

The Source Project is Binghamton University's only first-year research program in the social sciences and humanities. It allows invited students to learn the research process through developing their own research project and working closely with a professor and a small class group. Before the program begins, students are invited to browse the potential course topics, known as research "streams," and indicate their top three choices. As a first-year student, they will be placed into one of these streams based on their interest and the availability of the stream. In the first semester, students develop their skills in the foundations of research, learning how to engage with sources, and also gain foundational knowledge in the academic field of their stream. In the second semester, students create their own research projects under the guidance of their professor and get to become experts in their own right. The Source Project experience doesn't need to end after this first year. Students now have several opportunities to stay engaged with the project by applying to develop their research further in a third semester colloquium or by applying to be a Peer Mentor for future streams. Collected here are reflections from the Spring 2025 Peer Mentors on their time in the Source Project as researchers and mentors.

One benefit of the Source Project is its community building, both in and out of the classroom. For Peer Mentors Jacob, Mary, and Lia, their favorite memory of the Source Project course was an instance where their class took place outside of the classroom--at the Starbucks cafe on campus, on the risers outside the fine arts building, or picnic tables on the lawn. Several students remarked upon being introduced to the Binghamton University campus and the surrounding community through the Source Project, such as Deniz, who conducted field interviews at local churches, or Robert, who interned at the Binghamton Civic Center as part of his Source Project coursework. In Evelyn's Source Project Stream, they were challenged to complete a scavenger hunt across campus to get familiar with campus resources. Ria's class went on regular field trips, which took them out into Binghamton to study the local environment.

Of course, the Source Project is also a research program that encourages students to push their own boundaries, where students learn from their peers as well as their professors. Spencer recalls the constructive criticism he received on the first presentation of his final project. Now, he says his favorite memory was being able to answer all of the questions in his final presentation. Liam also remarked on the length of his final paper, coming in at just under 30 pages. While it was a lot of work, he says that it helped him feel prepared for future upper-level classes. Hana remembers the unique editing process of her professor, who selected a volunteer's paper to model and cut it into scraps for the class to rearrange. As the lucky volunteer, Hana now considers this her favorite memory of the Source Project experience.

One of the most special impacts of the Source Project being a research program for the first year of college is the work that students are able to do in the years after their first year. For Rebecca, Abigail, and Deniz, the best moment was the final poster presentation. Seeing their final work come together and presenting it alongside many other Source Project students was a moment of triumph well earned by all. Many of the mentors interviewed expressed that they felt empowered to conduct future research or go for opportunities that they wouldn't have otherwise considered. Ultimately, sixteen students were chosen to become peer mentors this year, each of whom wanted to provide support and encouragement to a new class of Source Project student researchers.