

Global Humanities and Religions

FALL 2024

website: chss.wvu.edu/humanities-religions



Note from the Department Chair:

August 2024

Dear alumni, colleagues,
students, and many friends of the
department,

We hope this finds you each very
well. After having had the privilege
of serving as Department Chair for
nine years, this summer I am passing
the baton (a metaphor on my

mind, I think, after some intensive Paris Olympics viewing
with my eight-year-old son earlier this month). Professor
Andrea Gogröf will serve as the interim Department Chair
for the upcoming academic year. And while I will remain
a Professor in the Department, for the time being I am
moving across campus to Old Main to work as the new
Director of Western's Honors College. I'm thrilled about
this new challenge, even as it is hard to step away from the
Department!

And there are other transitions in the Department this
summer, too. Professor Seán Murphy retired at the end
of Spring Quarter, and has moved to Maine, where he
planned to return to a set of lifelong interests in forestry
and the natural world. On a different note, though, the
Department is delighted to start this year with the hire of
a new tenure-track Assistant Professor, Dr. Carrie Frederick
Frost. An accomplished scholar and teacher, Professor
Frost will continue to enrich an increasingly varied Religion
and Culture curriculum in the Department, drawing in
particular on her expertise and academic interest in
themes including women and ritual; religion and literature;
contemporary spirituality; ethics; religion and material
culture; comparative contemplative traditions; and Eastern
Orthodox Christianity.

The Department continues to have a wonderfully
talented – and growing! – group of major and minor
students. In recent years, we have been able to offer
two Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarships for
Excellence in the Humanities each year. And we continue
to bring a variety of different experts to campus with our
annual *Distinguished Speaker Series*, this year highlighting
the religious dimensions of the current war in Ukraine.
We are also particularly excited to share that we have

established a new interdisciplinary Minor for the
campus community, in *African Studies*.

As ever, we hope that you will keep in touch with the
department, update us on your recent news!

With warmest greetings to all,
Kimberly Lynn

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Smith Excellence in the
Humanities Memorial
Scholarship



MAKE WAVES.

STUDENT ART COLLECTIVE

The Kalliope Project

This project—created by Global Humanities and Religions (GHR) students and recent alumni—is a series of photographic portraits reimagining women from Greek and Roman antiquity, and their accompanying mythologies.

www.thekalliopeproject.com

Love is the muse who impels me. Sing to me, O Goddess, and may my words ring true. This is a story about mothers and daughters, nymphs and sirens, lovers and warriors, goddesses and queens. Ovid, sit down. You tried, but you still came up short. This one is to the girls, from the girls. May the winds carry my name to the stars and add my voice to the chorus of song that has always been sung.

—Maesie, Project Creator

Artist Statement:

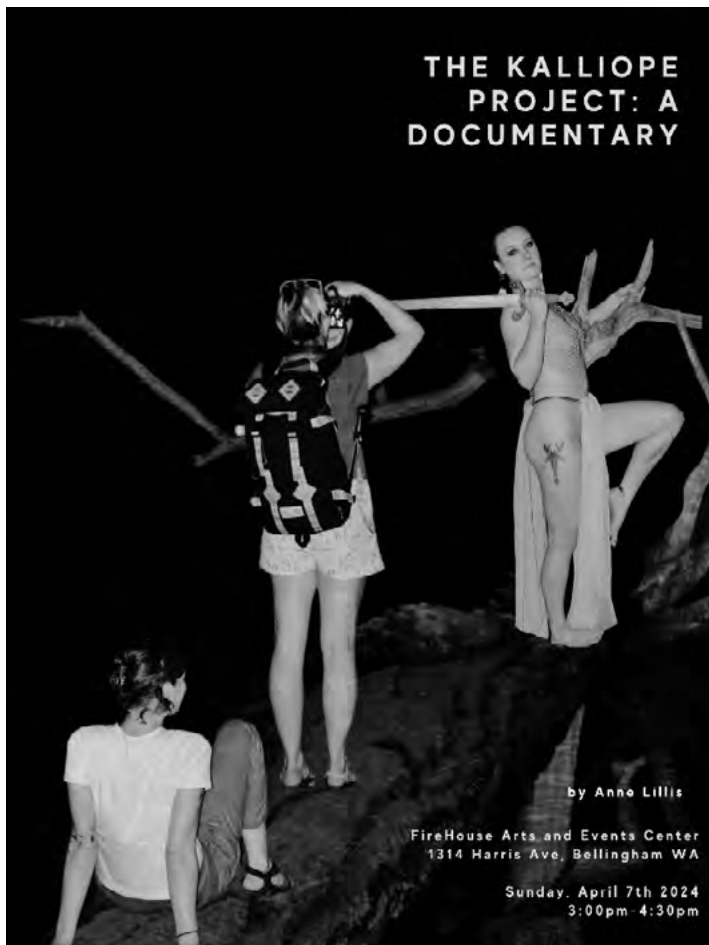
In-depth textual analysis of classical works reveals the complexity and depth of the female characters of Greek and Roman mythology, yet many male scholars have dismissed these women as sexual plot devices. They are not celebrated for their complexity.

The urge to change this is what inspired *The Kalliope Project*.

Throughout this project we sought to tell the stories of the multifaceted women of antiquity, offering art as a celebration of their depth through a feminine lens.

One very important aspect of this project has been bringing women together, empowering women to feel beautiful, and encouraging women to take joy in their appearance without the male gaze of sexualization and shame.

These portraits are rife with devotion and tribute to femininity.



Pictures from The Kalliope Project

The portraits hang beside a retelling of a story from each character's mythology, inviting the viewer to not only engage with the photographic content, but also the offering of a narrative freed from male lens that it has so often been trapped in. The key concept behind these works is poetic synthesizing.

We asked women from all aspects of our lives to participate in The Kalliope Project by posing for the portraits. We were also fortunate to find many individuals and businesses in Bellingham willing to donate time and space to our project. In our creative process we discovered that women and men, young and old, were fascinated by these ancient myths of complex womanhood, and developed a vested interest in helping us celebrate the characters. The project would not have been possible without the love, support, and interest of our community.

–Maesie Halliday (Creator and Writer), Sophia Robertson (Photographer), and Anne Lillis (Documentarian)

Previously featured:

WWU News Archive

news.wwu.edu/kalliope

Whatcom Talk Archive

www.whatcomtalk.com/2024/05/21



FACULTY UPDATES

Ethan Bushelle

Prof. Bushelle has been chipping away at his book-length monograph, *Government Under Heaven: The Rise of the Japanese Nation in Eurasian Late Antiquity*, but progress has been slow going. Ever astounded by how much there is to learn about the ancient world, he has come to terms with the fact that the knowledge base that a book requires simply takes time to build, and that there is joy in the process of building. Fortunately for Prof. Bushelle, he can share that joy in his teaching, where he is always excited to guide students along their own journey into the ancient world and its many fascinating mysteries. When not pondering the lives and cultures of people long ago, Prof. Bushelle enjoys getting outside in nature—hiking the trails of Mt. Galbraith or paddle boarding on Lake Whatcom—and spending quality time with his two kids, age four and six, and wife, Emi.



Holly Folk

Holly Folk continues to pursue an energetic scholarly research agenda charting global New Religious Movements.



In recent years, she's been particularly focused on research travel to Japan, in the highly charged political and religious climate following the shocking assassination of Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan. And she is working on a new book project drawing together her research on different branches of the Unification Church. At the same

time, she continues to develop new research and teaching interests, for example in the development of modern forms of Buddhist tradition, particularly as they have been expressed in North America, and their intersection with important questions of race and cultural diversity.

Carrie Frederick Frost

As of Fall 2024, Carrie Frederick Frost is delighted to join the Department of Global Humanities and Religions as an Assistant Professor of Religion and Culture, and she looks forward to teaching her first 400-level seminar “Comparing Holy Lives,” a study of hagiography across religious traditions. Over the past year, Frost has lectured at Valparaiso, Yale, and Catholic University. Her most recent book, *Church of Our Granddaughters*



(Cascade, 2023), was taught at Notre Dame, Harvard, and Yale, and is being translated into German and Finnish. Her most exciting recent travels were to Zimbabwe in May 2024 to witness and document a historical event in the Eastern Orthodox Church, the first ordination of a deaconess of the twenty-first century.

Andrea Gogröf

During this busy year 2023/24, Andrea has continued to pursue her efforts to motivate students on all levels. It has always been important to her that students feel supported and encouraged to find their voices and their paths. For a few years now, she has encouraged students to apply and participate in the annual conference of the Pacific and Ancient Language Association and almost every year one or more senior majors present at this prestigious conference venue. Our last outstanding graduate gave a paper based on his thesis on William Blake at the PAMLA in Portland, Or. Andrea's research continues to focus on the areas of surveillance as it impacts public and private living, and the French author Michel Houellebecq's latest works and public persona. Andrea is looking forward to being Interim Chair during the academic year 2024/5.



Kimberly Lynn

Kimberly Lynn had the chance to revive some research projects over the past year, aided by her sabbatical in the first half of 2023. She contributed a chapter to a new *Cambridge Companion to the Spanish Inquisition*, currently under review by Cambridge University Press. And she attended her first academic conference since before the start of the covid pandemic, the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, held in Chicago in March. There she coordinated two panels honoring the scholarship and mentorship of her undergraduate advisor at the College of William and Mary (Dr. Lu Ann Homza). She organized one around the topics of “Inquisition, Print, and Early Modern Catholicism” – in which she delivered a paper on “Gender, Heresy, and Law: Women and the Spanish Inquisition's Legal Handbooks,” – and the other around the topics of “Institutions, Archives, and Early Modern Legal Culture.”



Jonathan Miran

Jonathan Miran has been at work on a number of articles and an edited book project on the histories of slavery in the Red Sea region. He is particularly excited about manumission testimonies and reports that he found in the Italian colonial archives in Rome last year. These sources allow him to reconstruct the experiences and recover the voices of enslaved Africans, Arabs and even a few Baluchis and South Asians who were liberated in that region in the late 19th and early 20th century. On the teaching front, this last spring Jonathan enjoyed wandering across the globe and across centuries with his students as they closely read the evocative travel accounts of Ibn Fadlan (10th c.), Ibn Battuta (14th c.), Evliya Çelebi (17th c.) and Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (19th c.) in the seminar 'Pilgrimage and Travel in Islam.' Jonathan is also thrilled about the new African Studies minor program, to launch this coming fall!



Tom Moore

Tom considers himself to be the department's chief representative of dilettantism. He continues to work on his poetry and one major novel, *The Heifer Girl*, which is a retelling of the myth of Io. In addition to teaching Poetry and Spirituality & Myth and Folklore for GHR, he is currently teaching a seminar for Honors somewhat grandiosely titled *The Landscape of the Spirit*. The other half of his workday is spent running the Fellowship Office, this year sending Fulbrighters to the Belgium & South Korea as well as helping WWU students win a Hollings Scholarship and a Udall, both focusing on environmental science. In his spare time he plays with his marvelous granddaughter and helps former WWU grads with their writing projects. All in all, a full and rather wonderful life.



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Scott Pearce

Scott returned to Bellingham and to teaching in the past year. In this time he also published two review articles (with two others already in production for next year), and continued work on the successor volume to *Northern Wei (386-534)*, an examination of that regime's sixth-century successors, which will also

be published by Oxford University Press. A rough draft of the second volume is expected by the end of this coming Summer.

Daniel Picus

Professor Picus was busy writing and planning courses this year. His article on ancient Jewish conceptions of the Oral Torah as an inscribed stone monument came out in *Hebrew Studies* in December. Another article, on the usage of biblical narratives as healing incantations in ancient Judaism, was accepted into the *Archiv fur Religionsgeschichte*, and will be appearing in its next issue. He continues to work on his book manuscript as well, tracing the cultural history of reading the Bible publicly as a religious practice in ancient Judaism.

In addition to his scholarship, Professor Picus developed two new courses this year. The first was an elective on the Biblical Apocrypha, called "Secret Books of the Bible": he had such a blast teaching it that it will certainly be offered again soon. He also taught his first senior seminar, called "Contesting Creation," which examined ancient Jewish and Christian interpretations of Genesis, and understandings of the world's creation. He's teaching two new classes in 2024-2025 as well: an introduction to Judaism, and a senior seminar on the Talmud.

Michael Slouber

Michael delivered a lecture at the International Seminar on Tantric Religion, Pondicherry University in September, a recording of which is available at his website (garudam.info). In November he gave the final talk accompanying a wonderful exhibit at the Western Gallery called "From Himalaya to Cascadia" showcasing work by a local artist from Nepal. He continues to steadily grow the new minors in South and Southeast Asian Studies and Digital Humanities, and to tutor students and community members in Sanskrit and Hindi. He recently returned from a workshop in Vienna, where he and a small group of colleagues are finalizing volume 4 of a dictionary of Tantric terminology; it explains in detail the meanings of terms of art that are missing from existing Sanskrit dictionaries. He is serving as the Faculty Senate President for the 2024–2025 school year.



FACULTY UPDATES

News From Emeritus Faculty

Milt Krieger

Milt Krieger's definitively last ever academic publication, modest in length and scope, appeared as a preface to the book by his closest Cameroonian colleague the last two decades, now teaching in Cape Town: Francis Nyamnjoh, *Incompleteness: Donald Trump, Populism and Citizenship* (Langaa Press, 2022). Francis spent two mid-2015 months in Trump's, Jim Jordan's and J.D. Vance's part of Ohio, learned enough while there to predict 2016's presidential election correctly, and turned the experience into this book, with the Nigerian novelist Amos Tutuola among his muses. Milt's preface



introduces Francis to a hoped-for American readership.

2021 marked the first (and likely last) publication of a Krieger poem, "Jazz Festival, August 2021" in *Whatcom Watch*, October 2021. As it suggests, he continues to stalk local jazz, and also to move his jazz vinyl and books to Western's Music Library, and jazz miscellany to the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies' Milton Krieger Collection on Jazz in Whatcom County.

2024-25 Leadership Team



Left to Right: Calvin Christoph, Sophia Roberston, Alex Bassett, Max Whitley, Sarah Baker. Not Pictured: Vanja Hagman, Aodhan Jibril

Department Outstanding Graduate

2023-24 Maesie Halliday

Graduates with Departmental Honors

2023-24 Maxwell Bauccio-Teschlog,
Johnny Clark, Maesie Halliday,
Anne Lillis, Maya Rismiller

Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities

9th Annual (2024-25) recipients:

Calvin Christoph

I am an incoming fourth year student at WWU, a member of the department's leadership team,



and a recipient of the Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship. I have always enjoyed learning about history, particularly the history of cultures and traditions from around the world, and I am grateful to be able to study these subjects here at Western. I firmly believe in the importance of the humanities, and I am honored to

be recognized for my participation in this field through this award. I was raised in a religious family and was fortunate to be immersed in religious diversity, and so I have always been interested in learning about religious traditions to further my understanding of other people's perspectives. I believe that religion is an integral part of human culture, and I have greatly enjoyed the courses I have taken in this department which have expanded my understanding of religious traditions. During this academic year I will be preparing for graduate school, serving as an AS Senator for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and serving on the departmental leadership team. I'm looking forward to another great year of working with the department and its students, so say hello if you see me around on campus!

Max Whitley

I am honored to have received the Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for this year. I discovered my passion and enjoyment of academia at the Global Humanities and Religions department. I explored my interests at community college during my junior and senior year of high school



through the Running Start Program, but only after I came to Western, did I find what I truly enjoyed doing and studying. I am majoring in Religion and Culture with a minor in South and Southeast Asian Studies. My current focus in the field is on New Religious Movements. I enjoy the study of many different topics, and I am continually battling myself to

decide what I want to focus on in the future. I am extremely excited to explore my interests more at the university and in the GHR department. I have taken classes on many different subjects across the wonderful faculty of the Global Humanities and Religions Department, I am immensely grateful for the passion for learning that my professors have managed to cultivate inside of me. My time in the department has been challenging in the best possible way. I have been challenged by my professors and my peers to think about what I have always taken for granted. They have nuanced and complicated my understandings of even the most basic aspects of my life. Bellingham and the University have been very welcoming and comforting to me during my time here. I am unsure of exactly what lies ahead of me beyond Western, but I am hugely excited for the rest of my time here and I hope to go to graduate school and explore academia further.

Humanities Scholarship

2024-25 Recipients:

Ticker Ba-Aye, Alex Bassett, Sophia Roberston

2023-24 Senior Thesis Topics

Maxwell Bauccio-Teschlog, "Narratives within Narratives: Analysis of Vocabulary Involving Indigenous People in *Life of Fray Junípero Serra (1787)*" (Advisor: Kimberly Lynn)

Johnny Cook, "The Jew in the Lotus Before and After: Examining Religious Change and Personal Choice in the American Jewish-Buddhist Encounter" (Advisor: Daniel Picus)

Maesie Halliday, "Eros of Worship: Language and Desire in Jerome's Asceticism" (Advisor: Daniel Picus)

Anne Lillis, "Divine or Devious: The Need to Defend or Demonize History's Smartest Slut" (Advisor: Seán Murphy)

Maya Rismiller, "Learning the Way From the Blossoms: Buddhism and Court Poetry in Early Medieval Japan" (Advisor: Ethan Bushelle)



Pablo Martinez

I would like to thank all of the GHR department and faculty. My academic skills have been shaped by the work ethic and expectations required of me during this program. I entered university without a



defined interest; by chance, I enrolled in GHR courses. The courses provided me with valuable insights into cultural realities and histories through a variety of sources and methods of study. Quarter to quarter, I found myself absorbed by a new topic,

challenged to familiarize myself with varying world cultures and locations: I knew I had a field of study that piqued my academic interest.

However, there was one specific area of study in which I carried on into my personal pursuits post-graduation: the courses concerning the Islamic world, taught by Professor Miran. Before attending university, I held a genuine interest in Islamic civilization, both ancient and modern, upon enrolling in these GHR courses I was able to indulge that curiosity. Within each course, I found myself pursuing questions and answers I had always thought about relating to the Islamic world.

For example, I recall taking the HUMA 362 course titled Islam in the Indian Ocean World. This course

focused on the intercontinental spread of Islam through trade across the Indian Ocean, revealing corners of the globe that one would easily forget to mention when locating the 'Islamic world'. In this course, I was introduced to new ideas concerning the spread of Islam and the varied ways it became interpreted or reinterpreted through diffusion across thousands of miles of open space. This course, among others, placed the rise of Islam as an intrinsic part of world history and cross-cultural exchange, and I found myself wanting to keep learning about this cultural/religious phenomenon.

Post-graduation I pursued this interest in learning more about Islamic civilization. I enrolled in Arabic classes, where I have spent the past 10 months studying and practicing the Egyptian dialect. During this time, I also traveled for a few weeks in Egypt to finally immerse myself in a region of the world that I had spent more than a year learning about. The experience of traveling itself was eye-opening, I consider myself well-traveled, however under-traveled in the Muslim regions of the world. The cultural, religious, and sociohistorical aspects of Egypt were entirely new to me in terms of a real-life setting, however, I felt better prepared due to my previous academic pursuits.

During my travels, I explored Cairo and cities along the Nile. My favorite experience was in the Governorate of Luxor. Luxor is a well-known tourist destination due to the multitude of tombs and temples located around the city showcasing the burial and death rites of ancient Egyptian rulers. I was most intrigued by the region's rural setting, where many people lived in an agricultural setting based on subsistence farming. It was here that I noticed the relationship the Nile River held with the economy and livelihood of Egypt. I came to understand the different lifestyles and realities present in Egypt. By observing the metropolis of Cairo and then transporting myself to a rural setting,

I developed a more balanced view of how Egypt functioned as a country.

While in Egypt, as a traveler and student, I carefully observed the unique local architecture and the multitude of museums, as well as historical sites. It was surreal to directly view texts, works of art, and historical references I had studied and discussed while at Western. For example, I visited the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, where I viewed textiles, ceramics, and artwork originating from the early eras of the rule of Islamic Caliphates in Egypt. During these museum visits, I remembered direct moments of study while observing these historical pieces in real life.

I cannot forget to mention the people. I was charmed by the Egyptian people and their openness to curious foreigners. I had numerous interactions with locals (to the best of my ability) about their country and mine, where I listened to new perspectives on various topics. These

encounters solidified my interest in learning more about Egypt, its people, and other Muslim-majority cultures. The immersion of this trip brought home the differences between us as humans and our defined cultural practices. Although there were many notable differences, I also observed commonalities that shone through our unique realities.

My plan hereafter is to continue to learn Arabic, and I hope to travel to another Muslim region of the globe. I have enrolled in graduate school for the coming fall. In this graduate program, I will continue a multidisciplinary field of study first introduced to me within the GHR program. I look forward to showcasing the research, investigative, and other academic methods I gained while studying at Western. I will always look back at my experience within the GHR program fondly as one of development and an awakening of my curiosity to learn.



Opposite page: Temple of Hatshepsut, Luxor

Above: Mohammed Ali Mosque, Cairo

Below left to right: City view of Cairo, View of the Nile river and Luxor facing the East Bank, Agricultural setting of Luxor (West Bank)



SPEAKER EVENT

16th Annual Distinguished Guest Speaker information coming soon.

Keep an eye on the department webpage <https://chss.wvu.edu/global-humanities-and-religions/distinguished-speakers-series> for information.

15th Annual Distinguished Guest Speaker Dr. Nicholas Denysenko, Valparaiso University (2024)

Nicholas Denysenko received his undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota (1994), and his graduate degrees at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (M.Div., 2000) and The Catholic University of America (Ph.D., 2008). Prior to coming to Valpo, he taught for seven years at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, where he also served as director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute.



Denysenko

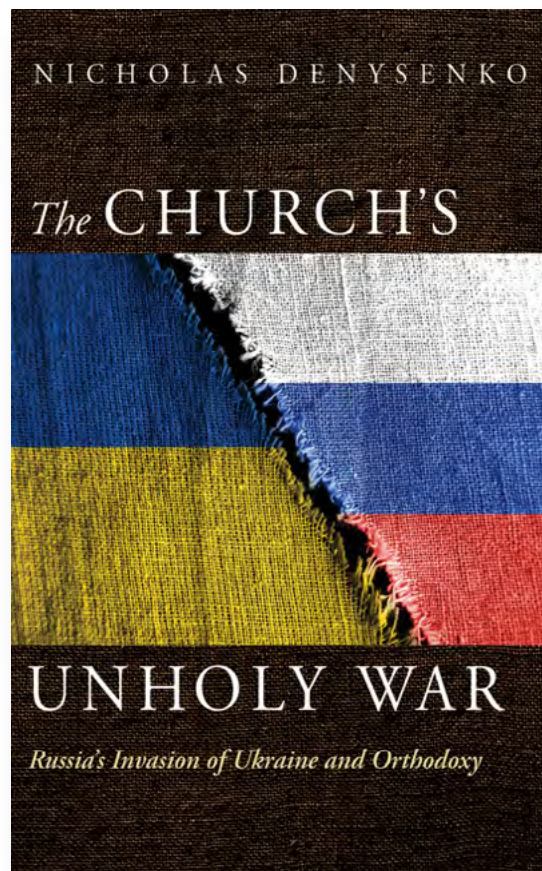
writes and speaks on diverse topics, and specializes in liturgical theology and Orthodox Christianity. His work has appeared in venues such as the *Journal for the American Academy of Religion*, *Theological Studies*, *Studia Liturgica*, *Worship*, and *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*. He blogs regularly at "Pray, Tell: Worship, Wit & Wisdom." In his research, Denysenko explores the intersections of liturgical history, ritual studies, and pastoral theology, and writes for an ecumenical audience. He has published books, articles, and essays on liturgical theology and religion in Ukraine. Denysenko is the author of *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), *This is the Year That the Lord Has Made: The Liturgical Year in Orthodoxy*

(Cascade Books, 2023), and *The Church's Unholy War: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine and Orthodoxy* (Cascade Books, 2023).



"Making Sense of the Role of Religion in Russia's Invasion of Ukraine"

The war in Ukraine is now over two years old, and the human toll is staggering: over 14.6 million Ukrainians are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Russia's list of grievances used to justify its brutal invasion include an accusation that Ukraine has persecuted the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. How does religion figure into the war? Nicholas Denysenko of Valparaiso University explains how a simmering conflict among Orthodox Christians in Ukraine contributed to Putin's decision to bomb and invade Ukraine. In this public lecture, Denysenko will introduce the historical events that created divisions among Orthodox believers in Ukraine and Russia, will explain how religious leaders use hate speech to promote discrimination and violence in Ukraine, and will address the controversial claim that the Ukrainian government is persecuting the Russian Orthodox Church and its believers in Ukraine.



Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities

*The department suffered a heartbreaking tragedy nine years ago, with the loss of our major and member of the 2014-15 Liberal Studies Leadership Team, **Meagan Smith**. We're honoring her memory with a scholarship.*

Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities



This scholarship honors the legacy of Meagan Elizabeth Smith (1993 - 2015). An outstanding student, Meagan was scheduled to graduate with departmental honors in December 2015, with a Humanities major, a concentration in Religion and Culture, and a German minor. She had developed a particular interest in non-Western societies, and especially in Nepal, which inspired the senior thesis she was researching on "Making Sense of Fierce Deities in Indian Religions." Meagan was a member of the first Liberal Studies Leadership Team, a musician, and an athlete, dedicated to serving the many communities of which she was a cherished part. This is the first and only named scholarship in the fifty-year history of the Global Humanities and Religions Department, designed to recognize academic excellence in the humanities.

Ways To Give

Online at
<https://foundation.wvu.edu/GlobalHumanitiesAndReligions>

With a check made payable to the WWU Foundation and mailed to:

The Foundation for WWU & Alumni
516 High Street, MS 9034
Bellingham, WA 98225

By phone at: 360-650-3027

*Please write **Meagan E. Smith Scholarship** on the memo line of your check.

For more information on ways to give, including instructions for WWU employee payroll deduction or gifts of securities, please visit: <https://foundation.wvu.edu/making-gift>



The 2014-15 Leadership Team was asked, "Why HUMANITIES?" Meagan's Answer—

"Discussing religions and traditions from around the globe as well as from different time periods has helped to expand my cultural understanding of the world immensely. Joining this major has given me opportunities to study a variety of subjects, as well as embarking on a study of Nepal this upcoming summer. The Liberal Studies department has opened my mind to the cornucopia of traditions existing in our world today and the impact we each have on one another."

GRADUATION SPRING 2024



Spring 2024 graduates and department faculty.

GLOBAL HUMANITIES AND RELIGIONS



MAKE WAVES.

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