Global Humanities and Religions

FALL 2026

website: chss.wwu.edu/humanities-religions

Note from the Chair:

Greeting friends, students, and alumni of the department,

The times they are a-changin', as they tend to, but more so this past year! The department of Global Humanities and Religions is weathering the changes well though, and we had a successful year with most of our courses full, a record number of students in our minors, and a healthy cohort of majors. Two long-time stalwarts retired in June: Scott Pearce and Andrea Gogröf. I am happy to announce that both will remain connected to the department in retirement with emerit status. This year we also bid farewell to Siyamak Zabihi-Moghaddam, who taught courses relating to Islam and women and religion for many years. We are welcoming three new instructors to help shore up the curriculum this year: Rachel Wilkowski will teach "Intro to the Study of Religion", Eren Jaye will offer courses on the "Humanities of the Caribbean" and "Folkloric Futures", and John Henry Reilly will offer "Religion and Disability."

I hope you enjoy reading more details below about what we have been up to, and about our excellent current students and alumni. If you have not been in touch in a while, we would love to hear from you! We are hoping to build connections between current students exploring their career options and alumni who are established in careers. If you are willing to be part of that, please let us know! As always, we deeply appreciate gifts that support our student scholarships, student conference travel, speakers, and library collections. The college is currently hard at work on a Mellon grant proposal to fund paid internships for humanities majors. If that is successful, we will also have a fundraising campaign to make the proposed humanities internships program sustainable for the long term.

Take care friends,
Michael Slouber

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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Congratulations to Scott Pearce and Andrea Gogröf on their retirements!

Two pillars of the Global Humanities and Religions department retired at the end of spring quarter, Prof. Scott Pearce and Prof. Andrea Gogröf.

Prof. Scott Pearce served Western for 35 years, joining the department (then called Liberal Studies) in 1991 as a specialist on the history of China and inner Asia, a few years after taking his Ph.D. from Princeton University. His teaching spanned the Humanities and Religions sides of the department's curriculum, offering various courses touching on history, art, economics, mysticism, pilgrimage, and religion in eastern Asia and globally. He regularly contributed to East Asian Studies (first as a center, more recently as a program) at Western through cross-listing of courses and as managing editor of its book series for over a decade. His teaching emphasized fundamental skills of close reading and discussion of the traditional texts of East Asia, home to nearly 20% of humanity.

Beyond his notable impact on students through his courses, Prof. Pearce has regularly advocated for a high quality curriculum for all undergraduate students. Most recently that has taken the form of his service on the 2025–2026 task force for revising the GUR curriculum. He has served as parliamentarian, vice president, and president of the Faculty Senate; he served a term as department chair, and served on various other committees in the college and the wider university.

As a researcher, Prof. Pearce focused on political and military history of late classical China, particularly interactions between inner Asian peoples and the agrarian communities of eastern China. His 2023 monograph *Northern Wei (386–534): A New Form of Empire in East Asia* (Oxford University Press) deserves special note. This work took shape during professional leave in 2021–22, which he spent as visiting research scholar at Princeton and NYU. His interdisciplinary scholarship is guided by deep questions about what it means to be human, and probes why cultural and religious features show up at particular places and times. He has always sought deeper meaning beyond surface facts.

As an emeritus, Prof. Pearce has continued research on the roots of East Asia's Tang empire (618–907) in preceding regimes of Inner Asian origin that had ruled the Yellow River plains in the 5th and 6th centuries CE, building on his earlier study of a particularly important such regime, the Northern Wei.

Prof. Andrea Gogröf served Western for 30 years, joining the department (then called Liberal Studies) in 1996 as a specialist in nineteenth- and twentieth-century French and German literature and philosophy, shortly after taking a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Washington, following undergraduate and graduate degrees in Paris. Her teaching has primarily covered modern and early modern European literature, history, art, and ideas, with occasional courses on earlier periods. Her courses have played a critical role in the department, bridging the gap between deeper history in Europe and non-Western civilizations with the modern context that we all swim in. In recent years she developed two highly successful new courses: one on Friedrich Nietzsche, the other on the Avant-Garde movement.

She made special efforts over the years to encourage students to participate at conferences; most recently, she guided a graduating senior to deliver a paper at the 2025 conference of the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA). These sorts of experiences have a huge impact on undergraduate students.

Prof. Gogröf's service track record is long and varied. She served the college and university on numerous committees over the years, and participated as an artist in the faculty and employee art show for fourteen years. In the department, she has served as interim chair on three occasions, steering the department through some tough times punctuated by unexpected faculty departures.

She also served in leadership roles for her main professional organization (PAMLA), with few breaks, for the past twenty-three years, including a stint as President of PAMLA in 2017–18. One contribution to the department that stands out is her close support for the remarkable student-led Kalliope Project, which drew in numerous majors and other students as participants in its rehearsal and revivifying of European humanistic heritage.

Prof. Gogröf published a monograph prior to tenure, and went on to write eight articles and one interview. Moreover, she was editor for two journal special issue volumes, and is currently working on a five-chapter book on Michel Houellebecq, a notable French writer and performance artist. She consistently participated in conferences and workshops over the years, often multiple per year. As an emerita, Prof. Gogröf continues her life as a painter living in Seattle, working solo and with a studio cohort. She plans to show her work and see new parts of the world.

Panoramic view of campus and Bellingham Bay.

FACULTY UPDATES

Ethan Bushelle

Prof. Bushelle remains focused on the writing of his book, *The Sword and the Mirror: Warriors, Priests, and the Birth of Yamato Kingship*.

Over the last year, he has shared his research for the book in professional settings with colleagues, not only in our department series *Fourth Fridays* but also at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, and submitted three essays that deal with the book's central themes to major peer-reviewed outlets: "Nation Formation in Early Japan: An Entangled History" published in the journal *Nations and Nationalism*, "Descendants of the Sky: Central Eurasia and the Emergence of Yamato Kingship" forthcoming in the journal *Monumenta Nipponica*, and "Of Celestial Descent: Shinto Myth and Ethnic Consolidation" to be published in the forthcoming edited volume, *Race and Ethnicity in Medieval East Asian Literature*. In addition to these recent publications, Prof. Bushelle continues to publish on Japanese Buddhism. His essay on Buddhist poetics in Japan is scheduled to appear in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Buddhist Literature*.

Carrie Frederick Frost

In her second year as Assistant Professor of Religion and Culture, Carrie Frederick Frost enjoyed teaching two new classes: REL 490 Seeking Silence in a Noisy World (of her own design) and HNRS 219 Colloquium in Religious Studies in the Honors College. Her work on alternative forms of grading and student agency was featured in the Center for Instructional Innovation annual "Innovative Teaching Showcase."

She also continued organizing the popular GHR Fourth Fridays series—a monthly opportunity for GHR faculty to informally talk about their research with colleagues and students—and advising the GHR Leadership Team. She edited a festschrift for her PhD advisor at the University of Virginia: *A Chorus of Faith: A Festschrift in Honor of Vigen Guroian* (Pickwick, 2025) and continues her study of the recent developments in the Orthodox Church regarding women's ordination, including an article under peer review at the journal *Religion and Gender*. She continues to work on a long-term project on the laicization of contemplative practices in Orthodoxy.

Personally, she anticipates transitioning to an empty nest this fall as her triplets head to college, and welcoming a new grandchild this past summer!

Holly Folk

Holly Folk is on leave for the 2026 calendar year, and is working on several writing projects about new religions.

Kimberly Lynn

Dr. Lynn continues to serve as the Dean of the WWU Honors College (which is now quite large — around 900 students majoring in subjects all across campus!). She also really enjoyed getting to connect with current and emeritus department faculty at events throughout the year. Dr. Lynn has loved getting to see a few former students this past year, and seeing this year's wonderful thesis and scholarship presentations at the annual celebration in May. Outside of work, her two kids continue to keep her on her toes.

Jonathan Miran

After eight intensive and rewarding years of service as editor of the journal *Northeast African Studies*, Jonathan passed the editorial leadership to a new editor in late 2025. Over the past year, he also finalized work on a volume he is co-editing, *Enslavement and Unfreedom Across the Red Sea: Regional and Transregional Histories*. The manuscript is now in production with the publisher (Brill) and is scheduled to appear in 2027.

Continuing his research on the histories of enslavement in Northeast Africa and its wider region, Jonathan spent the summer of 2026 writing an article that reconstructs the trajectories, experiences and agency of enslaved people who fled their owners in northern Ethiopia and crossed into neighboring colonial Eritrea in pursuit of

manumission and freedom.

On the teaching front, Jonathan looks forward to offering a new version of his course on Sufism next winter quarter, now titled "REL 390: Seeking Baraka: Sufis and Saints in Islam."

Tom Moore

Tom published two poems recently, one of which Maureen has included in this newsletter (the other, Desert Hues, appears in *Hamlit*). He is also helping to produce an anthology of short fiction, essays, and poetry from Bellingham writers (possibly titled *A Weaving of Words*) to be published in the late fall. Otherwise, as Director of Western's Fellowships Office, he continues to help our students apply for such prestigious awards as the Fulbright. In that regard, Western's Fulbrighters continue to shine, with 10 winners since 2024 and a splendid cohort working on this year's applications. On a personal note, as if by magic, grandchildren keep appearing, with the latest (Duncan) breaking into the light on July 8, 2026. Peace.

Daniel Picus

Daniel had a busy year in the department. In addition to a special issue of a journal, a conference paper, and work on his book manuscript, he was lucky enough to teach both the religion methods seminar, and an upper-level seminar on ancient Mediterranean creation narratives and their interpretation. Students had to write their own creation narratives, and then interpret another student's, as part of the seminar: it was one of the most interesting, exciting, and generative sets of assignments he's ever received.

He'll be on professional leave for Fall 2026 and Winter 2027 quarters. In between conferences, a couple of trips, and finishing his book manuscript (plus a few other projects, like a conference paper on the reception of Ezra, or a first foray into publishing on the New Testament), he's finally managed to plant a raspberry patch in his yard, and his plum tree looks like it will yield more than just one plum.

Michael Slouber

Michael transitioned into his new role as chair this past year with increased administrative duties and reduced teaching load. He has enjoyed working more closely with students as the advisor for both Humanities and Religion majors, as well as the Student-Faculty Designed majors, and teaching the department methods courses. He guided several students this year on independent language study (Sanskrit and Nepali), advised a capstone for a Digital Humanities minor, and is serving on an MA committee for a student in English. On the research front, projects have mostly been in a holding pattern due to other commitments, but a few minor publications are in the works. One exciting moment recently was a community member who reached out to donate a pair of palmleaf manuscript bundles from Laos or northeast Thailand, which Slouber helped identify before turning them over to Special Collections.

Eddy Troy

Eddy has completed his second year teaching in Global Humanities and Religions and continues to be inspired by the curiosity and intellectual engagement of the department's majors. He enjoys developing interdisciplinary courses that bring together European literature, philosophy, and film. His recent article, "Djibril Diop Mambéty's Decolonial Existentialism: Sartrean Praxis and the Critique of Bad Faith Humanism," published in *Film-Philosophy*, examines the intersections of the acclaimed Senegalese filmmaker Djibril Diop Mambéty and French existentialism. When he's not hiking and camping throughout the Pacific Northwest, he's at work on a book manuscript exploring philosophical approaches to global Francophone cinema.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

2026-27 Leadership Team

(L to R) David Leahy, Emma Brown, Jasmine Lacey, with Farouk El-Zaatari on the phone! Not Pictured: Hayley Christensen, Tessa Milum, Lexi Sevian

Department Outstanding Graduates

2025-26 Religion and Culture
Andy Jennings

2025-26 Humanities: History of Culture
Sophia Robertson

Graduates with Departmental Honors

2025-26 – **Hannah Fleischmann**

Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities Awardee

11th Annual (2026-27) recipients:

(L to R) **Lexi Sevian**, Julie Smith, **Samantha Demorest**

Lexi Sevian – I am a senior at WWU this year, and I am incredibly grateful to be chosen as one of the recipients this year for the Megan Elizabeth Smith Excellence in the Humanities Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is representative of the meaningful connections that I've gotten to create with my professors and peers, and I feel so lucky to be surrounded by like-minded individuals with a boundless curiosity for the world and an appreciation for the past. This year, I am very excited to be working on my senior thesis, where I will be incorporating themes of collective effervescence through hymnography and choral practices inspired by Plato and St. Ephrem, and will also be working on my Honors capstone project where I will be translating Sanskrit from a palm leaf manuscript on Tantric medicine healing snakebites through music. This year I am excited to begin specializing in the areas of the world that I am most interested in pursuing after I graduate, and I want to give a special thanks to Dr. Tom Moore for advising my submission for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Armenia. I will also be joining the GHR Leadership team this year, and I am

excited to bring more attention and curiosity to our department. Studying global humanities means having an affinity for the unknown, and compassion for that which we do not understand. It also means being chosen to remember while being surrounded by those who choose to forget, and I am so deeply honored with the wisdom my professors have entrusted me to pass on. My professors have proven to me how interconnected the world truly is, and hopefully I will get to spend a lifetime teaching students the same.

Samantha Demorest – I first joined the Global Humanities and Religions department in 2013, back when it was known as Liberal Studies. I was among Meagan Smith's cohort and a member of the leadership team when her memorial scholarship was founded in 2016, so I am incredibly honored to be its recipient in 2026, the year I returned to school to conclude my studies in the humanities. I returned to Western this past winter quarter, and while the path to my degree has been long and circuitous, returning to this department has felt like a homecoming, and I'm grateful to the faculty who welcomed me back so enthusiastically. Changing trajectory and walking away from the career I had built was a difficult decision, but I've grown more this past year than I did the entire decade I was away; to have come to this point is absolutely one of my proudest achievements. Initially I was unsure where exactly this new trajectory would lead – the only thing I knew for certain was how important it was to me that I finish what I started all those years ago. I decided to make the most of being a student again, and to recommit to the tradition of curiosity and dedication that the humanities represent. Over the summer, an accelerated course unexpectedly led to my declaration as a pre-major with the chemistry department, and I'm delighted to say that I am pursuing an additional degree, a Bachelor of Science. Nothing ever truly ends in the study of the humanities. It is ever-present, ever-relevant, and ever-rewarding, and I will carry what I have learned here with me into all my future adventures.

2025-26 Awardee **Hayley Christensen** and Julie Smith

2025-26 Awardee **David Leahy** with Julie Smith

2026-27 Department Scholarship Awardees

Fiona Broward and **Hayley Christensen**

2025-26 Senior Thesis

Hannah Fleischmann, "The Mahādevī: Benevolence and Bloodlust in the Divine Feminine" (Advisor: Ethan Bushelle)

Student Presentation

Senior Sebastián Prieto-Keith finishing up his presentation at the PAMLA conference in November, 2025.

Photo courtesy: Andrea Gogröf

A postcard from Hawai‘i

Dear GHR,
Oh, how I miss the sound of the fountain in Red Square in the early mornings of spring, the red brick around campus, Ginger Boat teriyaki, and sunsets over the bay driving down State Street. It's been three years since I left Bellingham, and I wouldn't be where I am today without those memories and, more importantly, the people I met there.

For those reading this postcard who may not know me, Aloha! My name is Maile Akeo, and I am a 2023 graduate of Global Humanities and Religions. I was also a student worker in the department office, so between work and classes, Bond Hall became a second home during my years at Western.

When I graduated, writing another essay or reading another required text was just about the last thing I wanted to do. So, I moved back home with my parents, got a job, and planned to take a break from school.

There was just one problem: my undergraduate thesis.

While researching for my thesis, Restoring the Presence of the Pacific Peoples During the American Whaling Era, I came across work from the Department of Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Curiosity led me to its master program, and I decided I would apply and see what would happen.

In January 2024, I received my acceptance letter.

And now, three years after leaving Western, I am writing you a postcard from Mānoa on the island of O‘ahu as a recent graduate with my Master of Arts in Pacific Islands Studies.

Moving nearly 3,000 miles across the Pacific changed far more than my academic interests. Growing up on the continent, my Hawaiian ancestry was primarily taught to me through family traditions and stories. Living in Hawai‘i allowed me to immerse myself in the culture, history, scholarship, and community around me while beginning to ask deeper questions about my own family.

Those questions eventually changed the direction of my research.

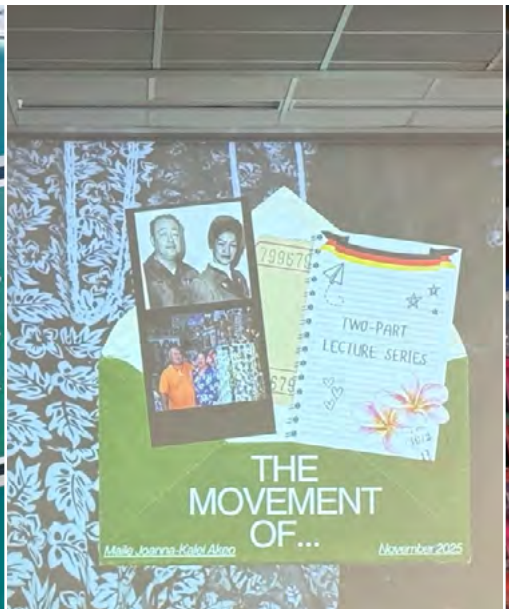
I knew early in the program that I probably wasn't going to stick with whaling. I had the opportunity to pursue an interdisciplinary thesis, and I wanted to combine my love for photography with a dream I had of creating a documentary. I just needed to figure out what story I wanted to tell.

Every answer led me back to my ‘ohana.

My grandparents, who were born and raised in Hawai‘i, owned and operated a Hawaiian gift shop in Tacoma, Washington, for more than sixteen years. They sourced materials from Hawai‘i and homemade clothing, jewelry and other goods. When I began asking my Nana and other family members questions about the shop, I realized there was an entire research project within my own ‘ohana and a documentary waiting to be filmed.

That became Made with Aloha: Memory, Clothing, and Cultural Inheritance, my master's thesis and documentary centered around unboxing the inventory my grandparents left behind. Using those objects to invite family members to remember, the film weaves together stories of family, migration, material culture and what it means to grow up Hawaiian on the continent.

Creating a documentary was an ambitious choice considering I had no formal filmmaking



experience. But even that brought me back to Western. Some of my first experiments with video happened in my undergraduate classes, where creative final projects gave me the confidence to work with my own footage, voiceover, and editing. I had no idea those assignments were preparing me to one day film and produce a documentary of my own.

Graduate school also brought me somewhere else I never expected: the front of a classroom. As a Graduate Assistant for the Department of Pacific Islands Studies, I had opportunities to lecture in undergraduate Pacific Islands Studies courses. Going from sitting in classrooms at Western to teaching students in Hawai'i was one of those moments that made me realize just how far the last few years had taken me.

This past spring, I successfully defended Made with Aloha and completed my master's degree. The degree may be finished, but the documentary is not. I am continuing to edit and develop the film with hopes of bringing it into future screenings and whatever stages may come next.

And somehow, I find myself in a familiar place again, finished with a degree, proud of what I have done, a little tired, and wondering where I go from here.

Three years ago, I had no idea that a paper about Hawaiian whalers would lead me across the Pacific, that undergraduate video projects would eventually lead me to documentary filmmaking, or that I would find myself standing at the front of a college classroom.

The scenery is different now. Instead of the fountain in Red Square, I hear the rain and birds in Mānoa Valley. Instead of looking toward Mt. Baker, I look toward the Koʻolau Mountains. But I am still doing something I learned back in Bond Hall: asking questions and following them further than I ever expected them to take me.

So, to my GHR family, mahalo of being part of where so many of those questions began.

For now, consider this a postcard from somewhere along the way.

With aloha from Mānoa,
Maile Joanna-Kalei Akeo

Opposite page: Maile.

Above left to right: Graduation, May 16, 2026. Photo from one of Maile's lectures. *Kalei-O-Kalani* inventory, photo from *Made with Aloha*

Above: Green gecko friends in my yard, named Cash.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Sydnee Preedy ’18

Hello Global Humanities and Religions Department!
It has been a number of years since I have seen or talked to many of you, but after seeing the latest newsletter I wanted to reach out.

The main purpose for this communication is to take the time to say thank you to every professor that I had the pleasure of learning from in this department. It is through my time as a student in this department that I discovered a love for the humanities.

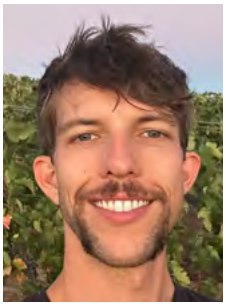
I graduated in 2018 and after some time in corporate America I went back to get my Masters in Teaching from Eastern Washington University in 2023. Much of the work I did through what was then called the Liberal Studies department covered the requirements for a Social Studies degree, although I had to take a few political science and economic classes before I could apply for the Masters Program. I am now a Social Studies and English Language Arts endorsed teacher for the secondary level. This year is the first year I have a classroom of my very own at Liberty High School in Spangle, Washington. The subjects I teach are Civics, 9th Grade English, Yearbook, and World History. My time as a student in this department prepared me for so many aspects of this career that I have fallen in love with. Teaching World History students about the knowledge I gained from India, Dante, The Inquisition and Reconquista, and so much more, has been a delight. Many times this year I have found myself recalling those lessons I learned in the classrooms of Bond Hall and remember them with delight.

Thank you so much to all of the professors I had during my time as a student in this department. My love and passion for this work was influenced by you.

Sincerely,
Sydnee Preedy

Britton H. Johnson ’17

I graduated from WWU in 2017 and have spent the last 9 years working in a variety of industries before landing in San Diego as a wine bar manager. My educational foundation in Humanities enhances my hospitality skills by allowing me to share with guests a historical and holistic view of how food, wine and culture intersect. I love providing a level of depth and context to the traditions that shape what we consume. My goal is when someone walks out of the bar, they have enjoyed a great wine and learned something they are excited to share with a friend.



Kaye Kulp ’25

I’m now living in Oregon and working on my master’s in library science online through the University of North Carolina Greensboro. I’m starting my second year of the program, with a focus on archives and special collections. Outside of my classes, I volunteer with UNCG’s Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) and with my neighborhood’s historical preservation task force. Rare books have always fascinated me, but I decided to pursue a career as an archivist after writing a report for Professor Picus’ Hebrew Bible course on a rare bible in Western’s special collections. Today I have seven antique bibles, inherited from my ancestors. I frequently write about my family archives, community archives more broadly, and the importance of digital literacy on Substack in my free time.

Alumni Connections: Please stay in touch! You can always call or email, and we also made a new alumni contact form for your convenience: https://chss.wwu.edu/global-humanities-and-religions/alumni-connections

Retirement Gathering

A few pictures from Professor Andrea Gogröf's retirement party!

Emeritus Faculty Bill Stoever and Andrea Gogröf

(L to R) Emeritus Faulty: Rob Stoops, Bill Wallace, and Bill Stoever

(L to R) Professor Branko Ćurgus (*Math Dept*), Andrea Gogröf, and Professor Petra Fiero (*Dept of Languages Literatures and Cultures*)

Emeritus Andrea Gogröf and Assoc. Professor Daniel Picus

(L to R) Department Lecturer, Dr. Siyamak Zabihi-Moghaddam and Professor Jonathan Miran

WWU_GHR

Join us on Instagram!

DEPARTMENT OBITUARY

Rodney Johns Payton, Emeritus Professor of the Humanities, passed away on March 14, 2026, in Bellingham WA. Born in Louisiana in 1940 and as a young child the family moved to Washinton State when his father got a job with Hanford Engineer Works now known as Hanford Site. He took an M.A. degree in Music History from Washington State University in 1966 and a Ph.D. in History of Culture from the University of Chicago in 1974. In 1970 he started in the newly formed department of General Studies (later renamed Liberal Studies, now Global Humanities and Religions) teaching courses on Western Civilization, and particularly the medieval period. The following year he was hired onto the tenure track, and in 1975 created his signature course on Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* which he taught for 30 years, and which was taught in the department for another 18 years by other faculty, including Andrea Gogröf and Seán Murphy. He was a member and frequent contributor to conferences of the Dante Society of America. One colleague described Payton as the main visionary behind the department's cultural history emphasis, and the glue that united the various specializations across global civilizations. He is the author of *A Modern Reader's Guide to Dante's Inferno*, published by Peter Lang in 1992, and the translator, along with Ulrich Mammitzsch of J. Huizinga's *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, published in 1994 with the University of Chicago Press. His work is also represented in anthologies and professional journals on the subjects of the history of art and music, historiography, and literary criticism. For many years he stewarded the Mammitzsch Fund, a department endowment used to support library acquisitions relating to the Humanities. As an emeritus, he got involved in the effort to save the WWU Music Library during a time of budget crisis. On a personal note, Prof. Payton was also an expert woodworker and an avid fisherman; he fished salmon commercially in Chuckanut Bay with fellow WWU faculty member, Al Froderberg. Rodney was a founder and pillar of the Humanities at WWU for many decades, and will be missed.

Recently published poem by Dr. Tom Moore (Pensive Journal)

Introduction

Introduce yourself to us in strange places.
In the reflection on the storefront window
of the woman in the yellow hat
in the laughter of a six-year-old when you
make buzzing noises on her tummy
in the clip of shoes on the marble floor of
a church you, at the last moment
enter, hoping to find, resting on
a pew, a single word that would
lead you out of the darkness
in the smell of fresh oregano, rosemary,
thyme, and all the other herbs
that delight the nose
in the indecipherable love of the dog
that greets you at a front door
because she is your son's and
you are part of her pack
in the dusk of a Saint Lucy's service at
a church your mother-in-law
attended for ninety years
in the call and cry of the geese flying
over your house, lost in a
snowstorm, as are we all.

Current faculty and Emeritus faculty, families and friends got together this past April to wish Emeritus Professor, **David Curley**, and his wife Jayme, bon voyage as they leave Bellingham for Berkeley, California to be closer to their kids. We will miss them and David's continued support and presence in the department.

We wish you well!

(L to R) Emerir Bill Stoever and David Curley

(L to R) Andrea Gogröf, Bill Stoever, and Rob Stoops

(L to R) Jayme Curley, David Curley, and Jonathan Miran

(L to R) Emeritus Faculty Milt Krieger, Bill Stoever, Rob Stoops, and David Curley

GHR Professor and Honors College Director Kimberly Lynn and David Curley

SPEAKER EVENT

18th Annual Distinguished Guest Speaker information coming soon.

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

17th Annual Distinguished guest Speaker Dr. Bryan Miller, Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan.

Bryan K. Miller is Assistant Professor of Central Asian Art & Archaeology in History of Art and Assistant Curator of Asian Archaeology at the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology. His work investigates the politics of visual culture and the intersections of art and ecology in early Eurasia. His recent book on the Xiongnu: *The World's First Nomadic Empire* challenges normative constructs of nomadic societies so as to reassess the sophisticated arts, institutions, and polities they create.

Annual Distinguished Guest Speaker website

Between Horses and Heavens: steppe 'religion' in the age of the Xiongnu

Just as the ancient Xiongnu nomadic empire was an economically and politically sophisticated entity, so were its religious beliefs equally complex. This talk engages the wealth of visual art, archaeological, and historical materials to elucidate the ways in which belief systems and ritual practices of Inner Asian communities during the Xiongnu dynasty elevated geographies and nonhuman animals of the steppe world in a matrix of beings linked to the *Tenger* heavens.

Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities

The department suffered a heartbreaking tragedy in 2015, 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-five-year history of the Global Humanities and Religions Department, designed to recognize academic excellence in the humanities.

Ways To Give

Online at
https://foundation.wwu.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.wwu.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."

QR link to give.

2025-26 AY GRADUATES

Fall Graduation:
(L to R) Owen Bakker, Sophia Robertson, (Prof. Slouber), Omalia Pursley, Audrey Stearns.

Spring Graduation:
(L to R) Professor and Chair, Michael Slouber, Christian Slagle and Alex Bassett in the back, and Dasia Kim and Katrina Goussev in the front.

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