

# Global Humanities and Religions

## Note from our Chair:

## 2019 Newsletter

Another Fall arriving, and another round of warm greetings to all of you, the department's community of friends, alumni, and current students. Once again this year, these pages contain some highlights of the department's many activities in 2019.

This is also a particularly special year for the department, in at least three remarkable ways! As most of you will have heard by now, we begin this year with a new name – we have now become the Department of Global Humanities and Religions, and our courses are called either "Humanities" or "Religion" (for example Humanities 302 and Religion 303). Along with an updating and opening up of our major and minor curricula, these names give us a new way to communicate the department's long-standing strengths to the campus community! You can see all those changes in print (so to speak) in our page in this year's university catalog (here: [University Catalog—GHR](#)) as

well as on our new web site ([Global Humanities and Religions](#)).

This year also – astonishingly! – marks the fiftieth anniversary of the department, which was established in 1970. See later in the newsletter for a history of our first half century, generously prepared by our emeritus faculty.

In addition, this year the department's first named scholarship, the Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities reached its endowment threshold. This means that the scholarship will now be awarded each year in perpetuity! (This is not to say gifts aren't still warmly appreciated... they simply add to the amount our amazing scholarship recipients will receive!). And I would like to extend my thanks to all those who have so generously donated to help us reach that ambitious goal, in particular the department's alums Sher and Chris Isenberg, 1988 and 1989, whose exceptional generosity made this dream into a reality.

As always, there are many more transitions, activities, and accomplishments that are too numerous to mention here – although some of them are on the pages which follow! I am humbled again this year by all the extraordinary things I hear that our talented group of students, alumni, and faculty are doing in the world, in places near and far. We once again have some excellent new faculty joining the department this Fall and Winter (Jason M. Brown, Carrie Frederick Frost, Michael Jones, and Lauren MacDonald; more about them here on the [faculty page](#) of our web site). And, after fifteen years in the department, I also want to recognize Prof. Errol Seaton's retirement at the end of 2018-19 academic year. We will miss Prof. Seaton's presence in the hallways, and the extensive knowledge he shared with so many Western students in teaching each part of the Humanities sequence (121, 122, 123), as well as – in recent years – the upper-division Postcolonial Novels and Romantic Paradox courses. Of course, as ever, the department sends many congratulations and good wishes for the start of retired life!

The department continues to bring events to the Western campus community. And, especially if you're nearby be sure to join the department's Facebook page ([Facebook page](#)) or watch our web site for more information on upcoming events ([News & Events page](#)). We hope that you'll join us for our annual reception for alumni, students, and faculty (current and emeritus), during Alumni Weekend in May 2020 – look for more details in your email, after the new year! And we are always delighted to hear from our alumni. The easiest ways to contact the department are by phone at 360-650-3031, or to our new email address: [GHR@wwu.edu](mailto:GHR@wwu.edu) (where you're likely to be greeted by Maureen Christman, our Administrative Services Manager).

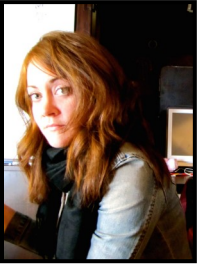
We hope this finds you all very well!

*Kimberly Lynn*

### Inside this issue:

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## **Faculty Updates**



### **Katie Brian**

In addition to teaching her regular roster of courses on cultural histories of the modern world, Kathleen Brian continues work on suicide in the modern Anglophone world. She was invited to speak at [Madness, Violence, and Technologies of Care: A Symposium](#) (Center for Disability Studies, SUNY-Buffalo), where she interrogated the intertwined emergence of actuarial knowledge, the U.S. security state, and the epistemology of suicide as a 'risk event.' In her role as CFO and executive board member of the Disability History Association (DHA), she helped to inaugurate the DHA's [podcast](#) and [peer-reviewed blog](#). Meanwhile, her upper-level seminar, "Religion and Disability in North America," is being offered for the first time (Fall 2019), and she is busy co-editing the October issue of *The Activist History Review*, [Burning Borders: Disability Brought to Bear](#).

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### **Ethan Bushelle**

This year was a busy one for Ethan, both professionally and personally. Taking advantage of his course-release for the fall term, he made significant progress on his book, tentatively titled *The Mandalization of the World: Kūkai and the Reconfiguration of the Classical Japanese Imaginary*. Its basic focus is one students who have taken his courses will recognize: namely, the role Buddhism played in shaping Japanese understandings of the self, society, and the cosmos. While reading, writing, and thinking deeply about such issues, he received an informal education in fatherhood. His first son, Theo Kuma, was born in August of 2018. After a quarter of parental leave in the Spring, Ethan looks forward to returning to teaching in the Fall.

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### **Holly Folk**

Prof. Holly Folk is starting out the new academic year on research leave, continuing her work on New Religious Movements, now with particular attention to a variety of different new heterodox movements of Protestant Christianity, to which she is taking a comparative, global (and globe-trotting!) approach.

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### **Andrea Gogröf**

While on a quarter-long professional leave Winter 2019, Andrea Gogröf edited a special volume of *Pacific Coast Philology* entitled *Ways of Seeing: Visuality, Visibility and Vision*. This volume includes her article entitled *Visibility is a Trap? Dimensions of Surveillance and its Effects on Culture today*, which synthesizes her most recent research on surveillance as an unavoidable and paradoxical dimension of modern life. *Pacific Coast Philology* is the academic journal affiliated with the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association, and it is published by Penn State University Press, featuring peer-reviewed essays of interest to scholars in the classical and modern languages, literatures, and cultures. <https://www.pamla.org/pacific-coast-philology>

During the Fall quarter 2019, Andrea serves as the interim chair of the department.

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### **Kimberly Lynn**

This past year, Prof. Kimberly Lynn finished her first four-year term as department chair... and agreed to begin a new one in 2019-20! But first, she will be spending Fall quarter 2019 on research leave, returning to some of her ongoing writing projects that explore elements of the cultural history of Catholicism in the early modern Hispanic world. Prof. Lynn was particularly delighted to have the opportunity to teach two seminar courses in 2019, one a senior seminar on cities in the global early modern Iberian empires, the other her fourth trip through the magnificent early seventeenth-century novel *Don Quixote* in the company of the department's majors, in her version of what will now be called Humanities 302.

# Faculty Updates



## **Jonathan Miran**

This year, Jonathan continued to pursue his research and editorial activities, especially in his capacity as general editor of the journal *Northeast African Studies*. In late 2018 he published the article "Biography and History in Giuseppe Puglisi's *Chi è? Dell'Eritrea 1952*," *Poent. Cahiers d'Études sur la Corne de l'Afrique et l'Arabie du Sud* 12 (2018). A book chapter that reconstructs the material life and exoticized figure of a prominent early twentieth century Red Sea pearl merchant will appear in December 2019 in the volume *Pearls, People, and Power: Pearlning and Indian Ocean Worlds*, edited by P. Machado, S. Mullins and J. Christensen (Indian Ocean Studies Series, Ohio University

Press). Jonathan is also excited about his new course, REL/HIST 390: 'Islam and Muslim Societies in Africa,' which he will teach for the first time in Winter 2020.

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## **Tom Moore**

*After St. Lucy's Day* (a poem) won a merit award in the Sue Boynton poetry contest (Boynton being a Whatcom Co. poet and educator of old), and he reports that the poem will appear on the side of various WTA busses during the coming year.

Fellowship Wise, Tom reports that it was a very good year: Five Fulbright winners, two Hollings winners, one Goldwater (our first in 10 years), one Udall winner (also WWU's first in ten years).

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## **Seán Murphy**

For the entirety of 2018-19, Dr. Murphy was on professional leave at the National University of Ireland, Galway, where he held a visiting research fellowship in the Moore Institute for Humanities, under the sponsorship of its Centre for Antique, Medieval, and Pre-Modern Studies. While at Galway, he continued his work on relationships between medieval Jewish and Christian cultures, completing an edition and translation, with introduction and notes, of the massive treatise, *On Laws*, written by William of Auvergne, an influential, early 13th-century Bishop of Paris, who was responsible, among other things, for the first-ever trial and condemnation of the *Talmud*. On a parallel intellectual track, he deepened his expertise in Irish studies, attending four graduate seminars on Old Irish language and literature, while also taking night classes in modern Irish. And, finally, he initiated and presented new research on the history of European constructions of "the West" as a locus of alterity comparable and sometimes evolving in direct relation to European constructions of "the East."

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## **Scott Pearce**

In this past year, Scott completed work on a book on *Northern Wei (386-534): a new form of empire in East Asia*; served as guest co-editor of a special 2019 volume of the journal *Early Medieval China* on the Northern Dynasties (386-589); and in September 2019 participated in a workshop at NYU's Institute for Study of the Ancient World, which was assembled to organize an upcoming exhibition of the apparently 5<sup>th</sup>-century tombs found at Ih-nur, Inner Mongolia. He continues work with Peter Lorge, of Vanderbilt University, on a textbook of Chinese primary sources, slated to be finished by December 2019.

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## **Michael Slouber**

This year Michael Slouber has continued revising and perfecting his suite of South Asia course offerings in the department and in Honors. He began serving as the Religion and Culture major advisor, participated on the hiring committee for a new South Asian historian position in the History department, and continues to work with students on senior projects, independent study courses, and language study. He is putting the finishing touches on his edited collection of narratives on Hindu goddesses, which is currently awaiting peer review. This summer he will teach "Fierce Goddesses of India" online, and prepare two papers (one on the development of Jain Tantra, and the other

on perceptions of philology in Goddess Studies) for the American Academy of Religion conference in November.

## [News From Emeritus Faculty](#)

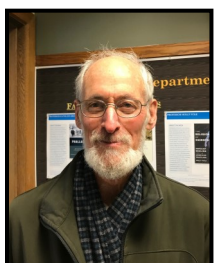


### **David Curley**

I have enjoyed speaking about South Asian history to local groups this year. One has been a World Affairs discussion group of retirees. Another were the ROMEOS, 'Retired Old Men Eating Out' (or if you trust their wives to have the name right, 'Really Old Men'). Audiences of a certain age, I have discovered, come up with great questions without encouragement on my part, which makes speaking to them challenging and fun. I also have continued to engage in research and writing. Lately I completed an essay about religious and worldly mastery as depicted in an amazing Bengali poem about a large group pilgrimage from Kolkata to Banaras undertaken in 1769. I am very glad to announce that it will be published next January in the Indian and Economic History Review.

Just as important to me, I have helped facilitate a program called "Beloved Conversations." This is a program designed to help Unitarian or Quaker congregations talk more openly about race and white privilege. Here are some things I learned about how my parents and I benefited from government programs that were not open, or not as open, to black Americans. My father enlisted to become a pilot in what was then an all-white Army Air Corps in WWII and got two years of free college tuition. After the war, he could finish college on the GI Bill. Not subject to racial discrimination by banks, my parents eventually were able to save enough for loan to buy a house in an all-white suburban neighborhood of Spokane, but only because of a VA subsidy that allowed us to make a smaller down-payment for a 30-year mortgage. And the excellent white, suburban public schools that I then attended helped me apply and receive scholarships to attend the University of Chicago.

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### **Milt Krieger**

Milt Krieger turned 80, so did Judy, both inhaled and exhaled but shed memory synapses, hosted a happier 2018 election party than 2016's, visited Hawaii with our SF and Denver families, and Vancouver Island and Washington's coast. Milt collaborated on the department's 1970-2020 chronicle (but otherwise reading fiction overtook writing history), enjoyed live local jazz and donated vinyl to Western's music library, continued Wednesday jazz lunch and Thursday geezer faculty beer, intermittent gym exertions and monthly poker games, and door-belled for Dems. He (still) did not start alto sax lessons and fretted over Cameroon (tearing apart), Canada, the U.S.A, the Salish Sea, the 2020 election, the 21<sup>st</sup> century...

## **Department News**

### **Western's 26th Annual Employee Art Show—May 2019**

Our very own Andrea Gogröf and Rob Stoops—Professor Emeritus, each had pieces exhibited this past May. Professor Gogröf submitted three oil paintings (shown right), while one sculpture and one photo of Rob's work was displayed. The photo from opening night shows Professor Scott Pearce in a picture with Andrea's work. Such talent in the department! [Click here to see images from the opening reception.](#)

For more on Andrea's art, please click [here](#). [Artists Today: A Conversation with Andrea Gogröf—YouTube](#)

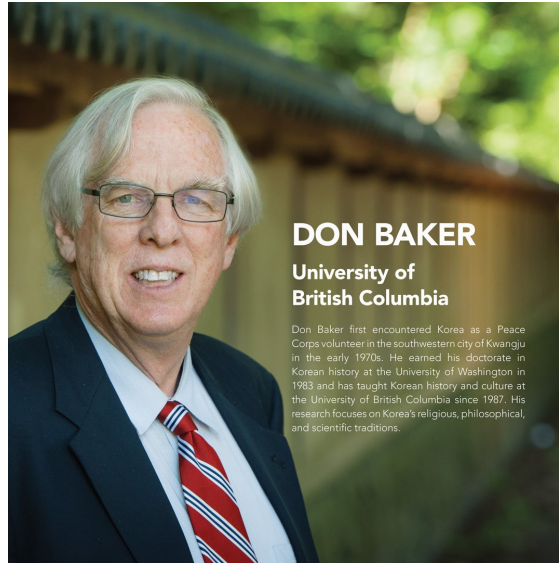
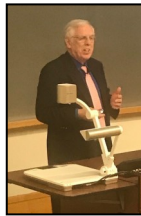
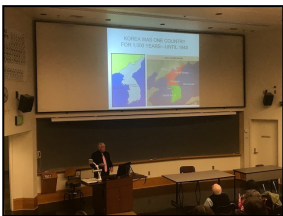


# Annual Distinguished Speaker Series



**Dr. Donald Baker,**

The department's 11th annual Distinguished Speaker event brought University of British Columbia Professor Dr. Donald Baker to campus this past April. Dr. Baker's research focuses on Korea's religious, philosophical, and scientific traditions and has taught Korean history and culture in UBC's Department of Asian Studies since 1987. His talk "The Two Koreas: A Historian's Perspective on What the Future Holds," detailed Korea's past and possible future. Learn more about Dr. Baker [here](#).



**DON BAKER**  
University of  
British Columbia

Don Baker first encountered Korea as a Peace Corps volunteer in the southwestern city of Kwangju in the early 1970s. He earned his doctorate in Korean history at the University of Washington in 1983 and has taught Korean history and culture at the University of British Columbia since 1987. His research focuses on Korea's religious, philosophical, and scientific traditions.

The Department of Global Humanities and Religions  
(formerly: Department of Liberal Studies)

## 11TH ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER

Co-sponsored by the Center for East Asian Studies and  
the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

**THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 4:00PM**  
SCIENCE FACILITY (SL) 130

### **The Two Koreas: A Historian's Perspective on What the Future Holds**

If we want to make an educated guess about what might happen on the Korean peninsula in the years ahead, we should draw on what has happened to Koreans in the past. Koreans lived under one government for over 1,000 years. Peace and unity, rather than hostility and disunity, is the normal state of the Korean peninsula. On the other hand, after the Korean peninsula was split in half in 1945, the two governments that emerged have been deadly enemies. Sixty-eight years ago they fought against each other in a war that cost millions of lives, and have come to the brink of another war many times since. Can history tell us whether war or peace is more likely in the near future? Professor Baker will draw on his experience observing Koreans and studying Korean history for almost half a century to try to answer that question.



Western is an equal opportunity institution.  
For disability accommodations, contact: Muesen Christman at [christ14@western.edu](mailto:christ14@western.edu) or 360-455-3000.

***\*\*Save the Date\*\****

## **12th Annual Distinguished Speaker**

**Tentatively, Thursday, April 16th, 2020**

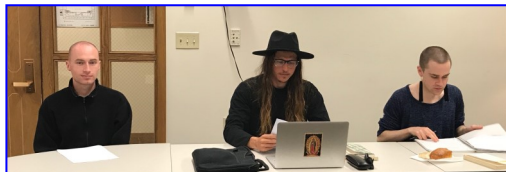
*More information coming soon!*

## Seminar 422 Pursuit of Happiness

Photos from Prof. Andrea Gogrof's spring quarter 2019 Liberal Studies 422 seminar.



This seminar examines the intersection and cross-fertilization of philosophy and literature in modern European and American culture. At the center of our investigation is one of the fundamental questions regarding the purpose and value of human existence: how do we define happiness and what constitutes the good life? Inquiry into this question departs from the Socratic stance, which promotes the relentless practice of critical self-awareness in our pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, virtue and happiness.



# Meet The 2019-20 Leadership Team



Names and Humanities Major Track

Front Row Left to Right:

*Lena Blissell*— Religion and Culture w/Thesis

*Kayla Clarke*— History of Culture w/Thesis

*Rhianon Blake*— History of Culture w/Thesis

Back Row Left to Right:

*Joe Stong*— Religion & Culture w/Thesis

*Jodie Permen*— History of Culture w/Thesis

*May Killorin*— Religion and Culture



Leadership Team participating in the 2019 Fall Info fair!



Leadership Team fall event:

Halloween and Pizza Movie Night

Tuesday, Oct. 29th, 7pm, Bond Hall 109

Movie: "What We Do in the Shadow's"

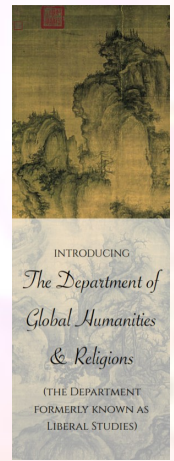


## Leadership Team 2018-19 Activities

Each year the Leadership Team plans, prepares and conducts a few events. This spring the Team (Jodie Permen, May Killorin, Caitlin Hanson, and Jonathan Davidson) promoted the department's name change and classes while handing out personally designed bookmarks (see below) and cookies. If you would like your own bookmark, click on either PDF. Note each PDF makes four (double-sided).

[Guo Xi Bookmark](#)

[Fall '19 Bookmark](#)



### Our Goal

**The mission of the leadership team is to foster communication among the students, alumni, and faculty of the Global Humanities and Religions Department (formerly Liberal Studies), and to increase the visibility of the department's major and minor programs.**

### What We are Doing:

**Alumni Connection**—The 2019-2020 Student Leadership Team is working on building a database of alumni interested in mentoring current students – so you can expect to hear from them in 2020, if you haven't already!

# 2019 Annual Department Highlights

## Alumni Weekend and annual Department Reception



### **2018-19 Outstanding Graduate**

#### **Award Recipient:**

*Sukí Black*

*Congratulations Sukí and Nathan Kamkoff (recent WWU History graduate) on their marriage this past May!*

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Caitlin and Julie Smith (Meagan's mom)

### **4th Annual (2019-20) Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities Recipient:**

*Caitlín Hanson*

*Congratulations Caitlín and Joseph Santos on their marriage this past June!*



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### **2019-20 Humanities Scholarship Recipients:**



*Rhianon Blake, Elizabeth Moorhead and Thomas Stewart*

\* \* \* \* \*

### **2018-19 Graduates with Departmental Honors:**

*Sukí Black, Shelby Jacobs, Vincent Vansaghi*



## 2018-2019 Senior Thesis Topics

**Suki Black**, "Female Renouncers in Tantric Buddhism and Baulism" (Advisor: Michael Slouber)

**Shelby Jacobs**, "Religious Texts and the Maya in the Colonial Period" (Advisor: Kimberly Lynn)

**Jonathan Davidson**, "Non Serviam: An Examination of Satanic Liberation Theology in the Modern Age" (Advisor: Holly Folk)

# 2018-19 Spring Commencement



Grads with Professor & Dept. Chair Dr. Kimberly Lynn

## Keep in Touch!

Old job? New job? Traveling? Graduate school? Marriage? Family? Please write us with your news. Let us know by writing to [GHR@wwu.edu](mailto:GHR@wwu.edu) (include your contact information!). We regularly publish articles about careers our graduates are discovering, and we also try to keep you up to date on the activities of faculty members and fellow graduates.



**\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\***

2020 Global Humanities & Religions  
Alumni Weekend and annual **Dept. Reception**

Please join us **Friday, May 15th, 2020**  
**Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Dome Room**  
**4-7pm**

*More information coming soon!*



*What do the dollars given to the Global Humanities and Religions Foundation  
by kind donors help us achieve?*

Gifts to the Department of Global Humanities and Religions are crucial in helping us fund guest speakers, including our annual distinguished speaker, a tradition now in its twelfth year, as well as our annual alumni reunion and reception event, in addition to student research opportunities and, most importantly, scholarships.

<https://foundation.wwu.edu/GlobalHumanitiesAndReligions>





## Looking Back in Gratitude

By Clarissa Mansfield, '01— WWU Outstanding Classified Staff Award 2019

On the first day of fall quarter, a colleague in the library introduced me to a new student who was just beginning at Western. As I welcomed her, I mentioned that I, too, had once been a student here, “many many years ago.” “Not *that* many years ago,” my colleague generously interjected. “Well,” I explained, “I finished my undergraduate degree in 2001.” “Oh wow!” the student exclaimed, “that’s my entire lifetime!”



And that’s when it really hit me: I graduated from Western with my Bachelor's degree in English and (what was then) Liberal Studies *a lifetime ago*.

This realization made me think about what I had done during that lifetime. How had my experience at Western and in the Liberal Studies department affected me, changed me, helped lay the foundation of where I would go and who I would become?

I started out at Western as an English major with a love of literature and writing. While that love still remains, it wasn’t until I began taking Global Humanities and Religions classes that I found what I had always wanted: a way to go even deeper, to better understand the world not only through literature and writing, but also through an exploration of history, culture, religion, art, politics, and all of the meaningful ways these aspects intersect with each other. This interdisciplinary path that opened up for me through the department was holistic, expansive, and exactly what I had been searching for my entire life, even though I had not fully understood I had been searching until I found it.

When I graduated in 2001, I was chosen as the recipient for the Department of Liberal Studies Outstanding Graduate Award. I remember being surprised and gratefully overwhelmed by this honor. Throughout my journey as an undergraduate, my relationships with faculty mentors and student colleagues had supported me and guided me in so many valuable ways, which even now I struggle to adequately explain or quantify, and which made this award mean all that much more to me.

In the fall of 2019, *a lifetime later*, I was chosen to be the recipient for the Western Washington University [Outstanding Classified Staff Award](#). Once again, I am overwhelmed with appreciation, gratitude, and awe of being recognized and honored in this way. To have so many wonderful friends and colleagues express their support and recognition is again more meaningful than I can ever fully express.

In some ways, I feel as though I have come full circle, from having been an undergraduate student here at Western, to having made my career and professional life at Western. While an undergraduate student, I never would have predicted what my career would be. In fact, I do not think I could have even predicted my profession. (I don’t even think “Library Communications” existed as a field at that time!) I do think my experience offers evidence of how valuable an interdisciplinary education can be in preparing someone for a life and a profession they may not have even dreamt of yet.

While working at Western Libraries, I have grown both personally and professionally. Many of the faculty members who were part of the then Liberal Studies department when I was still an undergraduate have since retired, but I have stayed in touch and have friendships that endure to this day. I have never forgotten the support I received from one faculty member in particular who went out of his way to help me when certain obstacles that are sometimes part of the systems of higher education threatened to negatively impact my ability to complete my undergraduate education. And as I am no longer a student but have over the years become part of this same system, I am grateful and happy to have had several opportunities to ‘pay it forward’ and help students navigate these same kinds of challenges.



## Looking Back in Gratitude Continued

In closing, I want to say that my time as a student in what is now known as the Department of Global Humanities and Religions was critical in helping me create the foundation from which I developed and grew. I developed skills, literacies, and perspectives that are not just fundamental to the work I do now and the issues I am still interested in, but also to my commitment to keep growing, learning and expanding my worldview. My coursework, research, faculty mentors, and peers helped me think critically, to understand the importance of questioning my assumptions, to dig deeper, to recognize intersections, to better understand the world around me and my place in it as well as my responsibility to it. I also learned that sometimes analysis and deconstruction are necessary components of improvement, that compassion is essential, that meaningful work never ends, and that my contributions matter. And I gained a deeper understanding of my own community, and an appreciation for humanity at large that continues to grow each day.

*Clarissa Mansfield began working at Western Washington University Libraries in 2006, and she became the Libraries' Communications Manager in 2013. In this role, she leads, coordinates, and manages the communication and marketing needs of all units of Western Libraries. Clarissa is a graduate of Western, receiving her B.A. in 2001 in both Liberal Studies (now known as "Global Humanities and Religions"), and in English. She also received her M.Ed. in Environmental Education from Western's Huxley College of the Environment in 2014, with her master's project concentration on exploring the role of academic libraries in environmental education.*



L to R: Provost Brent Carbajal, Clarissa, Pres. Sabah Randhawa

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### **Grad School Acceptance and continuing education:**

Winter 2019 Graduate Vincent Vansaghi has been accepted into the master's program at University of Colorado in South Asian Religions.

Spring 2017 Minor Thomas Tubbs has been accepted and enrolled in VU Amsterdam's Religious Studies program.



**\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\***

2020 Global Humanities and Religions  
(formerly: Dept. of Liberal Studies)

**Alumni Weekend**  
and annual Reception

**Please join us Friday, May 15th, 2020, 4-7pm**

**Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Dome Room**

*More information coming soon!*



# Meagan Elizabeth Smith Memorial Scholarship for Excellence in the Humanities



*The department suffered a heartbreaking tragedy four 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.*



*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."*

## **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 named scholarship in the more than forty-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: [WWU Foundation 516 High Street, MS 9034, Bellingham, WA 98225-9034](#) 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>

# *Department History*

Western's Department of Global Humanities and Religions:

A history of its first half-century, 1970-2020

Created in 1970, the year (then) Western Washington State College's enrollment and budget broke all previous records, this department, now renamed twice, reaches its half century mark in 2020. Precarious early times have given way to a more settled present. The authors of this "legacy" memoir, three faculty retirees, Bill Stoeber, Milt Krieger and David Curley, trust that it may usefully inform the department's future trajectory, while telling some stories of interest along the way.

Little was conventional about the department's origins. What had been a fewer than 1,000 student "Normal School" until 1937 grew and diversified by 1970 into a 10,000- student campus with a comprehensive range of bachelor's programs, a few masters programs, and the recently created "cluster" Fairhaven, Huxley and Ethnic Studies Colleges with their experimental curricular and pedagogic missions. A late arriving budget line opened to enable another innovation for Fall 1970, directed to general education, which the 1960s specialized discipline- and department-focused growth had not emphasized. A conventional "Western Civ" lecture-based humanities curriculum was to be augmented with faculty providing interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives. The Dean of Arts and Sciences, airport-hopping coast-to-coast in April (the apex time for the last sellers' market year in the humanities), interviewed and hired nine people from elsewhere, with just the inaugural chairman Roscoe Buckland older than forty. They joined two Western incumbents to launch what was originally named the Department of General Studies in September 1970, designed to preserve general education's core: a Western Civilization humanities program.

The formative years were complex. The lectures were held in the (then) dark and cavernous auditorium of the Performing Arts Center and a bit later they were supplemented by once a week discussion groups. In 1971, the department developed a three-faculty person "team teaching" model for the core sequence of three chronologically spaced, foundational Western Civ offerings, where the faculty shared lecture responsibilities and provided students multiple weekly break-out discussion groups in seminar format. All were departmentally collaborative and labor-intensive, and responsive to Western's shape-shifting oversight faculty committee for general education.

The challenge of Boeing's and thus the state economy's slump, which broadly speaking cut 25% of Western's enrollment and budget by 1975, threatened the department's existence early on, as the humanities marketplace tightened everywhere. During these trying times, the faculty of this department nevertheless enjoyed good times together: developing a new program, clamming at Semiahmoo, and home-brewing in basements were reality-checked by periodic searches for teaching jobs elsewhere and possibly into local real estate, commercial fishing, and backyard agriculture diversification. The department survived, but an all-campus Reduction/Reallocation In Force (RIF) process dropped its line positions by 1/3.

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Curricular content and style nonetheless developed among the survivors, considerably influenced by Ulrich Mammitzsch's 1972 arrival. He was an East to West Germany transplant (by train, with one suitcase, before Berlin's Wall) with a classical "gymnasium" education expanded by University of Hawaii doctoral studies in Asian texts and languages. Wearing a tie and jacket declaring "I am Mammitzsch!" on his first day at the department, he designed a signature "Humanities of..." course offerings beyond Europe and its outliers, covering East and South Asia (and Milt Krieger's field, Africa), thereby valorizing what previously at Western was lumped together and very awkwardly termed "Non-Western Cultures." He rapidly filled not one but two offices with books and manuscripts in close to a dozen languages, and remained a vital departmental presence until his sudden, untimely death in 1990.

Conventions developing through the 1970s established a consistent sequence of general education courses and a gradually increasing number of optional, special topic courses. Then as now, 90-95% of the General Studies enrollment involved students who chose its courses from a constantly revised, multi-departmentally competing range of "General Education Requirement" (GUR) courses. Enrollments grew from the twenties into the thirties in the GUR core 100-level Western Civ and into the forties in the core 200-level "Humanities of..." courses. 200- and 300-level topic-defined courses followed, some team-taught, with fewer students. Combinations of lecture and discussion formats, essay exams and required or optional papers in both GUR and elective courses maintained the faculty's labor intensity and the department's academic integrity.

# Department History continued

Additionally, from 1975 onwards, though not part of the original mandate (as the department's longest serving chair, Bill Stoever, has written, "its founders [believed] that any department with a major, automatically subverts its general-education assignment,") Western's curricular committees approved the department's proposal for a minor and then a major in Humanities. The introductory anchor seminar and portal to both, Rodney Payton's Dante course, joined Mammitzsch's non-Western courses as a singular departmental initiative. It was the demanding first step into a program for self-selecting students with broad humanistic interests. The major entailed a 30 departmental credit BA course sequence supplemented by other departments' offerings as electives. Its pedagogy drew students further into close readings and discussions of complex texts, utilizing both the Germanic sense of a history of "high culture" and more anthropologically slanted "folk" and material culture, and culminated with a capstone graduating research paper. By the late 70ies, the major has grown to include 20-30 students at a time, with up to 10 graduates per year.

The humanities courses, Western and Eastern, included religions necessarily, and the study of religions (not everywhere at the time an academic given) became an explicit component in the first decade, in particular courses and as a minor (which continues). This was initially Bill Stoever's bailiwick, joined by Rob Stoops in 1983. Under the latter's guidance, the Humanities major with a religion component became a fuller and more central expression of the department's curriculum, and included a popular concentration, offering a scholarly, critical, nonsectarian study of religions in history, culture, and society. Two other distinctive paths opened in the mid-1970s through Brian Copenhaver's interest in the history of science (with its tangents toward "the occult") and Michael Fisher's in South Asia. The former lapsed when Brian left Western, but the latter continues, as the department maintains Western's only South Asia tenure-line faculty position.

This departmental graft onto Western's history of a normal school that became by 1970 a department- and discipline-specific, comprehensive college took a decade to formulate. Faculty members trained in specific disciplines shaped a coherent, integrated multidisciplinary curriculum with cross-cultural features. By 1980, the department's curricular expansion from European into Asian and African materials and cultures, its faculty's research interests and the liberal arts foundation for its general education mission led to a name change, as Liberal Studies ("liberal" as in "liberal education"), and bore enough small-scale resemblance to programs at Chicago and Columbia to draw favorable attention when accreditation evaluators visited Western Washington University.

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Seven original or successor tenure-line faculty members staffed the department for the next two decades as "routines" accumulated, with "part-timers" assistance. The numbers were (and remain) small enough to foster coherence and to buffer disputes that a small department in a large College of Humanities and Social Sciences Arts and Sciences and a comprehensive university cannot afford. Bill Stoever's key missions as chairperson included representing the Liberal Studies program, curriculum and method to other chairs, committees, deans and provosts whose make or break curricular and budgetary general education decisions governed the department's role and very existence, managing and deploying scarce resources. Faculty members, then as now, served on key committees. Excellent office managers Phyllis Graham and Valerie Worthen, like Maureen Christman now, enhanced an operation that moved over time from Miller and Arntzen to Bond Hall.

Individual faculty members' courses and writings accumulated, and substantial partnerships developed. Notably in-house, Rodney Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch spent a year on a new translation from the second-edition Dutch original of Johan Huizinga's scholarly classic long known in English as *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, which exemplified the department's history-of-culture approach to the humanities; it appeared with Huizinga's title, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Substantial extra-departmental curricular and scholarly collaborations were in place by 2000. Many Liberal Studies faculty members taught courses in the Honors program, and still do. Individuals shared in numerous campus-wide initiatives like creating and team-teaching a "Third World Studies" course that developed into what's now the Institute for Global Engagement, participating as writers, editors and directors for the East Asian Studies program, and working on *The Journal of Ethnic Studies'* editorial board. One potential shared initiative did not come to pass: a late 1980s scheme that would have combined the History and Liberal Studies departments was abandoned for lack of full compatibility (this did not prevent both departments' multiple participants in Western's longest active faculty poker game, now in its seventh decade).

# Department History continued

The new century, ending the department's third decade, called for and ushered in a serious generational transition. All four original incumbents, Bill Stoever, Milt Krieger, Rodney Payton and Bill Wallace, were approaching their seventh decade. Accordingly, they adopted a phased, orderly retirement schedule. By 2008, the already established Rob Stoops-Scott Pearce-Andrea Gogroff-David Curley faculty roster welcomed Seán Murphy, Jonathan Miran, Kimberly Lynn and Holly Folk as the next generation's core. Their composite pedagogy and scholarship brought fresh talents and perspectives that extended cross-campus linkages in new collaborations like the Arabic and Islamic Studies minor, founded in partnership with Modern and Classical Languages, and drawing also on History courses.

Not least significant was the closer to parity departmental gender balance finally attained. And not incidentally, 2008 also marked the start of Bruce Shepard's Western presidency, bringing an open administrative mind to a long-sustained faculty union campaign. A collective bargaining agreement was soon reached with the United Faculty of Western Washington, which the department broadly favored. It brought more permanence and higher pay for some of Western's non-tenured faculty cohort, including the department's own previously itinerant "adjuncts," who became "senior lecturers." 2008 also saw the department make plans for an annual speaker series, which would bring a distinguished lecturer to campus each year, a tradition which the department has now hosted eleven times!

The new faculty presence soon led to a new student presence, with the formation of a Leadership Team from the ranks of the department's majors. It makes their experience and connection to the faculty more coherent, and supports, publicizes and promotes the program. The tragic 2015 death of an inaugural team member, Meagan Elizabeth Smith, led to the establishment of the department's first student scholarship, awarded in her name for academic excellence among majors. It reached the \$25,000 funding level in 2018-2019, assuring its financial permanence. 2016 marked the arrival of South Asian specialist Michael Slouber, as did 2018 for East Asian specialist Ethan Bushelle, the first faculty addition rather than replacement in decades (and another cross-program collaboration, this time with East Asian Studies). 2018-2019 opened with an agreement to cross-list upper-division courses with the History department, included the hire of a new faculty member to fill what had been Rob Stoops' line (a scholar of the ancient world and Religious Studies, Daniel Picus, who is slated to arrive in Fall 2020), and closed with the confirmation of Kimberly Lynn's second term as department chair.

With the name changes, the department opens the 2019-20 academic year as Global Humanities and Religions with close to 50 majors and minors, and with BA programs now in both "Humanities: History of Culture" and "Religion and Culture," plus minors of the same name, alongside the minor in Arabic and Islamic Studies. Courses are now called either "Humanities" or "Religion," while keeping those long-standing departmental values of interdisciplinarity, attention to cultural history, as well as substantial geographical and chronological breadth.

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Two original members, on retirement, conveyed a synoptic sense of what Liberal Studies at Western was about. From Bill Stoever: "the department formulated its work in terms of history of culture, as represented in the graduate program of that name at Chicago, extended from European to Asian and African traditions, understood as scholarly consideration of the several dimensions of the humanities in relation to other dimensions of social reality." The subject of its courses "was the principal themes, issues, and images concerning human beings and their place in the universe, expressed chiefly in literary texts and graphic and plastic art, in cultural and historical contexts," and also "the ways in which societies create and use their cultures," treating the latter "as dynamic and multiform." From Milt Krieger, with specific reference to the "Humanities of..." courses and their offshoots, but applicable elsewhere, the department covered "a wide range of the human community's beliefs and aspirations, speculations and disputes, expressive cultures, and historically mediated change through interactions among various peoples."

Another very important remembrance of things past is David Curley's account of his experience as chair, written March 10, 2019 as the department's name change was being formalized: "One thing I would want to add in a history of the department is that in 2010, when the Provost proposed to end Liberal Studies as a separate department, what saved us was a broad recognition among faculty and administrators that our GUR courses were demanding and rewarding. I could then state the indisputable fact that [they] still made up the overwhelming majority of our credit hours. I know this because it was the argument I made to the Provost in the meeting when she decided to reverse her decision. I still think our continued survival and success depends on...the high quality of our instruction of students who are not our majors."

# Department History continued

Such are the foundations for and some reflections upon half a century's program development. David's text on an episode from its recent past seems a fitting guide to things future as Western's Department of Global Humanities and Religions continues its story, from Gilgamesh, the prophets, apostles, saints, sinners, rebels, settled and itinerant sages and their fully Asian counterparts, to Dante and Cervantes, Nietzsche and Houellebecq, Achebe and Mahfouz...and those to come.

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## Full-Time Faculty Roster, 1970-2020

The department has regularly appointed people from humanities and area-studies fields, whose scholarly interests and expertise have been complementary along a continuum from West to East (with tangents South), ancient to modern, and literary to social. The curriculum developed as an objective expression of their distinctive expertise, and continues to do so.

Chairs (in succession): Roscoe Buckland, William Stoever, Robert Stoops, David Curley, Scott Pearce, Kimberly Lynn.

Founding full-time faculty (with scholarly focus): Roscoe Buckland (Amer West), Elbert Beamer (Hist of Rel), Nita Clothier (Classical West Civ), David Davis (Amer Lit), Janet Graves (Amer Lit), Milton Krieger (Afr), Wayne Lobue (Amer Rel), Rodney Payton (Eur Arts and Cultures), Stan Read (Amer St), William Stoever (Hist of Rel), William Wallace (Med-Early Mod Lit).

Subsequent full-time tenure-line faculty: Brian Copenhaver (Hist of Sci), Ulrich Mammitzsch (East Asia), Roger Hammill (Mod Intell Hist), Margaret Egnor (South Asia), Stuart Lasine (Mod Intell Hist), Usha Sanyal (South Asia), Michael Fisher (South Asia), Robert Stoops (Hist of Rel), Scott Pearce (East Asia), Andrea Gogröf (Mod Intell Hist), David Curley (South Asia), Seán Murphy (Med Lit and Rel), Jonathan Miran (Afr, Indian Ocean, Islam), Kimberly Lynn (Early Mod Hist), Holly Folk (Amer Rel and New Rel Movements), Michael Slouber (South Asia), Ethan Bushelle (East Asia), Daniel Picus (Ancient and Rel Studies).

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