit a friend's spot, at a certain point, they start becoming too inconvenient to be worth it. Lamont Library is the perfect example of this—while it is a cool spot to visit once, having to climb a fence with all the necessary items for a sesh makes it impractical. Dorm steps aren't perfect—they're weather-dependent, and sometimes you see people that you don't particularly want to. Still, the convenience factor more than makes up for these shortcomings, making any dorm's steps a must-try for residents of the Yard.

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**GRAPHIC BY PIPER TINGLEAF '24**



and patrons attempting conversation will compete with noisy ramen slurping from other tables. The much better alternative, Nine Tastes, sits just a block away.

Located in between an ice cream shop and a sex store on JFK Street, Nine Tastes flies under the radar. From the outside, Ninetastes has a humble appearance. It features creaky double doors and a cramped staircase that seems to lead down to an abyss. However, the atmosphere downstairs is lively and bright. They serve a wide variety of Thai cuisine, with out-of-this-world spring rolls, drunken noodles, Pad see ew, and Pad Thai. Ninetastes is a great place to go with friends and order a variety of Thai dishes, enjoying the large amounts of spicy food.



# AMAZON ESSENTIALS

What to bring to college and what to leave behind.

BY MADDY TUNNELL '26



We have all seen the lists of college dorm room *must-haves* littering the web, but what do you actually need in order to thrive in your eight by eleven square foot luxury hotel room of a dorm? In all honesty, I have no idea, but here I present you with a few of our well-reasoned essentials, and a few vetoes as well.

## BRING:

**Power Strip.** This one is a no-brainer, but a power strip is the only way to ensure you're not slumped over in Lecture lamenting your dead laptop and phone. Just be careful about how many microfridges you choose to plug into it. I do not think anyone wants to be known as the suite that shot the power outlets in the first week.

**Lamp.** Speaking of outlets, this 6" x 7" lamp is the perfect size for a desk and includes USB and USB-C charging ports. Widener Library closes at ten, and, considering Cabot more closely resembles an episode of Love Island than a space for serious academia past eleven, a desk lamp is crucial for late-night cramming.

**Liquid IV Packets.** These could be re-named to Liquid Gold in my opinion, and, luckily for us, we can order it in bulk! When the "work hard, play hard" lifestyle starts to make waking up without a headache a little too hard, pop one of these into a water bottle and experience sweet relief.

**Extra Bedsheet.** But not for your bed. While the Harvard party scene can be scarce, we nerds love a theme. You will find your dirty fitted sheet is not what you need for that one toga party that you want to turn up for.

**First Aid Kit.** It holds all of the essentials that you are bound to forget: band aids, tiny scissors, nail clippers, and anything you'd find in that messy kitchen drawer back home. Having some spare bandaids and disinfectant wipes is all well and good, but may I recommend adding another level of protection to a traditional first aid box?

**Condoms.** "Safe sex is great sex." - Lil Wayne. Available wherever anything is sold.

**MiO.** There is nothing that says "college" like a BORG, and while we cannot recommend the first ingredient to anyone under 21, the second will come in clutch. While nasty on its own, MiO comes to life when mixed with water and a variety of other liquids. I love the fruit



punch flavor, but finding your favorite MiO flavor is like finding your soulmate; date around and find your perfect match!

**Flask.** Felipe's Rooftop is notoriously strict on IDs, so if you want to get buzzed while enjoying some delectable Mexican food, a flask is a must-have. Slip it in your pocket and swig away the pain of underage life in Massachusetts.

**Trash Can.** You can throw away approximately 5 solo cups before the dinky little trash can under your desk becomes full. If you aren't a fan of taking out the trash every day, I recommend picking up a kitchen-sized trash can for your suite! They are especially helpful for tossing all of the flyers from the activities fair because the only thing there is to know is COMP THE INDY!

What five previous years of dorm living apparently did not teach me, but having to pack up a dorm room all on my own for the first time inevitably did, is that the less you bring with you the better! I cannot stress this enough, but a surplus of stuff is the last thing you want. Therefore, we have compiled some definite *No's* for your first Harvard move-in.

## LEAVE BEHIND:

**White Towels.** One word: Makeup. Something you will soon learn is that neither you nor the HSA laundry service have the wondrous stain removing knowledge kept secret from the rest of us by the official organization of mothers. While your white towels at home may feel luxurious and clean, the ones hanging in your dorm room certainly will not. Might you consider the navy? This also goes for sheets and rugs, or anything you would rather not (although definitely should) wash. Unless you want it to collect every speck of dirt to ever grace your bedroom, I would not recommend any form of faux fur white rug. The wonderfully soft

fluffiness will last for about 3 hours, until a pair of shoes or cup of coffee takes its stain virginity and initiates its transformation into a grayish matted mess.

**Mini Fan.** The heat of an early Cambridge fall is no joke, but the sun will surely be laughing at you if you show up with any sort of mini fan. Those tiny plastic blades will not cut through any Harvard humidity; however, do not fret because sooner or later, the weather will flip to arctic temperatures.

**Your Dignity.** Although we would love to keep it intact, after running around trying to find your first class, losing the key to your suite, and standing in the longest line of your life at El Jefe's, your dignity must be checked at the door. Let yourself be confused, and when an upperclassman looks at you from their high horse, just remember that they too once thought the Smith and the Science Center were the same thing.

**High School Sweetheart.** While they may have been the head cheerleader or the star quarterback, they simply are not worth the fuss. We all know it just doesn't work.

All in all, you truly cannot go wrong that far, as Amazon will be there for you throughout the year; it will probably be your longest lasting college relationship! Moreover, rushing to buy everything you think you need will be a burden on space as well as your wallet, so take it slowly and pack light. Remember that any forgotten item is just an excuse to knock on the door of the cute suite next door and ask them if they have any condoms.

MADDY TUNNELL '26 (MADDYTUNNELL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) VIOLENTLY OVERPACKED BOTH LAST YEAR AND THIS YEAR.

GRAPHIC BY ALMA RUSSELL '26



# INDY ON REPEAT: SUMMER 2023

Our favorite new releases, compiled for your listening pleasure.

BY MAT SAKIYAMA '25 AND LUKE WAGNER '26

This summer, we heard hyped releases from industry giants and excellent new songs from up-and-comers. In case you haven't had time to catch up on all the fresh music during your internship or off-the-cuff Eurotrip, the Indy has compiled an authoritative list of this summer's best songs for you. Put this playlist on as you move in, frantically unpack, and heavily reconsider taking a 9am class.

## Speed Drive - Charli XCX

Barbenheimer was arguably the biggest cultural phenomenon of the summer, which means this list is incomplete without a song from the incredible *Barbie* soundtrack. Even without the internet hype driving interest in both movies, Charli XCX's contribution would deserve a nod. Charli's latest car anthem features minimalistic yet dynamic instrumentals and light-hearted lyrics, ideal for a carefree summer drive.

## Enchanted (Taylor's Version) - Taylor Swift

Swift's ongoing Eras Tour and "Taylor's Version" album re-recordings have brought our attention back to her earlier hits, so naturally this classic makes the list. Taylor's updated vocals are richer than they were when she was 20. Nevertheless, she still captures the unmistakable twinge of young love and overwhelming desire that makes the original so great.

## Old money bitch - underscores

underscores first gained recognition with their sophomore album *fishmonger*, which was named a top ten album of 2021 by *The Atlantic*. underscores' production on "Old money bitch" is electronic pop at its best, combining various dings, whistles and beeps into a cohesive song. The melodies are catchy, the production fresh, and the lyrics quite relevant to an abundance of Harvard students who may or may not identify with the song title.

## MODERN JAM

### - Travis Scott ft.

### Teezo Touchdown

On "MODERN JAM," Scott's lyrics don't provide much of anything, but no one listens to Travis Scott for his amazing lyricism ("I like a bi girl on a bi-cycle?"). Teezo Touchdown's wavering vocals float beautifully atop understated drums, and the instrumental production gives listeners a variety of different sounds to follow as elements are seamlessly added and stripped away.

## PHONK É O CARALHO - d.silvestre, MC Gw, MC Rennan

Blow out your speakers with some Brazilian phonk. d.silvestre found sudden success this year by joining forces with superstar producer MC Gw on a series of collaborations, including this track. The distorted bass and blaring instrumental make "PHONK É O CARALHO" difficult to understand for even the most experienced Portuguese speakers, but the lyrics are secondary to the red-blooded energy this song brings.

## Most Viewed (Himera's Dream) - twst, Himera

twst, an electronic pop artist whom the *Independent* interviewed in 2022, released a series of great singles in 2023. "Most Viewed," released in April, inspired a remix by prog house/techno producer Himera. Himera's remix adds vocal distortion and spritely production that make perfect sense for the hyper-digital nature of twst's lyrics. Like on much of their other work, twst's vocals walk the line between fragile and

firm, and the additional effects from Himera take that quality to new heights.

## Psychedelic Switch - Carly Rae Jepsen

In July, Carly Rae Jepsen delivered *The Loveliest Time*, the B-side to *The Loneliest Time* (2022), and demonstrated once again why her throwaways are worthy of official releases. The production on "Psychedelic Switch" is suitably bouncy for the joyous subject matter, and Jepsen's consistently excellent songwriting on the album cements her place at the top of the pop genre.

## Came In Like This - STARKIDS

A group formed of young Japanese-American and Japanese artists, STARKIDS has perfectly melded hyper-electronic production with autotune rap delivered in English and Japanese. The group exudes swagger and joie de vivre that is especially evident in "Came In Like This." Within the first few lines, they note that they "just can't give a shit;" it's clear that J-rap is at its best when inspired by this devil-may-care attitude.

lot. Dixon intertwines smooth trumpet melodies and hard hitting lyrics throughout the entire album. The Virginia-born rapper outdid himself on this album, widely outperforming his last.

## Pasture Child - Dominic Fike

Fike's latest album, *Sunburn*, includes hits like "Mona Lisa" from the *Across the Spider-Verse* soundtrack and my personal favorite, "Pasture Child." Relaxed drums and guitar accompany Fike's nonchalant delivery. Fike found success in his laidback, melodic style on his 2020 album *What Could Possibly Go Wrong*, and has improved upon his at-times repetitive style and delivery in *Sunburn*.

## FUNKFEST - grouptherapy.

FUNKFEST is reminiscent of early BROCKHAMPTON tracks: raw, unedited, and harsh lyrics combined with erratic sounds that at first don't seem to fit. grouptherapy's newest album, *if i was mature for my age, but i was still a child*, impressed me, and FUNKFEST highlights the group's ability to combine unconventional rap styles to create something fun, lighthearted, and extremely catchy.

## I Been Young -

### George Clanton

I didn't really know much of George Clanton's music before this summer, but in early July I stumbled upon his album *Ooh Rap I Ya*. With his unconventional style of electronic sounding R&B/rap, George Clanton has created a fresh and enjoyable sound. This album reminded me of a more digital, and inspired version of *Currents* by Tame Impala.

## Sprinter - Dave & Central Cee

Two of the biggest names in UK rap collabed to release some of the hottest songs of the summer on their EP *Split Decision*. Packed with pop culture references, ranging from the Kardashians to various soccer players, Dave and Central Cee come out hot on the first song. Central Cee's "alright" adlib and model Jessica Gomes' "Maybach music" adlib are my favorites on the track and perfectly timed.

## Who Told You - J Hus & Drake

J Hus's newest album *Beautiful and Brutal Yard* is his most complete album so far, outdoing his 2020 album *Big Conspiracy*. J Hus combines both afro-beats and UK drill styles in his memorable beats, and his features add texture and depth to his sometimes one-dimensional sound. The best song of the album is "Who Told You," a collaboration with Drake, whose lyrics will provide many a middle schooler with Instagram captions.

MATT SAKIYAMA '25 (MSAKIYAMA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) OFTEN WONDERS WHAT MACKLEMORE IS UP TO. LUKE WAGNER '26 (LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) ALMOST



TOTALED HIS CAR BUMPING THIS PLAYLIST.

GRAPHIC BY CANDACE GARDNER '25

ARTS | 13



## Perfect Picture - Hannah Diamond

This teaser single for glitch pop artist Hannah Diamond's upcoming album—also called *Perfect Picture*—is among the first Diamond releases not to feature production from A.G. Cook. David Gamson's production, though less distinctly digital than Cook's, still perfectly complements Diamond's voice and allows her sincere singing to shine. Supported by swelling synths and tasteful vocal distortion, she laments the blurred lines between people and their online personas.

## 4runner - Brenn!

Brenn! broke both of his legs in a viral TikTok promoting this song. 18-year old Brenn!'s "4runner" was one of the biggest breakout indie singles by an artist this summer and a personal favorite. The simplicity of the beats and lyrics as well as the raw strumming of the guitar makes the song feel familiar, and plays into Brenn!'s strengths. Combined with great audio production and catchy beats, this song can easily stay in your head all day.

## Run, Run, Run - McKinley Dixon

McKinley Dixon's new album *Beloved! Paradise! Jazz!?* contains some of the best jazz rap I have heard in a while, and *Run, Run, Run* is the best of the





MIDDLE: ANYA MOSTEK

## STUDENT ATHLETE SUCCESS: ANYA MOSTEK

*Overcoming challenges in season for success beyond Harvard.*

BY KATE OLIVER '26

*A happy swimmer is a fast swimmer!*

This statement reflects the community that Anya Mostek '26 has found in her swimming career across all levels, making it no surprise that she has been wildly successful. Mostek, originally from Haverford, Pennsylvania, started swimming at age five for her local YMCA. She continued to swim with the team for 13 years and has been getting faster ever since, competing at events like the Toyota U.S. Open. Upon coming to Harvard, Mostek told the *Harvard Independent* that the Women's Swimming and Diving Team had an "environment [that] certainly facilitates dropping time," something she greatly valued.

Unsurprisingly, Mostek had a stellar season as a First-Year. Her mindset of swimming "whatever is best for the team" helped Harvard Women's Swimming and Diving to a second-place finish at the Ivy League Championships. She was an Ivy League champion in the 100-yard backstroke, swimming a new school record in the Ivy Finals. For those outside the swimming world, it would seem like a no-brainer that these accomplishments would land her an invitation to the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships. This, however, was not the case for Mostek. Unlike other sports, being a conference champion in a swimming event does not lead to automatic qualification for NCAAs. After not qualifying for NCAAs, Mostek said, "I absolutely felt supported by my team

after missing the NCAA cut. The coaches and team here foster an incredible environment." She looks forward to trying out for qualification again this year.

For many high-performing athletes, the Olympics Games is the biggest stage in the world. In Mostek's opinion, it is "the pinnacle of any athletic career." Years of preparation go into even having the chance to qualify and compete for one's home country. Reflecting on her childhood, Mostek stated, "ever since I watched Michael Phelps at the London Games in 2012, I knew I wanted to get there." This past summer she came one step closer to reaching her goal by qualifying for the Olympic trials in the 100m backstroke. While this does not guarantee her a spot on the Olympic roster, Mostek swam a personal best in this race and has made a significant step in the right direction. She will have the chance to earn a spot on the US roster this upcoming June.

Mostek's summer did not stop there, as she was selected to represent the U.S. at the World University Games in China. Selected by the USA coaching staff, Mostek racked up ranked finishes in both individual and relay events; most notably she recorded a second-place tie finish in the 50m backstroke, and anchored the US 4x100m freestyle relay that finished in 5th. In addition to competing in China, Mostek was also able to explore, noting that her personal favorite part of the trip was exploring the city of Chengdu.

Returning to campus in the fall,

qualifying for the Olympics will obviously be on Mostek's mind as the time to the Trials ticks down. Being a student at Harvard is hard enough, but add in being on a varsity team and training for the Olympics, and you quickly find yourself at the beginning of a race with no end in sight. As Mostek narrows her focus for this year, she plans to "focus on competing for Harvard first and then turn...[her] attention to Olympic trials in June." Along the way, she will hopefully notch her ticket to the NCAAs. Her mindset for the next six months is universally applicable, especially at Harvard: focus on the small steps first to avoid getting lost in the long-term goal.

While waking up early to stare at the bottom of a pool is not exactly glamorous, Mostek notes her gratitude for the opportunity to compete. "I'm so grateful to be able to compete for Harvard," she said. "I love every aspect of the school and it is so cool to be surrounded by such interesting and incredible people." This sentiment rings true to the wonderful atmosphere of Harvard; among our peers are future Olympians, CEOs, award-winning authors, and so much more. It is so easy to get caught up in the future that we fail to appreciate the years spent in class with extraordinary individuals. If you do not stop and take a look around, they might just swim right by you.

**KATE OLIVER '26 (KOLIVER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WAS A SWIM MANAGER IN HIGH SCHOOL.**



# BLANK SQUARES

BY REBECCA ACKERMAN '25

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

## ACROSS

- 1 Tire pattern
- 6 Word of greeting
- 7 Willow twig
- 8 Provide new pieces for?
- 9 Makes a home

## DOWN

- 1 "Rose, Bud, \_\_\_"
- 2 Take in again
- 3 Inventor Howe
- 4 Heads-up
- 5 Freshmen assignments



COVER ART BY ANNELISE FISHER '26  
LAYOUT BY PIPER TINGLEAF '24 & EL RICHARDS '26

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