

Liberal Studies

Spring 2013 Newsletter

From the Chair

Greetings Friends and Alumni of the Department of Liberal Studies.

In the midst of difficult times for higher education — in Washington State and the country as a whole — Liberal Studies is thriving.

Our alumni serve the world, while fine scholars such as Nile Green and David Knechtges come

north to deliver lectures for our students and the larger community.

Read through our annual newsletter to see what else the department's students and faculty have been up to.

And consider joining the department on Facebook, to help us keep up with all your adventures.

Scott Pearce



Special points of interest:

- PROFESSOR DAVID CURLEY RETIRES AFTER 22 YEARS
- PROFESSOR KIMBERLY LYNN PUBLISHES BOOK
- LIBERAL STUDIES LECTURE SERIES CONTINUES IN 2013

Liberal Studies Alumna Shares African Peace Corps Experience

In June 2010, Hilary Figgs (2007) left the US for Burkina Faso in west Africa to serve in the Peace Corp. Hilary worked at a health care center in Sala, about 100 km from the capital city, where she immersed herself in African culture.

At the clinic, Hilary's work



Hilary Figgs enjoying time with a child at the Centre de Santé et de Promotion Sociale in Sala, Burkina Faso, Africa.

promoted maternal and infant care. Her projects focused on prevention of malaria and malnutrition, HIV/AIDS awareness, infant growth tracking, hygiene, vaccinations, and safe birth practices. By the end of Hilary's service, the clinic saw a 50% increase in births and 75% increased participation of new mothers in the center's infant growth tracking and nutrition education programs.

Hilary worked with children when she wasn't at the health center as well, fostering independent, creative thought and teaching good health care practices to 2-7 year olds. According to Hilary, these children are often "forgotten" by their society because they are too old to

be carried and too young to work.

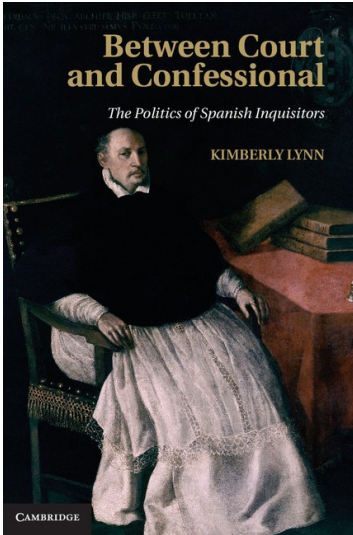
Hilary's long term goal is to return to school to obtain a graduate degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Life and Public Health.

"I think back to all the steps that let me to where I am right now and I am so thankful to have pursued a Liberal Studies degree... had I not focused on Africa I never would have had such a strong desire to go, never would have joined the Peace Corps, never would have realized my passion for working with children in such difficult or traumatic settings, and wouldn't be on the career track I'm on today!" says Hilary.

Inside this issue:

PROFESSOR LYNN'S NEW BOOK	2
REVISITING INDIA BY DAVID CURLEY	2
ALUMNA TEACHING IN SOUTH KOREA	3
EMERITUS PROFESSOR MILT KRIEGER'S BOOK ON JAZZ	3
2013 LIBERAL STUDIES LECTURE SERIES	4
OTHER HAPPENINGS IN LIBERAL STUDIES	5

"I am so thankful to have pursued a Liberal Studies degree..."



Cover of Professor Kimberly Lynn's book available from Cambridge University Press in June.

Kimberly Lynn Publishes Book on the Careers of Spanish Inquisitors

Congratulations to Professor Kimberly Lynn, whose book *Between Court and Confessional: The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors* will be published by Cambridge University Press in June 2013 (see more about it at the press web site: <http://www.cambridge.org/us>).

Professor Lynn is also continuing to develop courses about early modern cultural history. This winter, she taught her first senior seminar, about the city in the early modern Iberian world. The seminar explored the interconnected histories of the cities of the Hispanic and Portuguese

worlds, examining the founding, growth, and reconfiguration of urban centers in the early modern era, as well as the construction of urban identities and myths about what distinguished urban and rural areas. The course considered topics from colonialism to gender to religion, while also including study of architecture, painting, music, and literature produced in - and about - such cities.



Revisiting India by David Curley

say that American images of caste have changed less than caste in India has changed.

Since 1981 I have been quietly observing a group of dalits ("untouchables") who live and work on a stretch of sidewalk on Gariahat Road. They now have the business of collecting and sorting garbage from what is now a very prosperous neighborhood. In 1981 I used to see an encampment, several families, men, women and children living on the sidewalk. The children begged, and some of the women did also. In 2001 I tried to get medical attention for a woman with a severe hernia. Now there are still a few adults present in the day time, often napping (the work of garbage collection and sorting happens at night, of course), and only one baby, but no children. Are they in school? But in any case, their business used to be only the unofficial self-employment of sorting garbage. Now they are employed by the city as garbage collectors.

Prosperity does trickle down in

Kolkata. I noticed for example how strong and healthy the construction laborers are (construction is still booming in Kolkata, despite signs of a coming economic downturn.) But prosperity probably fails in areas of chronic disorder and rebellion, and among the most disadvantaged groups, where the state also hardly exists.

But then the state fails to exist at different times and in different ways. I arrived in Delhi just after the horrible gang rape. You may have seen the news of this event. I was told, as women also are told, don't go out at night, this city is dangerous. (I had gone to a restaurant with a fellow historian, and we were coming home about 10 pm.) I said, but there are crowds of people, it feels completely safe. He said, I don't mean now, I mean after 11 or 11:30 when everyone goes home. I asked him how long the city has been like this and he said, oh for a long time; since the 13th century at least!

In Kolkata I discovered that I was 'known'. Of course, a few

scholars in my field have known me for a long time, but this time MA students in history know something about my book, *Poetry and History*, which is being used in historiography classes in several universities, and is now out of print. Think of it, all 500 copies have been sold! As a result I was in immediate demand as a lecturer. It was very nice not to be completely retired after all.

After finishing my research in Kolkata I went to Gujarat to visit an old friend. Gujarat has all the contradictions of India in full view: a state friendly to investors, foreign and Indian, an amazing amount of new construction, plastic bags and other garbage everywhere, and girls on motorcycles wearing tight jeans, and with their heads and faces completely wrapped in veils and sunglasses. It is a fashion. They may look like terrorists, but in fact are trying to keep the sun from turning their skin darker.

I taught my last classes, graded my last papers and exams, retired feeling not a little sad, spent Christmas vacation with all my family in Monterey, and then went to India for two months, as my first post-retirement adventure. Of course, I have been going to India for a long time now. My first trip to Kolkata (then Calcutta) was thirty-nine years ago. Looking back, the changes are amazing, and so are the things that have not changed very much.

What Americans tend to know about India is caste, and so what strangers tend to ask me is, has caste changed at all? I try to remember to ask them first what they know about caste. I think one can

Teaching English in South Korea a Dream Job for One Liberal Studies Graduate

After months waiting and stacks of paperwork, Tara Hoyt (2011 BA Humanities) received the news that she had gotten a teaching position in South Korea. Tara left for Bughan-gu in late January where she will be teaching English to children aged 4-12 for a year.

"It's really exciting to

know that I will be utilizing my degree and doing something that I know I will love," wrote Tara in an email to Liberal Studies Department Chair, Scott Pearce.

Tara's interest in East Asian culture was sparked in her Liberal Studies courses, and she said that she's excited by the op-

portunity to travel and experience the culture first hand. She plans to use her limited vacation time while in South Korea to explore China and Japan.

We wish Tara the best of luck during her adventure living abroad, and look forward to hearing more from her upon her return to the United States.

"It is really exciting to know that I will be utilizing my degree and doing something that I know I will love."

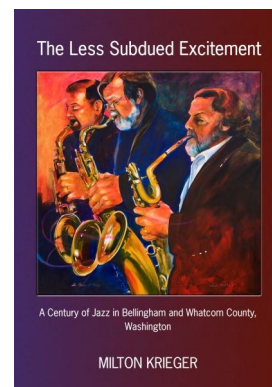
Emeritus Professor Writes Book on the History of Jazz in Bellingham

Emeritus Professor Milt Krieger turns his passion for local jazz music into a new book, *The Less Subdued Excitement: A Century of Jazz in Bellingham and Whatcom County, Washington*. Six years in the works, Dr. Krieger's book was published by the Whatcom County Historical Society in late 2012.

The book covers local jazz from the early 20th century to mid-2012, and draws on over 100 interviews and Dr. Krieger's experience listening to jazz in Bellingham since 1970. The book is available locally from the Historical Society and Village Books.

Dr. Krieger's other activities include continuing to

act as an expert witness for political asylum applicants from Cameroon, and he is working on a book that reprints his shorter Cameroon writings to be published in Cameroon. Current Liberal Studies student and 2012 scholarship recipient, Eliah Drake-Raue, is assisting Dr. Krieger on this new book.



Cover of Emeritus Professor Milt Krieger's new book on the history of jazz in Bellingham and Whatcom County, Washington.

2013 Liberal Studies Lecture Series

This year our tradition of bringing distinguished scholars to Western continued with the 2013 Liberal Studies Lecture. Delivered on April 24 by Dr. Nile Green of UCLA, its topic was "The Muslim Discovery of Printing: A Moment in Global History," the story of how suddenly in the early 1800s Muslims on the frontiers of European empires took possession of European



They used the newly invented Stanhope Press.

technology to spread their own ideas.

And on April 18, in conjunction with the East Asian Studies Program, the department also brought up to Western the esteemed UW scholar David Knechtges, to speak on the mountain poetry of Xie Lingyun.



The great 5th century Chinese poet, Xie Lingyun.



Department of Liberal Studies

Western Washington University
Bond Hall 152 | MS 9064
Bellingham, WA 98225-9064

Phone: 360-650-3031
E-mail: Liberal.Studies@wwu.edu
Website: <http://www.wwu.edu/liberalstudies/>

Other Happenings in the Liberal Studies Department

- Congratulations to Katherine Ehlers who was selected as the Outstanding Graduate for 2012-2013. Katherine was a Humanities—History of Culture major and Honors student who graduated Magna Cum Laude in Winter quarter.
- This year five Humanities students presented their thesis work during our 2013 Scholars Week Symposium.
- A temporary display in Wilson Library was developed to highlight the breadth of texts explored in the Western Tradition course series (LBRL 121, 122 and 123)
- Laura Kohl Johnston, a survivor of the 1978 Jonestown murder-suicide, visited Western in February to give guest lectures in Holly Folk's Introduction to Religion course (LBRL 231) and a history course on Latin America. During her visit Laura also shared her experiences in a open question and answer session hosted by the Liberal Studies department.
- Scott Pearce is working on a new course for next year's incoming freshmen on "The Power of the Book", where he'll explore the profound ways in which words written on paper or carved into stone have shaped and affected human lives for the last 6000 years.
- As always, Liberal Studies faculty have been active in their fields of study.
 - * Holly Folk attended the Communal Studies Association meeting, and chaired a session of the Mormon Studies Group and New Religious Movements Group at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion.
 - * Kimberly Lynn presented her research at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, and was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion on "Rethinking Prescott's Paradigm" at the Association of Spanish & Portuguese Historical Studies in Albuquerque, NM.
 - * Andrea Gogröf continues to pursue research in film studies. In the Fall of 2012 she chaired the panel on German/Austrian film at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association's meeting. Her latest project involves a philosophical approach to her analysis of the films of the Austrian director Michael Haneke.
 - * Monique Kerman had her article entitled "Cut to the Chase: The Work of Mary Evans" (a contemporary British-Nigerian artist based in London) published in *n.paradoxa: International Feminist Art Journal*.
 - * Jonathan Miran accepted an invitation to join the editorial board of the journal *Arabian Humanities* together with leading international Middle East studies scholars. *Arabian Humanities* is a peer-reviewed on-line journal published under the auspices of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), France.
 - * Sean Murphy attended three conferences this year, presenting his research at the International Medieval Congress, Medieval Association of the Pacific, and was an invited presenter at an international conference on "Religious Minorities, Integration, and the State" in Le Mans, France.
 - * Robert Stoops published a translation of *The Acts of Peter* with a critical introduction (Polebridge Press, 2012), and attended the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion in Chicago, IL.



Wilson Library display case highlighting the Western Tradition course series, located near the Circulation Desk.

How do the dollars work given to the Liberal Studies Foundation by kind donors?

First and foremost – scholarships to encourage and help support new entrants into our field of study!

And then occasional support for gatherings of students, alumni and faculty at which we continue *dialogue* and *exploration*!