

[Newcomb Scholars: Seeking Knowledge](#)

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In the seminar “Seeking Knowledge: How Various Disciplines Recognize Truth,” 20 young women of Tulane's Newcomb Scholars Program are learning what it means to do research. Sophomores Briah Fischer and Alexa Schwartz, two Newcomb Scholars in the program's inaugural class, agree they are benefiting from this unique educational opportunity.



Sophomores Alexa Schwartz, left, and Briah Fischer, right, are members of the inaugural group of Newcomb Scholars. (Photo by Claire Barry)

“It's such an exciting opportunity to learn and build relationships with faculty,” says Schwartz.

[Newcomb Scholars](#) take one seminar per year. Last year's seminar focused on the role of women in higher education, which, Schwartz says, helped her “learn how important Newcomb is.” She adds that members of the group grow close through their shared experience, creating a society of strong women.

Through assigned readings and guest speakers, this year's Newcomb Scholars seminar is emphasizing research techniques. The seminar already has included

presentations by Sally Kenney, executive director of the [Newcomb College Institute](#) and professor of political science; Eamon Kelly, director of the Payson Center and former president of Tulane University; and Molly Rothenberg, professor of English.

The students are studying the relationship between different disciplines while exploring their own academic interests, bringing them one step closer to developing original research questions.

The goal of the seminar this year is to write a literature review for the students' chosen disciplines. Fischer says that the work is important because "it gives a foundation in a discipline by looking at what material already exists."

The research topics that the students are investigating are diverse and based on their individual interests. For example, Fischer, a double major in economics and international development with a minor in public health, is interested in exploring the physical and mental health changes of people affected by natural disasters. And Schwartz, an anthropology major, is studying the Latino community in post-Katrina New Orleans.

Founded in 2009, Newcomb Scholars is a four-year program designed to benefit the academic enrichment of select Tulane undergraduate women through research and seminars, culminating in the senior year with the completion of an independent research project.

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