“The facts speak for themselves.”

“We need hard evidence.”

“Our decisions are data driven.”

Affirmations like these increasingly invade our language. An important function of the humanities is to uncover their vacuity. Personally, I have never met a speaking fact. Nor do I know anyone to whom facts speak — which is a good thing since myself-esteem would suffer enormously if facts were speaking to everyone but me. Hard evidence and good data are no doubt good things, but they most certainly do not tell us everything we need to know.

Humanists have a high regard for facts, but we never reduce truth to just the facts nor do we (more controversially) believe that all truths can be rendered by facts. Consider for example how much history differs from the past.

The past consists of everything that happened. EVERYTHING. Indeed, the only way to completely relive a day would be to repeat that day in all its detail — the pain in your shoulder when you woke up, the half-covered window through which you glimpsed a cloudy sky at 6:49 and 30 seconds a.m., the bark of your dog anxious to begin her walk — and everything else that happened for the next 24 hours. Unless you are Borges’ “Funes the Memorious,” you will forget virtually everything that happened in that particular day. Nor is it at all likely that some future historian will write every occurrence of that day into the canonical record.

Why? Because the first step in remembering the past or writing history is deciding what to discard, what to forget — which happens to be almost everything. Much forgetting is automatic, but some of it is intentional. For example, not that long ago women were mentioned in the occasional sidebar of a history textbook, but they did not receive half the historians’ attention although women and their stories clearly comprise half of the human past. Why were they excluded? Because someone decided their story was not important enough to include in the grand narrative of history.

Gratefully, women’s history is now a major area of inquiry in modern historiography. But the pride we take in history’s accomplishments in recovering women’s history should not blind us to the certainty that much of the past is considered unimportant and will continue to lurk at the sidelines until someone discovers its value and inserts it into our common narrative. We already see this happening in what is sometimes called posthumanism, which considers how the human past intertwines with environmental issues and our complex relationships to other living creatures.

Humanists also traffic in a messy area that might be called “truth beyond the facts” or better yet “truth with no facts to support it.” Some examples.

While some insist on the literal truth of the Garden of Eden story, most people, if they read it at all, would not call it factual. So maybe our first parents were not in fact Adam and Eve, and maybe the devil did not appear as a serpent to tempt them to eat the forbidden fruit. But before discarding this story as a quaint desert tale, consider Satan’s promise: “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” The core of the temptation then was to “be as gods.” When we consider our human penchant for dominating nature regardless of the environmental consequences, or for controlling other human beings through war, oppression, torture, class privilege, prejudice, injustice and (it’s a long list), we might conclude that the temptation to “be as gods” possibly underlies some of the worst aspects of human behavior. So while the Garden of Eden story may strike us as factually questionable, it does indeed contain a profound truth quite independent of the facts.

To push the point further, what do we do with fiction, a term often used as synonymous with nonfactual or a lie? Romeo and Juliet are not factual figures. Oliver Twist never had a material existence and Don Quixote is a double lie because Cervantes invents a fictional character whose delusional mind allows him to invent a phantasmagorical version of himself. Yet can anyone dispute that Romeo and Juliet tell us profound truths about young love and the tragic consequences of hatred and prejudice? Or that Oliver Twist tells important truths about the challenges of poverty and the vulnerability of children? Or that Don Quixote, despite his deliriums, is one of the most ethical and charitable characters in all literature? These fictions, of course, do not speak for themselves, any more than facts speak for themselves. But who can deny that these fictions, like countless others like them, tell truths whose ultimate interpretation will forever escape us?

So facts don’t speak for themselves, evidence is not always hard and even data-driven folks cannot avoid metaphor. For example, how often do we hear, “We need to drill more deeply into the data”? Or “There’s too much noise in the data.” Drill deeply? Hear through the noise? These are highly effective metaphors, useful for understanding both data and poetry. And they also show that, with its insistence on interpretation, humanistic study inevitably connects with everything humans do.
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**CORRESPONDENCE**
Rice University
School of Humanities–MS 33
P.O. Box 1892
Houston, TX 77251-1892
http://humanities.rice.edu

**EDITOR**
Stephanie Frey

**CONTRIBUTORS**
Ryan Bell, HRC
Mary Carroll Charlotte ’15
Ujalashah Dhanani ’15
Jeff Falk, Rice News
Matthias Henze, religion
Paul Hester, VADA
Juyoung Jang, postdoctoral fellow (Asian studies)
Grant Raun ’15
Stefanie Saathoff, R2 editor
Luziris Turi, CLIC
Hurst Williamson ’15
Meng Yeh, CLIC

**PHOTOGRAPHY**
Tommy LaVergne and Jeff Fitlow

**DESIGNED AND EDITED BY**
THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**EDITOR’S NOTE:**
Contributing writers and students listed as seniors in this issue graduated at Rice’s 102nd Commencement May 16, 2015.
A central part of the mission of the Center for Languages and Intercultural Communication (CLIC) is to design, develop and implement an innovative, research-based study abroad program that complements and expands the curricular options offered on campus at Rice. In summer 2014, CLIC brought this to life by launching Rice-in-China, Rice-in-Jordan and Rice-in-Spain programs. Rice-in-China was established by Meng Yeh, senior lecturer and associate director of CLIC, in collaboration with Nanjing University, one of the top–five higher education institutes in China. Luziris Pineda Turi, lecturer and associate director of CLIC, led Rice-in-Spain which gave students access to the premier Universidad de Sevilla through language and cultural encounters. Rice-in-Jordan was established by Maher Awad, senior lecturer, in partnership with Qasid Arabic Institute in Amman, Jordan, a leading center for Arabic language instruction.

These programs are completely distinctive from the traditional study abroad programs because of their focus on academic achievement and the direct involvement of Rice faculty in the design, implementation and assessment of outcomes. CLIC’s summer study abroad programs bring the exceptional education Rice students are used to on campus to their experience abroad.

“Over the last 20 years, there have been numerous studies that have consistently shown that the opportunity to study abroad does not automatically translate into improved competence in the language, nor a broader sociocultural awareness of the other culture,” noted Rafael Salaberry, CLIC director and the Mary Gibbs Jones Professor of Humanities. “When designing our innovative Rice-in-country programs, we took these research findings into account.”

Structurally, all of the programs consist of a six-week intensive curriculum that includes intercultural communication courses beyond traditional language courses, service learning and service opportunities.

“Each faculty leader worked tirelessly to make each program completely catered to Rice students’ expectations. We knew we wanted to take the traditional study abroad experience to the next level, to the Rice level,” said Turi.

In order to develop students’ intercultural communicative competence, students are guided to critically interpret pragmatic strategies and language use in its natural sociocultural context. Instead of simply hoping that students will immerse and increase their proficiency solely by being in a foreign country, this course makes explicit the information needed to think about how language works.

“We need to prepare our students to ‘learn from and work in more than one culture’ in the current global context, as President Leebron highlights in the Vision for the Second Century,” said Yeh.

Additionally, Rice students conduct interviews to gather empirical language data and analyze the language data to identify significant patterns of language use. The process allows them to construct their own understanding of the core values of the target culture.

“We had some intercultural communication assignments that we had to go out of the classroom to complete,” said Arim Yeom, Wiess College senior and participant in the Rice-in-China program. “I got a chance to converse with many Chinese people. One of the lessons was about posters in China and taking pictures of them while passing through streets made me more aware of the ideologies and motivation of the government.”

The service learning component is crucial to linking the knowledge gained in the classroom to making positive and real changes in the community. Instead of being tourists in a foreign country, students are given the agency to contribute and engage with the community they are visiting.

In order to immerse students in daily language and life in the country, students were paired with host families. Through this experience students truly get an up-close glimpse at the everyday lives of the people of the target country. Host families also provide students the chance to have to use the target language in a nonacademic setting.

“I think that the most educational and impactful parts were my interactions with my host family,” said Rice-in-Spain student Kristin Sweeney, a Hanzsen College senior studying biochemistry and cell biology. “I learned from them and, at times, they told me that they learned from me. I feel greatly blessed to have been a part of this program.”

For summer 2015, the initiative is expanding to include three additional destinations: Rice-in-Brazil, Rice-in-France and Rice-in-Italy. For more information about CLIC or these programs, visit langcenter.rice.edu.
Family is a core social system in East Asian societies. Social constructs such as cultural norms, social structures, and political and economic situations shape family dynamics: what people think about family, how family members interact with each other and what a family tries to achieve. On the other hand, changes in family relationships and lifestyle may influence the social contexts in which families are embedded. East Asian Families in Social Contexts: Global, Economic and Cultural Issues, a fall 2014 course taught by Juyoung Jang, postdoctoral fellow in the Chao Center for Asian Studies, addressed these various social issues impacting family life in East Asia.

The course explored a variety of topics related to East Asian families such as education, patriarchy, migration and technology. Information on these topics was introduced into the syllabus through journal articles, news stories and recent documentaries. The purpose of this course was to provide Rice students opportunities to explore and articulate the intersections of East Asian families and their various academic interests. Therefore, students identified family-related topics of their interest, conducted a review of literature and proposed their own research plan.

"It is an eye-opening course. Professor Jang is amazing at helping us connect seemingly unrelated topics, like family relations connected to the market. The course is set to help you think critically," said Will Rice senior Judy Liu. Liu, a double major in Asians studies and history, connected her research interest in historic Chinese immigration to Vietnam with the ethnic identity formation of Hoa families. Her final project was titled Hoa in the Vietnamese-American View.

Jang’s course was awarded a development grant from the Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning. An objective of the course was to enhance students’ leadership competences by collaborative learning and interdisciplinary engagement. ”In my first year at Rice, I found that Rice students have diverse academic and real-life knowledge and are enthusiastic to share their knowledge with others,” said Jang. "Then, I got an idea that it would be great for students to exchange their research ideas and deeply engage in providing input to their peers’ ideas as if they were consultants or a research committee.”

Psychology major Mollie Ahn said, “The course was great in that you can draw very personal connections to the topics that are being discussed. There is a lot of freedom to bring up your own interest and assess it from very different and new angles." Ahn, a senior at Brown College, was interested in the “education fever” of Korean families and explored the significance of tertiary education on employment in South Korea for her final project.

Final course projects were presented at the research proposal showcase which was held in December 2014 and co-sponsored by the Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning and the Chao Center for Asian Studies. Twenty guests attended the poster presentation and enjoyed sharing the students’ research ideas. "It is exciting to see classes that enable students to explore and research some topic that is of interest to them. The range of topics provided a really interesting experience for me,” Kyle Kurihara '15, a computer science major, said, "and I feel like the students were passionate about these topics.”

This course was offered again during the spring 2015 term and open to all Rice undergraduate students. For more information about the Chao Center, visit chaocenter.rice.edu.

Juyoung Jang is a postdoctoral fellow in East Asian studies at the Chao Center. Her research explores relationships and kinships of Asian families and multicultural families, which is the focus of the courses she teaches at Rice.
The Scottish photographer John Thomson traveled to China in 1868, documenting a wide range of individuals, landscapes and architecture. In many areas, he was the first Westerner — as well as the first photographer — to be seen.

Photography in China, a spring 2015 course in the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts and cross-listed with Asian studies, studied the photographs of Thomson, along with many others, to see the variety of ways in which China has been depicted over the years. The first part of the semester engaged students in rigorous application of defining, investigating and completing three local documentary photography projects. This research prepared the students for their weeklong class trip to Xi’an, China, during which each student created a research proposal for their final project and continued practicing documentary photography.

Early in the semester, guest lecturers presented their experiences to the students in preparation for their spring break trip abroad. Chinese photographer Tang DeSheng shared his photographs taken during the Educated Youth Movement in the 1960s when Chinese students were sent to live with farmers and peasants in rural China; Denise Weinberg showed intimate and sensitive pictures that she made on a visit in 1979; Raymond and Susan Brochstein showed images made in fall 2014 when they traveled with a Rice alumni tour; Steven Lewis, associate director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies, presented his visual research on the public advertising of the Transnational China Project; and Fred Baldwin discussed his travels with FotoFest International and his beginnings in documentary photography. In addition, four visiting lecturers discussed their photography projects in public lectures supported by a grant from the Humanities Research Center.

Before our departure, one of my students from China warned me: “It is considered very rude in China to take photographs of someone without their permission.” My immediate response was to go into panic mode. How can we possibly go to China and not take pictures of people? Rude or not, I have practiced street photography since I was an undergraduate student at Rice in the 1960s.

It turned out to be a false alarm. The people we met on the streets and in the parks were as curious about us as we were about them, and equally, if not more, interested in taking our pictures, too. The four Chinese photographers we met during our weeklong trip took pictures of our encounters, and one photograph taken with the grandfather of Rice student Andrew Tan ’16 appeared in the local Shaanxi daily newspaper. This soon became the motif of our entire trip — recording the interactions of our parallel practices and creating evidence of our cultural exchanges.

During our stay in Xi’an, we visited the Terra Cotta Warriors, the Shaanxi History Museum, the Great Mosque of Xi’an, rode bicycles on the surrounding City Wall and rode the sophisticated Xi’an subway line. We were able to make a pilgrimage to the Famen Temple in neighboring Fufeng County, where we saw the veritable Finger Bone of the Sakyamuni Buddha. On our final day before returning to Houston, our group lined up for a final class photo in the plaza where we had watched fireworks, Tai chi practitioners and late-night popular music dancers. I set up my tripod and set the self-timer on my camera, hurrying to join the group. I was delighted to discover, as I turned to face the camera, an even larger group of curious spectators watching our familiar activity. The camera had become a mirror by which we saw ourselves watching and being watched.

After returning, students continued researching and analyzing the evidence gathered in China. As the final research project for the course, each student produced a book that focused on a specific aspect of his or her trip. These books, and a selection of photographs from our trip, were exhibited in Fondren Library in April.

—PAUL HESTER, PHOTOGRAPHY LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL AND DRAMATIC ARTS

Many thanks to the Rice Study Abroad Office, Fondren Library, Chao Center for Asian Studies, Humanities Research Center, graduate student Jing Wang and our wonderful trip liaison, Li Xiaohan.
Mentality – What is Masculinity to You?

What insights can a movie convey about a complex topic like gender? The 23 undergraduates enrolled in the fall 2014 course, Masculinities, took on that task. The result of their work, a feature-length documentary titled “Mentality,” was screened at Rice Cinema in January 2015 following a reception co-hosted by Rice Cinema and the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality (CSWGS).

Offered by the anthropology department and cross-listed with the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality (SWGS), Masculinities introduced students to several decades of academic work on masculinity and gender theory. Taught by Brian Scott Riedel, CSWGS assistant director and professor in the practice, the course addressed the institutional and intellectual histories connecting women’s studies and men’s studies, the complex relationships between academic research and popular literature on gender and gender stereotypes, the enduring mythopoetic men’s movement, and feminist critiques of the science of sex differences.

With these debates in hand, students worked in six groups to craft a documentary exploring contemporary issues in masculinity. Each group chose a topic for its section, proposed interviewees from across campus and greater Houston, and drafted a storyboard. As a class, the students critiqued the storyboards, organized the sections within the movie and decided on transitions between sections.

The resulting hour-long video explores the gender socialization of youth, hip-hop masculinities, ideologies of strength in sports, stereotypes around sexual violence and depression, and the ways we all self-police our gender expressions.

“Working collectively to make a documentary was a really great way to connect the work we’d been doing in class with the ways masculinity is part of our daily lives,” said Kendall Post ’15, a SWGS major. “We were challenged to synthesize interviews, commercials and texts to communicate a message. This was completely different from any other video project I’d done.”

The collective project also gave students the chance to use their talents in unexpected ways. Thomas Sturm ’15, a music composition major, volunteered to craft a scored trailer for the movie. As Sturm put it, “this was truly one of the most unique, hands-on learning experiences I’ve ever had.”

Khadijah Erskine ’16, a double major in English and SWGS, found the project gave the debates in the classroom a concrete form. “It showed how certain aspects of what we see as ‘appropriate’ masculine behavior confine people,” Erskine said.

Other students echoed that sentiment, like Zoe Matranga ’16, also a SWGS major: “Constantly, we are surrounded by perceptions and expectations of masculinities in nonacademic settings with our friends, peers and surroundings. [The video] kept me grounded and served as a constant reminder of how the issues we discussed are present and pressing.”

Present, pressing and confining though gender norms may be, the class also found hope and a call to action for social change through the way they theorize gender. Making “Mentality” also became one way they could press back.

“A premier effort: Brian Scott Riedel, CSWGS assistant director, and SWGS 333 students at the January 2015 film screening at the Rice Media Center.

“What working collectively to make a documentary was a really great way to connect the work we’d been doing in class with the ways masculinity is part of our daily lives.”

—KENDALL POST
Rice Students Explore Jerusalem

Few cities in the world possess a religious significance as rich and storied as Jerusalem does. Located on a plateau in the Judean Mountains between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, it is one of the oldest cities in the world and considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Over spring break, 15 Rice students were able to experience Jerusalem as part of a first-of-its-kind course offered by the Program in Jewish Studies.

The course, Jerusalem: Holy City in Time and Imagination, was co-taught by Matthias Henze, the Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of Biblical Studies and director of the program, and Melissa Weininger, a lecturer in modern Hebrew. Both led the students on the nine-day trip, which traversed from the Mount of Olives to the Dead Sea and the West Bank.

“Instead of simply ‘covering’ the long history of Jerusalem in chronological fashion, this course aims to provide students with the critical tools necessary to develop their own analysis of Jerusalem today,” Henze said. “The thematic emphasis of our class is on the integration of the old and the new and on the interconnection of history and modern life. The trip allowed us to explore how Judaism, Christianity and Islam claim, create and maintain sacred spaces and experience firsthand conflicting claims to authority and religious meaning.”

The morning after arriving in Tel Aviv, the group began its weeklong itinerary by heading up to the Mount of Olives overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem, followed by a visit to the Israel Museum. The students were aided by a “travel book” — papers they had prepared and presented in advance on historical sites in and around Jerusalem.

For the diverse group of students, the trip proved eye-opening. “We found learning about Jerusalem has a cross-cultural appeal,” Weininger said.

Jena Lopez, a Baker College sophomore and double major in economics and political science, was drawn by the course’s premise. “I have always wanted to go to Jerusalem since I was a child,” she said. “But I was not interested in a religious tour. I wanted to travel with a group who held different views than I, and one that was academically rigorous.” A Catholic, Lopez had given a presentation on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is venerated as Calvary, or Golgatha, the site where Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. “I chose it because it is one of the most holy sites in my faith,” Lopez said, “and I wanted to know more about the site beyond its religious significance.”

Jeremy Reiskind, a Duncan College junior double-majoring in sport management and history and minoring in Jewish studies, has been to Israel multiple times. A Jew, Reiskind chose the Muslim Quarter for his presentation because he wanted to explore a place he had never been to before or knew anything about. Reiskind said being in Jerusalem allowed him to see how closely the three main religions interact and how this small city, especially the Old City, is so important to them. “Even with all the conflict that surrounds Israel and the city, it is pretty incredible that these three religions are able to share arguably the holiest city in the world,” he said. “I truly saw how the conflict affects those experiencing it every day. We heard from so many speakers across the political spectrum about their views on the conflict, and it’s crazy how there are so many different views on what should be done.”

For Katherine McElroy, a Sid Richardson College junior and psychology major on the premed track, the trip spoke to the power of firsthand experiences. “You can study a place. You can research it. You can even look at an infinite number of maps and Google Earth views of a place, but until you immerse yourself in the location, you don’t really get a full grasp of how it is to live there,” she said. “My stay in Jerusalem has allowed me to not only see how the residents live out the history of Jerusalem today, but it has allowed me to remove my mental image of Jerusalem as dirt roads and an abandoned desert town to a modern and historical city full of life, culture and delicious food.”

To read the blog by Henze and Weininger about the course’s travel and experiences in Jerusalem, go to reli392.blogs.rice.edu.

—JEFF FALK, NEWS AND MEDIA RELATIONS, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Special thanks to the donors who supported this unique opportunity.
The Power of ‘Fangs, Feathers and Fins’

A recent exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) took visitors deep into the spiritual world of the ancient Americas, where animal deities ruled the heavens, Earth and underworld. “Fangs, Feathers and Fins: Sacred Creatures in Ancient American Art” was curated by Chelsea Dacus, an assistant curator at the MFAH, who is currently in her first year of pursuing a Ph.D. in art history at Rice.

The exhibition, which was on view Oct. 20, 2014–March 22, 2015, drew from the museum’s significant pre-Columbian collection and spanned nearly 5,000 years. It was the first time that the exhibitions’ nearly 200 artworks — dating from 3300 B.C. to 1550 A.D. — had been brought together thematically at the museum.

“Since the dawn of time, humankind has been fascinated with the creatures that populate the world,” Dacus said. “In the Americas, wildlife such as the jaguar, harpy eagle and howler monkey became religious symbols of divinity and rulership, playing significant roles in religion and society. Artworks were made in the images of these beings to bestow supernatural powers, to protect and for worship. Other masterpieces were made to transform humans into creatures or to show that transformation.”

Pre-Columbian peoples were particularly devoted to the concept of the world having three levels — celestial, terrestrial and underworld — and the role that animals played in that understanding is expressed by their representation in art.

Walking through the exhibition space on the lower level of the MFAH’s Audrey Jones Beck Building, the visitor’s eyes were drawn to the inventive ways animals were depicted, be it in a 1,000-year-old feather tunic from the Nasca people of Peru, the gold ornaments from the Tairona culture of Colombia, or ceramic vessels and stone monuments made by the Maya and Olmec of ancient Guatemala and Mexico.

For Dacus, the exhibition’s theme had a personal appeal. “I’ve always been interested in animals. It’s been a passion of mine,” she said. “I never had posters of boy bands on my walls when I was a kid. I had pictures of animals. I subscribed to International Wildlife and would tear out pictures of animals and put them on my walls. It’s probably part of what drew me to pre-Columbian art because they have such an interrelationship with them. In their cosmological understanding of the world, animals helped with different processes. The relationship was much more intricate; they’re not just animals to them.”

Dacus, who travels between her full-time job at the MFAH and her classes on the Rice campus, has found an ideal Rice faculty adviser in John Hopkins, assistant professor of art history and classical studies, who specializes in the antiquities. “Even though my first passion is pre-Columbian, I have always been drawn to ancient Roman art. With John there, I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to research another area of interest while obtaining a degree from an excellent university and staying at the museum,” she said. “It was kismet.”

Hopkins said Dacus’ participation in his department’s Ph.D. program is a mark of excellence. “Chelsea’s leading role in the conception, curation and production of this exhibition marks a new stage in our nascent doctoral program,” Hopkins said. “The Ph.D. in art history at Rice is just six years old; our first cohort has not even graduated, and yet already we have a student who is a lead curator on an impressive, intellectually sophisticated and beautifully organized show at one of the country’s major encyclopedic museums.”

—JEFF FALK

Creature concepts: Chelsea Dacus, an assistant curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Rice art history Ph.D. student, stands at the entrance to her “Fangs, Feathers and Fins: Sacred Creatures in Ancient American Art” exhibition.
“Travel far and dig deep.” That was the special summer 2014 assignment for a group of five students who are majors in the School of Humanities’ B.A. Program in Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations (AMC).

“Students thrive on experiencing life on an excavation,” said Michael Maas, director of the AMC program and professor of history and classical studies. “If (the students) are doing archaeology, they’re literally in the trenches,” said Maas, who is also the managing committee chair of the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome.

Four of the students’ archaeological excavations were made possible through new funds made available by the president’s office, and the fifth student was the recipient of a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship.

Danny Graves, a senior at Will Rice College and a double major in AMC and classical studies, spent six weeks at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece. The trip was made possible through a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, which provides mentoring and financial support for entry into Ph.D. programs and a career as a scholar and faculty member.

“One of the most exciting parts of the trip was being able to tour the Parthenon with Greek architect and archaeologist Manolis Korres, one of the leading Parthenon experts in the world,” Graves said. “With him, we were permitted to enter and to experience the space while he lectured on different aspects of the building.”

Northwest Belize was the site of Baker College senior Joyce Jones’ excavation experience. Led by the University of Texas at Austin, the program teaches students the fundamental skills and practices of field archaeology and artifact analysis, specializing in the pre-Hispanic Maya lowlands region. The program allows students to work at three different sites to gain experience in different types of archaeology, from hinterland sites to larger city structures.

Going into the program, Jones was not sure if she wanted to pursue archaeology in the future, the anthropology and AMC double major said. “I had never had any ‘real’ archaeological experience in the field, so I did not know for certain if archaeology was the right path for me,” Jones said. “However, at the end of this program, I knew without a drop of uncertainty that I wanted to continue studying archaeology.”

Kevin Kim, a double major in AMC and history, spent five weeks in Sandanski, a small Bulgarian resort town about a three-hour drive from Sofia, the country’s capital. Kim’s program, led by the American Research Center in Sofia, helped students develop a sense of how actual archaeological fieldwork is done and how to analyze findings according to when they were made and which shape they would have originally had, Kim said.

While Kim’s team found very interesting artifacts such as a gold earring and a very well-decorated arrowhead made of bone, he personally enjoyed the scientific method needed to conduct fieldwork. “I learned to always be aware of how deep I was digging,” said Kim. “We were labeling our trench according to different stratigraphic units, meaning the change of soil color and textures.”

Chynna Foucek, a Duncan College senior and double major in AMC and biochemistry and cell biology, participated in the Sanisera Field School, located on the island of Menorca. Sanisera was an ancient Roman port city that dates back to the first century B.C.E.

The American Research Center in Sofia’s Archaeological Field School at Heraclea Sintica, a Roman site in Bulgaria, was where Brown College junior Arlen Walker experienced his excavation work. Walker relished the opportunity to get his hands dirty in exploring a site that had thrived in the Roman and Late Antique periods and declined in the early Middle Age. “I thought one of the really neat parts was when, while digging through one of the destruction layers, we started finding lots and lots of painted wall plaster,” Walker said. “I thought it was really cool to be able to see the physical evidence of a Roman practice that I had certainly read about, but never gotten to experience like that.”

AMC students will participate in excavations again during summer 2015, Maas said. For more information about AMC research and programs, see amc.rice.edu.

—JEFF FALK
A new professional development program, Humanities Encouraging Diverse postGraduation Employability (HEDGE), was developed in the Humanities Research Center to support humanities students in their exploration of career options. HEDGE began with a summer internship program and has grown to include peer-to-peer dinners, funding for unpaid internships, career panels and research fellowships. Eventually, the program plans to expand to also offer a collaborative mentorship program.

In its inaugural year, HEDGE’s professional internship program awarded positions to four students during summer 2014. Mattie Pena ‘15, linguistics major, worked as an entrepreneurial intern with Treadsack, a restaurant group based in Houston, and Sarah Long ‘15, an English and religion double major, worked with Treadsack’s Gulf Coast food industry magazine, Sugar & Rice. English and VADA major Gloria Quintanilla ‘15 was a communications intern for HISD. Alex Haer ’17 interned for White Rhino Financial. For summer 2015, HEDGE offered more than twice as many internship opportunities, with hosts ranging from NASA to alumni-owned SolvChem to International Emergency and Development Aid, Inc.

In partnership with the Social Sciences’ Gateway program, HEDGE hosted two peer-to-peer dinners during fall 2014. These dinners brought young Rice alumni who are current BP employees to campus to have dinner with undergraduates curious about what it is like to work for a large oil and gas corporation as nonengineers. Peer-to-peer dinners will continue bringing young employees from a variety of industries to campus, where they can interact with humanities and social science majors to provide inspiring and helpful insight into professional life.

“Our goal is to place humanities students in a professional workplace where we hope two things will happen: first, that our students will recognize how much they already bring to a professional environment; and second, that employers can become familiar with our students’ extraordinary talents and skills,” said Nicolas Shumway, dean of humanities.

Through generous support from the dean’s office, HEDGE will offer funding for students who find their own unpaid, professional summer internships. The amounts awarded vary based on internship duration, location, intensity and student need.

If you are an alumni or parent who is interested in providing internship opportunities or participating in a future mentorship program, please visit hrc.rice.edu/hedge.

What attracted you to the professional internship program?
I was interested in an opportunity to get real-life experience and to see how the analytical and technical skills learned in the classroom translated into real work scenarios.

Why did you choose to work with HISD?
The department that I interned for (media communications) had people working in many areas that interested me such as media writing, videography and graphic design.

What was most surprising about your experience?
I was surprised by how the employees at HISD were not just ready but eager to offer advice and share their experience with me.

What was the biggest lesson you learned?
Through speaking with people of different ages and at different stages of life, I learned that our majors and educational choices do not constrain us to a narrow road of possibilities in regards to career. We are not locked into what we study. Our studies provide analytical and reasoning skills that are valuable across a vast number of possible careers.

Would you recommend the program to others and why?
Absolutely! The program provides a great opportunity to apply skills that are learned in the classroom and to work closely with people who have years of experience in their particular field.
In April 2014, Rice’s Chao Center for Asian Studies collaborated with local arts and culture organizations to produce My Voice Would Reach You, a festival celebrating contemporary Asian art. Tani Barlow, inaugural director of the Center (2008–13) and the T.T. and W.F. Chao Professor of History, curated the festival, which developed out of meetings with the international scholarly collective, Capital, Class and Culture in Asia. The purpose of the festival was to focus on two themes: the question of freedom in the cultural, social and economic worlds of Asia; and the question of how artists and critics open avenues of freedom.

"It is our responsibility as scholars in area studies to convey highly complex ideas and Asian economic realities to the general public,” said Barlow. "It was profoundly gratifying to watch the public interact with highly sophisticated art objects and installations.”

Working with academic and artistic partners, Barlow created a weeklong program of scholarly lectures, exhibition openings and artist talks. Rice Gallery commissioned artist Dinh Q. Lê to create a site-specific installation, “Crossing the Farther Shore,” which opened in April and kicked off the festival. The gallery also organized a round-table discussion with three Vietnamese-American artists about the postwar Vietnamese diaspora and its negotiation with current Vietnam. Lê was joined by fashion designer Chloe Dao and poet Bao-Long Chu for this intimate discussion moderated by Barlow. Matchbox Gallery, Rice’s student-run exhibition space, presented an exhibition of works by emerging Chinese artists as interpreted and executed by Rice students. Rice Cinema, Rice Public Art and the Humanities Research Center also collaborated on university programming in conjunction with the festival.

The festival’s main academic event was a two-day symposium, Rethinking Art History: Writing/Making Modern and Contemporary Asian Art and Architecture Histories, hosted by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH). Participants included MFAH curators and MFAH director Gary Tinterow gave the opening remarks. Visiting faculty and artists gave presentations on themes such as Decentering Modernism and Agencies of Archive. These international scholars, visual artists and poets also delivered talks at the BioScience Research Collaborative throughout the week.

“I attended a poetry reading session by four distinguished poets and not only witnessed a very moving experience of personal expression, but also caught a glimpse of the vibrant and cutting-edge creativity that is happening now in the Asian and Asian-American literary communities,” said Anne Chao, adjunct lecturer in the School of Humanities.

The impressive list of artists and community partners brought together for this unique project illustrates the importance of continuing such cultural and historical conversations. In 2015, Tsinghua University plans to convene an offshoot scholarly meeting to examine specific instances in which cultural production, subjected to market processes, still offers a vision of a better and more collaborative world.”
“Beyond the Hedges and Into the Sand”  

BY MARY CHARLOTTE CARROLL ‘15

Maya Angelou wrote, “Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.” I won’t pretend to have had this thoughtful eloquence and keen insight when I decided to spend my summer in Jordan, but I was excited by the idea of seeing the enigmatic Middle East and finally using my Arabic outside the classroom.

I knew as I flew into Amman that I would be studying at the Qasid Arabic Institute with four other Rice students, but all I saw through the plane window was endless sand and blue sky. As we landed, I felt the unique mix of excitement and utter terror that only a summer abroad can bring. I worried that the Middle East would not be a friendly place for American students; my readings as a history major — and a look at the news on any given day — did not paint a pleasant picture of Arab-American relations. This fear turned out to be totally unfounded. As we walked down the streets in long sleeves and skirts, but with hair conspicuously uncovered, passersby shouted, “Ahlan wa Sahlan (Welcome to Jordan)!” You are welcome here.

In class, we scribbled down colloquial phrases in our soon overstuffed notebooks and eagerly put them to use. Shopkeepers greeted us warmly and thrust steaming cups of tea, sweets and breads fresh from street-side ovens into our all-too-willing hands.

When Ramadan approached, I felt anxious about stores and restaurants closing en masse after sunrise. As it turned out, I was left not starving and miserable but in awe of the beauty of Islam and the devotion our friends and neighbors felt. At Qasid, we learned to wish Muslims Ramadan Kareem and happiness for the rest of the year. We celebrated Iftar — breaking the fast — with friends and went out for cake and coffee at 2 a.m. as restaurants opened their doors each night. Then came Eid-al-Fitr, a joyful celebration filled with family and feasting. Our teacher, Omaima, invited us to her home for the festivities. We were inundated with cups of Arabic coffee, platters of fruit fresh from her backyard orchard, honeyed cakes and an enormous pile of mansaf, Jordan’s national dish of roasted chicken, rice and fermented yogurt, which we ate with our hands while chatting with at least 30 relatives.

Being halfway across the globe, struggling to communicate in an unfamiliar language, was an incredibly humbling experience for me and one everyone should have. It’s easy to group the world into categories of “us” and “them” and live in fear of the unknown, but my experience abroad taught me this distinction is meaningless, something Angelou figured out long ago. My trip through the Rice-in-Jordan program would not have been possible without generous tuition funding from the CLIC, and I am indebted both to them and to my professor, Maher Awad. As time goes by, I find my love and nostalgia for Jordan only increases, and I hope to return soon. “Insha’Allah (God willing).”

Mary Charlotte Carroll is a McMurtry College senior majoring in history. She was one of five students to participate in the inaugural Rice-in-Jordan summer study abroad program, organized by the school’s Center for Languages and Intercultural Communications.
Faculty Spotlight

Harvey Yunis

By Ujalashah Dhanani ’15
As a freshman, I enrolled in Harvey Yunis’ Greek Civilization course, and it was the only humanities course during my first fall semester. With a full schedule of general chemistry, differential equations, microeconomics and statistics, I anticipated the course to be “an easy DI” that would allow me to spend most of my time on my other premed courses. Suffice it to say, I spent more time during that first semester reading the works of Demosthenes and Aristophanes than I did balancing chemical equations or analyzing production-possibility frontier graphs. A surprising turn of events, I agree. Was it because I was initially more curious about these classical works than the laws of Boyle, Charles and Le Chatelier? Or perhaps because the course reading was so dense that I was forced to put my other classes on the back burner? Not exactly.

Yunis, the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities, expected that each of his students would come into class as a quasischolar on the material for that day. It simply did not matter whether or not a student had read any Plato before their time at Rice — they were expected to participate in class discussion and form articulate, insightful thoughts based upon the course material. He ensured this level of preparation by implementing a system wherein he would volley a question from behind his podium and then randomly select the student expected to return his shot. “I don’t know” simply was not a valid answer; he would often respond with a request for the student to make an educated guess and to explain the textual foundation for his thought. Yunis did this not to torture or embarrass his students but to convey to us that our ideas, no matter how unconventional, deserved to be heard. By virtue of the significance Yunis gave my ideas (and those of my classmates), I began to take my own thoughts more seriously and to spend more time dissecting class readings so that I could come to class better prepared.

After completing his Ph.D. in classical philology at Harvard University, Yunis arrived at Rice University in 1987. As a member of the Department of Hispanic and Classical Studies, his recruitment was the function of an active effort by the university to increase the quality of classical education. Within a few years, the Rice administration created an independent Department of Classical Studies (soon to be the Department of Classical and European Studies). During his nearly 10-year term as chair of the department, Yunis played an instrumental role in attracting some of the nation’s most brilliant classicists to Rice and developing the department’s national prestige, despite its young age.

“Harvey is a highly active scholar who brings great credit and visibility to the School of Humanities. We are very proud of his accomplishments and his commitment to classical education at Rice,” said Nicolas Shumway, dean of humanities.

While Yunis played an integral role in faculty recruitment, the advantages of researching at Rice are clearly evidenced by the prolific research accomplishments of Yunis and his peers. One of Yunis’ recent projects analyzes a newly discovered set of papyri fragments of Demosthenes’ “On the Crown.” Having already written extensively on the work, the fragments were sent to him to be studied through a process of philological, historical and literary analysis. These recently discovered papyri constitute the earliest available evidence for the text and are only about 80 to 100 years removed from the original composition, which is a rare phenomenon for any classical author. The discovery of the papyri and their translation by Yunis play a critical role in scholars’ understanding of the original structure of “On the Crown.”

While on leave during the fall 2014 semester, Yunis focused on tackling the hermeneutical question of how Plato’s original audience may have understood his “Symposium.” His research will be published as an addition to the Greek text and will include commentary on not only the text’s interpretation by Plato’s contemporaries, but also the way it has been understood throughout history. He also is working on a new annotated translation of Aristotle’s “The Art of Rhetoric.”

“Harvey is one of Rice’s foremost scholars in the humanities and has played an instrumental role in enhancing the brand of the department,” said Scott McGill, current department chair. “He consistently pushed himself and his colleagues to a level where their work could be respected by their peers outside of Rice, and this discipline and rigor led to a department that was increasingly prolific in research.”

Though his scholastic accomplishments and contributions to the field of classics are impressive, Yunis is so much greater than that. During my freshman year, he helped me to understand that my age or lack of experience with a topic did not mean that my postulations and ideas were inherently inferior to those of the upperclassmen and professors around me; as long as I had done the research and gathered the appropriate evidence, my ideas were going to be welcomed by professors and scholars who were experts in their respective fields, not just at Rice, but around the globe. This revelation became particularly relevant during my sophomore year when I conducted an independent research project under the supervision of Yunis to analyze how the conversion of eros between the public and private sphere in Athens was demonstrated by the Knidian Aphrodite. My experiences with Yunis inspired me to major in classics and write a senior thesis so that I may continue my scholarship on the subject.

Yunis’ ability to connect to the heart of texts from thousands of years ago is a testament to his understanding of the human experience and the knack that he has for exploring the world outside of the confines of his point-of-view. It is this ability to empathize with a variety of experiences that makes Yunis not only an innovative scholar, but also a great educator and mentor.

Ujalashah Dhanani is a senior at Sid Richardson College, majoring in classics. He has participated in the Health, Humanism and Society Scholars Program and plans to go to medical school after graduating from Rice.
“Agriculture”  
By Doha Aboul-Fotouh ’15

“But where is my garden,” asked the woman. It was no use, customs took away her seeds in the airport white-noise. She came for a garden. Her subsidized apartment has a Bunsen burner and a 4x2 balcony, neighbors who speak her language but use it to ask each other where is her husband, her father, her child. Weeds grow through the cement cracks in the unlined parking lot. She came for a garden. Weeds are not a garden. A garden is the right of any woman: a place to plot and grow and do whatever she wants under the rightful eye of the sun. Instead sun burns the dust on the plastic-shaded window above the breakfast table where she eats alone cold cereal accompanied by the clank of the spoon and the crunch in her mouth. Like gravel-crunch when she rolled her bag into the complex and a million faces awaited her, her color, her face, her forehead, all repeated in a sea like the pattern of wheat repeated on fields. Fields here are covered with cement and then covered with rubber tire and rubber shoe tracks. Pressing her hand to her forehead she wishes to sew a garden in the lines neatly drawing above her brow. It seems so long ago now, she thinks as she crowds to greet a woman and man and their three children. They are escaping the country she escaped but with their seedlings in tow.

“Anatomy Lab”  
By Amber Nadeau ’15

Winter in the hospital. Dead bodies, for once, in short supply; one to each team of three. I remember one tall dark girl with a French accent and hands of black marble, across the table from me, reeking of lavender.

Our woman. She wore coral lipstick that had rubbed off on some tube or another, but enough remained to surprise me when I touched her lips and they were cold. The French girl sliced a line above each breast, then straight down the stomach.

After you die you don’t bleed.

When I felt her intestine I paused to think two things: Did I turn on the Crock-Pot? and This feels gritty. Gritty like fine sand. We dug deep. Coral, thousands of rough little pearls, spilled out, as if her lipstick had colored her inside too. Cancer, said the professor. Quelle domage, said Lavender Girl. My hair stuck to my forehead. I wanted to wipe it away.
After nearly 16 years with Shannon, 15 of those living together, 14 of those married, Rich panicked each morning he woke up alone in a twin bed. It took his subconscious a few anxious seconds to reorient itself, and then he jumped up and flicked the lights on. Geoff threw his hands up to block the light, glaring at his roommate through the cracks between his fingers. His hands cast three different tints of shadow on his face.

“There’d better be a fire,” he said.

“C’mon, get up,” said Rich. “I’m getting dressed. You should too.”

“Not in the middle of the fucking—”

“Hey, I’m not the one who wants to do this,” said Rich, who knew he wasn’t telling the entire truth. He blamed the boredom, mostly, and his sponsor’s voice in his head reminding him that he needed something different. Rich couldn’t just keep being himself but without drinking, Javi always said. His entire personality was susceptible to change, and worth the change, if it would end in sobriety. If nothing else, Geoff was definitely a change.

“Do you even have proper gym clothes?” Rich asked.

Geoff crawled out of his bed, leaving it unmade behind him, with the flat sheet ripped from the foot of the bed and tangled up near the pillow. He grabbed a pair of basketball shorts from the floor. After digging through his mound of not-quite-clean-not-quite-dirty long-sleeve shirts, he finally donned a plain blue T-shirt.

Rich had expected collapsed veins, abscesses or persistent infection, but Geoff had different injuries from other addicts. The insides of his elbows were riddled with holes, black and old and gaping. Rich couldn’t tell whether these were recent injuries or if this was just how Geoff’s arms had scarred over. He realized that his roommate must have had considerable effort into concealing his arms until then.

“Hey, c’mon, let’s move. First morning’s the hardest,” said Rich, who was lying again.

After that first workout, Geoff convinced a reluctant Rich to stretch for 15 minutes. Soon enough stretching after their workout became another routine in the blurred days of meeting in the same rooms talking to the same people about the same things (drinking and drugs: they are bad).

A dozen days into the program, Rich found himself camped out once again on the mats in the corner of the gym, trying to press his forehead to his shins.

In the middle of the hamstring stretch, Geoff said, “I almost died.”


“My rock bottom,” Geoff said. “I took too much, and I almost died. Then my parents sent me here.”

“OK.”

“Just thought you should know,” Geoff said, sliding his feet out and pressing his forearms flat against the ground between them. He motioned for Rich to do the same. “And besides, you never mentioned yours.”

“No, I didn’t.” When Rich tried to mimic the stance, the twinges in his legs and back reminded him that Geoff was closer to his daughter’s age than his own. “Mine is thoroughly average.”

“But isn’t it still important?” Geoff asked.

“Like, for your recovery? To talk about it?”

“I don’t remember most of it.”

“Come on, I’ve pulled that before; you have to remember something. Maybe the type of drink, or what you were up to beforehand?”

Rich brought his legs back in and shrugged his arms into a tricep stretch. “Whiskey,” he said. “Driving home.”

“Don’t just recite events,” Geoff scolded. “Give me some emotion. How do you remember feeling?”

Rich paused while he inched his hand down his back, feeling his arm tighten like an old rubber band. He remembered collapsing onto the couch, trying to process the spin of the Earth, and then Shannon had leaned over and asked him what was wrong.

“Nothing,” he had said. “When’s dinner?”

“We already ate dinner,” she had said. There had been something strange happening at the corners of her eyes and at her neck, but she was too out of focus for him to see what was wrong. “Do you remember what we ate?”

The trembling in her neck might have been her pulse. Shannon’s heart had been speeding up while Rich’s slowed down. That night he slowed so much that unconsciousness caught up and ran him over; he fell under its wheels before he could even answer Shannon’s question.


“Then...?” Geoff pressed. “Come on, then what?”

“Thennn...” Geoff thought. I had a stroke and took me to the hospital and found that I had a BAC of thirty-eight and my car was half-wrecked from a hit and run I did, and no one was hurt but Jordan had seen me stumbling around and Shannon filed for divorce the next day because apparently she’d had the papers waiting for months,” Rich said. He stood and headed for the room, and Geoff followed.

“You’re right,” Geoff said. “That was actually pretty standard.”

“That wasn’t it,” said Rich. He was annoyed, and he could trace the annoyance to his disappointment in Geoff. He wasn’t sure why he expected his child of a roommate to understand, when no one else had, when they had all accepted the divorce as a natural low-point.

“Then what was?” Geoff asked.

Losing Shannon and starting to lose Jordan too should have been an epiphany. The epiphany. He should have fallen long enough or landed hard enough to give himself an aversion for alcohol, but he didn’t. The wisdom from his rock bottom, like the effect of countless other life-changing moments whose opportunities he ignored and whose circumstances he could no longer remember, faded within a day. So he drank when he got out of the hospital.

“It was the day after,” Rich grunted, and he refused to discuss it further, because talking with Geoff wasn’t going to change his life.
Amidst a sea of prospective engineers and medical students, one might expect a right-brained student to feel out of place at Rice University. Yet the humanities and the sciences aren’t dichotomous but rather two entwined parts of every Rice student’s narrative. Unconventional wisdom can be found in all corners of the campus and for academes like me, it is easy to locate in the Department of History.

From the dynamic history of the American South with John Boles ’65, the William P. Hobby Professor, to the complexity of Central Asian Empires with Lisa Balabanlilar, associate professor, and from the evolution of the Brazilian state with Alida Metcalf, department chair and the Harris Masterson Jr. Professor, to the internal battles of the Cold War with Douglas Brinkley, a fellow at the Baker Institute and professor of history, the pursuit of a Rice history degree can take a student on hundreds of different paths. The degree is reflective of a student’s personal interests, and the spread and depth of the history department’s knowledge ensures no two major-tracks are the same.

Yet no matter how diverse a student’s historic interests, there are more than two dozen acclaimed history professors to teach both undergraduate and graduate students. As one of the largest departments in the School of Humanities, their commitment to exemplary academic experiences permeates every area of study. The department has a culture of discussion and inquiry that is made possible by its faculty’s consistent dedication to supporting students.

Outside of the classroom, history faculty interact with students in a variety of fashions. Alexander Byrd, associate professor, is concluding his five-year term as master at Wiess College in spring 2015 and Caleb McDaniel, assistant professor, will serve as the master of Duncan College beginning in fall 2015. At McMurtry College, Balabanlilar has served as head resident fellow and Daniel Cohen, associate professor, as a resident associate. Many faculty members also serve as college associates, an advisory honor whereby students invite faculty to become part of their residential college.

“Our extensive involvement in the college system is part of what makes history professors some of the best teachers on campus,” said McDaniel. “We get to know Rice students — their interests, concerns and challenges outside of class — and I think that makes us more engaging in the classroom.”

Yet apart from unrivaled and dedicated faculty, what is it that makes the history major such a unique experience at Rice? For undergraduate majors, the department offers a level of support for research that is matched by few universities. The Charles Garside Jr. Prize is a grant awarded to graduating seniors who apply with proposals for research trips. Described by a major as “an adventure grant,” the Garside Prize has sent students all over the world as a means to encourage student travel and self-reflection. After submitting a trip proposal and two letters of faculty support, students are chosen by a faculty committee.

“The Garside coincides with the perfect time in a student’s life,” said Metcalf. “The chance to earn a grant that emphasizes travel and reflection is a rare and truly special opportunity for our seniors.”

Also unique to undergraduate education is the Ira and Patricia Gruber Fund for Undergraduate Research. Created in honor of retired faculty member Ira Gruber and made available to students writing an honors thesis in history, the fund allows majors to pursue original research
on an international scale. For example, the Gruber Fund supported senior Emma Hurt’s 2014 trip to Paris to study Nazi art looting during World War II. “The Gruber allowed me to connect with my research and with France on a far deeper level than I would have otherwise,” said Hurt. Hurt will be the first history major to graduate with the new international concentration track for students interested in complementing their studies with foreign language and study abroad requirements.

There are equally phenomenal opportunities for graduate students pursuing a history doctorate. In partnership with the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) in Brazil, the department offers the first dual degree Ph.D. program in the School of Humanities. This new program allows qualified students to study at the partner university and to write a co-supervised dissertation, ultimately receiving a degree from both Rice and UNICAMP. In February 2015, Rice sent its first participating graduate student, Rachael Pasierowska, to study for a year in Brazil.

Unlike many other graduate history programs, Rice does not require graduate students to serve as instructors. Although there are many opportunities to teach, including courses that graduate students develop themselves, the emphasis on graduate education is the development of Ph.D. candidates in their preferred learning environment. All graduate students are trained with an emphasis on transnational approaches to the study of the past and campus partners such as the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, the Center for Critical and Cultural Theory, and the Kinder Institute for Urban Research offer additional opportunities to enhance their experience through certificate programs and interdisciplinary research.

The history department at Rice prides itself on offering its students unparalleled opportunities while creating a degree experience that is unique to student interests and guided by remarkable faculty. A Rice student with a history degree represents more than just a collection of knowledge; it indicates that as a historian, that student has moved beyond the basics of analyzing and interpreting sources. By graduation, a Rice history major has been exposed to a diversity of fields within the major and has honed their skills of historiography and methodology in one of Rice’s most communal and supportive academic environments. The Rice history department is most certainly unconventional, but ask any of its majors — we wouldn’t have it any other way.

For more information about Rice’s history department, visit history.rice.edu.

Walter Hurst Williamson is a Hanzsen College senior studying history and political science.
Mark Krouskop, program manager for the Rice Theatre Program, is late to our meeting. He’s in Hamman Hall helping a student with their set design, explaining how the relocation of a circular platform could open up down stage left and pointing out where a slight reduction in the size of a cutout could reduce building time.

“One of the joys about Mark, and there are many, is that he takes his mentoring of students, whether they’re theater majors or not, really seriously,” said Christina Keefe, director of Rice Theatre and humanities professor in the practice. Together, Keefe and Krouskop serve 20 theater-track majors and the larger Rice theater community by providing diverse and challenging courses and productions. They supplement their own skills with a rotating cast (pun 100-percent intended) of adjunct professors, working professionals and guest designers.

“That’s a lot,” acknowledged Keefe. But the strategy allows the program to flourish as it puts Rice students in a position to succeed and gives them access to the resources to do so.

Soon after the Department of Art and Art History divided into two separate departments, the Department of Visual Arts asked the theater program to join it in 2006, with the intention of theater gaining more visibility as part of a diverse, multidisciplined fine arts department. This move was made with the unanimous support of the dean of humanities and visual arts faculty with an eye toward curriculum enrichment for majors and nonmajors across the campus.

Both campuswide and college-specific organizations have always provided Rice with a strong and diverse student theater tradition. Notable theatrical events in Rice’s history include the 1951 founding of the oldest (and best) student-run theater company in Houston, the Rice Players; the 1964 debut of Wiess Tabletop’s “Hello Hamlet”; and the founding of Baker Shakespeare in 1971. With so much pre-existing theatrical energy, the Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts (VADA) didn’t want to replace existing student institutions, but to educate them and in doing so, make Rice thespians more experienced, better trained and better organized.

“One of the biggest goals that I’ve had since I got here in 2008” said Keefe, “is bringing theater at Rice — all theater at Rice — to the forefront of people’s minds.” Looking at campus today, it’s hard to deny that Rice theater is experiencing a bit of a renaissance. By my count, there were seven productions in the spring 2015: Rice Theatre’s “Bob: A Life in Five Acts”; the Rice...
Theatre's signature style: the seamless decision-making, which is precisely Rice students experience at every level of the Rice Players, the popular show gave collaboration between Rice Theatre and influenced and driven production. A of Horrors," was just as much a student search "Rice Midsummer." was seen by at least 1,000 people over the funny Shakespeare performance. The show plenty of students to execute a fresh and the Sallyport, the show brought together partly under a beautifully lit tree in front of the stone courtyard outside Sewall Hall and outdoor Shakespeare. Performed partly in Susannah Eig '17, who had a passion for theater program to get validation from the outside," remarked Keefe. "For a small community here and the community but it's also about how we connect to the experience and educational touch to the result of Keefe's close relationship with it's totally about the program that I run, and it's also about how we connect to the community here and the community outside," remarked Keefe. "For a small theater program to get validation from the Houston Press is remarkable in my mind."
The fall 2013 show, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," was dreamt up (sorry) as the result of Keefe's close relationship with Susannah Eig '17, who had a passion for outdoor Shakespeare. Performed partly in the stone courtyard outside Sewall Hall and partly under a beautifully lit tree in front of the Sallyport, the show brought together Rice alumni, professional designers, and plenty of students to execute a fresh and funny Shakespeare performance. The show was seen by at least 1,000 people over the three-night run and the Houston Press wrote that "the production is free, but the joy is priceless." A recording of the performance is available on the Rice YouTube channel, search "Rice Midsummer."
The spring 2014 show, "The Little Shop of Horrors," was just as much a student influenced and driven production. A collaboration between Rice Theatre and the Rice Players, the popular show gave students experience at every level of decision-making, which is precisely Rice Theatre's signature style: the seamless integration of student and professional artists. "Working with student designers can be a challenge, but it can also be very rewarding," said Krouskop. "When you see that light bulb moment going off, going 'I get it!' That's awesome. That's why I enjoy doing it." The opportunity to work with professionals is incredibly valuable since they "can bring in their expertise and their connections and networks to our students," Keefe said. "And that's pretty unusual."
Students who join a VADA production are given hands-on experience with how to correctly run an efficient production. They learn how to collaborate and communicate while working under the pressure of a firm deadline. They interact with students from across campus with different levels of experience and skills. Participants receive distribution credit, which allows the students time in their class schedule to focus on the production. This and the top-quality professionals hired each season bring an exceptional level of academic rigor to each production.
The visiting lecturers provide an experienced and educational touch to the constantly expanding theater curriculum. Rice Theatre offered 18 major-track courses and produced one classic and one modern performance during the 2014–2015 school year: "The Servant of Two Masters," a 1743 Italian play commonly cited as one of the foundational works of modern comedy; and "BOB: A Life in Five Acts," an Americana comedy. "BOB" was directed by VADA lecturer Julia Traber, who also taught a spring 2015 upper-level course on directing. Other notable recent lecturers include Leraldo Anzaldua, who taught a stage combat class; Heather Breakjern, the Alley Theatre costume shop manager, who regularly teaches costume and make-up design; and Shyla Ray, founder of the Station Theater, who has taught Improv for Stage and Screen and Intro to Western Theatre History. I took both of Ray's classes and they were my first- and fourth-favorite classes at Rice, respectively.
These relationships, along with the efforts of Keefe and Krouskop, have led to external collaborations and career opportunities. Students like Eig and Aaron Tallman '12 have gotten roles at professional theaters while still students at Rice. The program's association with the National Theatre Institute has allowed students to spend the semester studying with nationally recognized teachers and even visit the Moscow Art Theatre in Russia. "What the Rice Theatre Program provided for me, instead of large shops and state-of-the-art stage equipment, was amazing mentors who really became invested in me," said Mackenzie Turner '13, a costume designer in New York. "They truly cared about my interests and where my career would go once I left the program. These are people that I still turn to for advice today, and that's an experience that couldn't have been replicated somewhere else."
As for myself, I already know my Rice education is working for me. This semester I directed McMurtry Theatre's production of "The Pillowman." I could hear myself echoing Keefe's sound-oriented approach to directing, I could see myself espousing Krouskop's penchant for smart, practical design, and I could feel myself more prepared for managing the ups and downs inherent in putting on theater.
The Rice Theatre Program is small, but its reach is wide, its heart is large and its knowledge is unconventional.

For more information about Rice Theatre, visit theatre.rice.edu.

Grant Raun is a McMurtry College senior majoring in political science and theater.
2014–15

The Rice Seminar, Temporalities and Exchanges, studied the tension between increasing globalization and traditional divisions in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Helena Michie, the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor in English, and Alexander Regier, associate professor of English and editor of the scholarly journal SEL: Studies in English Literature 1500–1900, led the seminar group of four faculty, one postdoctoral fellow and two graduate student participants. Over the course of the year, participants read recent scholarship about borders between countries and time periods, hosted six visiting scholars and invited members of the community to “open meetings.” Visitors and topics have included Lara Kriegel, associate professor of English and history at Indiana University at Bloomington, on the Crimean War and the Victoria Cross; Frances Ferguson, the Ann L. and Lawrence B. Buttenwise Professor of English at the University of Chicago, on theories of education in the 18th century; Lauren Goodlad, professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, on the idea of globalization; Saree Makdisi, professor in English at the University of California at Los Angeles, on space and mapping in 19th-century London; and Ericka Beckman, assistant professor of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, on the standardization of time in the 19th-century Latin American novel. The seminar concluded with a spring symposium and two special issues of SEL: Studies in English Literature 1500–1900, which grew out of the seminar topic.

2015–16

After Biopolitics, the 2015–16 seminar, will explore how and why “life” in the broadest sense has become a central topic of politics over the past few decades.

The seminar will be led by Cary Wolfe, the Bruce and Elizabeth Dunlevie Professor in English and director of the Center for Critical and Cultural Theory, and Timothy Morton, the Rita Shea Guffey Professor in English.

Over the past 30 years, no paradigm has become more central to understanding our own moment than the paradigm of biopolitics — a fact that has left hardly any discipline untouched, resulting in new formations such as bioart, bioethics, biotechnology, biomedia, biocapital, bioinformatics, biovalue and biocomputing among many others. The reasons for this are not hard to see: the engineering, domestication and commodification of life in the era of synthetic biology, at a level scarcely thinkable 50 years ago; rapid depletion of the earth’s resources in the context of global warming in what used to be called the first world; seemingly endless debates over the political and economic complexities of healthcare, social security, lengthening retirement ages and dwindling personal savings rates in the developed West; confrontations over abortion and immigration in the U.S., in which the concepts of life and race are never far from view; and the post-9/11 context of the war on terror and ongoing anxieties about security resulting in the normalization of spaces and practices of juridical exception such as Guantanamo Bay, drone warfare and electronic surveillance at a level heretofore unknown. Add to these an increasing awareness of the plight of nonhuman life, whether in discussions of animal rights, factory farming and the bioengineering of nonhuman creatures or in the increasingly undeniable fact of the sixth-major extinction event in the history of the planet. In the face of such developments, the seminar seeks to reexamine the theoretical, cultural, social and political underpinnings of the biopolitical paradigm and to explore conceptual resources for the possibility of thinking what has been called an affirmative biopolitics that views the intersection of life and the political as a potential space of affinity, community and creativity.

The Rice Seminars program is an initiative of the Office of the Dean of Humanities and is funded by the School of Humanities and the Humanities Research Center.

For more information about the Rice Seminars, visit hrc.rice.edu/riceseminars.

Exploring life: After Biopolitics faculty leaders Cary Wolfe, the Bruce and Elizabeth Dunlevie Professor in English and director of the Center for Critical and Cultural Theory, and Timothy Morton, the Rita Shea Guffey Professor in English.
Finding Jesus

Religion professor explains the ‘Gospel of Judas’ in CNN television series

Just before school started in August 2014, my phone rang. The caller identified himself as a TV show producer from London working on a series of six shows examining artifacts about Jesus. As the man continued talking, I was drawn in, impressed by his knowledge of the “Gospel of Judas,” one of the artifacts the CNN TV series would cover.

The “Gospel of Judas” is an ancient Christian Gnostic writing from the middle of the second century. A fourth-century copy of it written in Coptic had been recovered from a tomb in Egypt and was restored and translated by the National Geographic Society in 2006.

Once the Coptic transcripts of the gospel were released, I went to work on the text myself, discovering that the original translation work done by the National Geographic Society team was erroneous throughout. Their translation and interpretation presented Judas as a heroic figure much like Martin Scorsese’s Judas in his film “The Last Temptation of Christ,” when in fact the gospel identified Judas with an evil power called the Thirteenth Demon. This figure is not only demonic; it is a known figure from Gnostic literature, the dark Lord of the 12 demons who rule the world. Judas is no hero in this gospel. He is as evil as ever.

To get word out, in 2007 I wrote a book called “The Thirteenth Apostle: What the Gospel of Judas Really Says” and published an op-ed in The New York Times, ‘The Gospel Truth.’ I also hosted the Codex Judas Congress, an international scholastic conference in 2008 at Rice University and published the proceedings in 2010. While word spread among scholars, it never seemed to penetrate the public mind, which had been saturated initially with heroic images of Judas from the National Geographic media campaign and DVD film.

Gospel of Judas Really Says’ and published an op-ed in The New York Times, ‘The Gospel Truth.’ I also hosted the Codex Judas Congress, an international scholastic conference in 2008 at Rice University and published the proceedings in 2010. While word spread among scholars, it never seemed to penetrate the public mind, which had been saturated initially with heroic images of Judas from the National Geographic media campaign and DVD film.

Now, as I spoke with this TV show producer, I realized that his team wanted to get word out. They wanted to tell the whole story about the “Gospel of Judas,” and they wanted me to fly to Geneva, where the “Gospel of Judas” is housed, to take them through the Coptic text and capture this on film.

In October 2014, I traveled to the Bodmer Library and saw the relic for the first time. Emotion rushed through me. This had been a sacred text for a Christian Gnostic some 2,000 years ago. In it, Jesus indicted Judas for the part he would play in his death. As the camera fixed on me, I went through the gospel page by page, explaining what the gospel actually said.

The film series, “Finding Jesus. Faith. Fact. Forgery” premiered March 1, 2015, on CNN. “The Gospel of Judas” aired March 15 as the third episode of a six-part series that blends science and archaeology to examine six Christian relics. To retell “the greatest story ever told” using state-of-the-art scientific techniques and archaeological research, the series covers the Shroud of Turin; True Cross relics; the “Gospel of Judas”; John the Baptist relics; the Ossuary of James, Jesus’ brother; and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene. A companion book, “Finding Jesus. Faith. Fact. Forgery,” written by David Gibson and Michael McKinley, was released in February 2015.

April D. DeConick is the chair of the Department of Religion and the Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Rice.
Window Into Rice Gallery

The Rice Gallery is the only university art museum in the nation dedicated to site-specific installation art.

The Rice Gallery is a gateway to the university’s rich cultural life as it presents temporary, large-scale environments that visitors can enter and explore. An integral part of campus life, Rice Gallery offers seminal art experiences for students, as well as opportunities to hear and interact directly with creative individuals from a variety of disciplines. Students may participate as interns, gallery attendants and in academic classes.

July 2014 marked the 20th anniversary of Rice Gallery’s installation art mission. Please visit ricegallery.org for details about becoming a member of the gallery and information about upcoming events and programs.

WINTER

El Ultimo Grito: “Garden Object”
Jan. 23–March 23, 2014

Spanish design studio El Ultimo Grito, founded in 1997 by husband and wife team Rosario Hurtado and Roberto Feo, created this wildly patterned, eccentric form installation that existed as functional public seating, contemporary sculpture and graphic design. Expanding upon their approach to design and construction in which they rely on their hands, bodies and readily available, inexpensive materials to “free” them from traditional methods of production, their creative mode is described as “a return to a kind of primitivism, before tools and machines could inform the way we design and think about design.” Over the course of a few days, Grito and a team of Rice Gallery volunteers covered lanky, snaking plywood armatures in bubble wrap, packing tape and, finally, a skin of brightly colored stickers.

This versatile installation provided a great opportunity for students and visitors of all ages to interact with art. Visiting school groups, studying undergraduates and curious gallery patrons were able to enjoy lectures and programming while sitting on the installation.

T h i s v e r s a t i l e installation provided a great opportunity for students and visitors of all ages to interact with art. Visiting school groups, studying undergraduates and curious gallery patrons were able to enjoy lectures and programming while sitting on the installation.
In “Crossing the Farther Shore,” Vietnamese-American artist Dinh Q. Lê incorporated photographs taken in Vietnam during 1940–1980. The photographs were stitched together to form fragile-looking, rectangular structures that allude to the mosquito netting under which people sleep, creating what Lê calls a “sleeping, dreaming memory of Vietnam.” Lê was born in Hà Tiên, Vietnam, but he grew up in Los Angeles after his family left the war-torn country in 1979. Lê has been collecting photographs for years and considers them to be important in documenting the everyday lives of Southern Vietnamese people. Such photos are some of the few records of South Vietnam that have escaped from the Northern Vietnamese communist government’s systematic effort to erase the pre-1975 existence of the South.

This deeply moving installation inspired Words & Art, a powerful public reading and writing workshop, that gives attendees an opportunity to read or listen to prose written about the art. “Crossing the Farther Shore” was on-view during the gallery’s crowd-funding campaign, Give 20 for 20, which raised more than $30,000 in celebration of Rice Gallery’s 20th anniversary.

Created in conjunction with The Menil Collection’s exhibition, “Experiments With Truth: Gandhi and Images of Nonviolence,” Japanese artist Yusuke Asai painted his installation, “yamatane” with different types of local mud, dust and soil. In his first exhibition in the United States, Asai transformed Houston’s swampy soil into immersive murals inspired by Indian folk painting. The simple geometric shapes formed dense forests full of imaginary animals and people appeared in lush patterns crawling across walls and ceilings.

Inspired by the installation, Shepherd School students performed “Music for Peace” at the Oct. 18, New Art/New Music event. In “Professor Perspectives,” Rice faculty members from across campus discussed how the mud murals connected to their research.

SPRING/SUMMER

Dinh Q. Lê: “Crossing the Farther Shore”
April 10–Aug. 28, 2014

FALL

Yusuke Asai: “yamatane”
Oct. 2–Nov. 23, 2014
2014 was a year of change for SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900, as the SEL community experienced the loss of two esteemed editorial board members, Anne Barton and Edward Orth Doughtie. Barton, professor emeritus and fellow of Trinity College at the University of Cambridge, joined SEL’s editorial board in 1976. Doughtie served as editor of SEL from 1973 to 1978, and from 1984 to 1989. He retired in 2001 as a professor in Rice University’s Department of English, but continued to serve as an active member of the SEL board until summer 2013. SEL also mourned the passing of Diana Potteat Stallings Hobby, associate editor of the journal from 1979 to 1991. In her honor and with her support, the Hobby Family Foundation set up funds to support the Monroe Spears Award, given annually for the “best essay” in each volume of SEL, and most significantly, to establish the Diana Hobby Editorial Fellows program, which provides generous stipends to Rice’s English graduate students while they learn about scholarly rigor, professional behavior, and publishing standards and protocols.

During the 2015 annual convention of the Modern Language Association in Vancouver, the editors of SEL presented the third Robert Lowry Patten Award, the ninth Elizabeth Dietz Memorial Award and the 18th Monroe K. Spears Award. Judith Roof, the William Shakespeare Endowed Chair in English and chair of the Department of English, and Logan D. Browning, professor in the practice, SEL’s publisher and executive editor made the presentations to the winning authors and publishers.

The Patten Award was created in 2012 to honor the over 40-year distinguished scholarly and pedagogical career of Rice University professor Robert Lowry Patten. “How to Do Things With Books in Victorian Britain” by Leah Price, the Francis Lee Higginson Professor of English Literature at Harvard University, was selected as the most outstanding recent contribution to 19th-century British literary studies. The judges lauded the work, published by Princeton University Press, for its combination of “solid scholarship with bold intelligence.”

The judges for the 2014 Patten Award were Jon Mee, professor of 18th-century studies and director of the centre for 18th-century studies, University of York; Adela Pinch, professor of English and women’s studies, University of Michigan; and Heather Glen, professor of English, University of Cambridge.

The 2014 Elizabeth Dietz Memorial Award was given to “Mortal Thoughts: Religion, Secularity, and Identity in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture” by Brian Cummings, professor of English and related literature at the University of York. The book is published by Oxford University Press. As the judges report, “Mortal Thoughts’ offers a significant and enduring contribution to contemporary debates about the quality and pace of secularization in the early modern period and the urgency and inventiveness of religious thought in the age of Dürer, Shakespeare and Donne.”

The judges for this year’s contest were Margreeta de Grazia, emerita Sheli Z. and Burton X. Rosenberg Professor of the Humanities, University of Pennsylvania; Garrett Sullivan, professor of English and director of graduate studies, Pennsylvania State University; and Julia Reinhard Lupton, professor of English, University of California at Irvine.

The journal’s Monroe K. Spears Award was given to Joshua Phillips, associate professor of English at the University of Memphis, for his winter 2014 essay, “Monasticism and Idleness in Spenser’s Late Poetry,” and James O’Rourke, professor of English at Florida State University, for his autumn 2014 essay, “What Never Happened: Social Amnesia in ‘Sense and Sensibility.’” The editors voted and agreed that both essays most completely met the award’s criteria: being “marked by clarity, economy and felicity of expression and by elegant and discerning interpretation” and “the essay that has given the editors the greatest pleasure to read.”

SEL, a quarterly journal of British literary studies founded at Rice by Carroll Camden, longtime chair of the English department, began publication in 1961. For more information on the journal and upcoming issues, please visit sel.rice.edu.

**SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900 Receives 2014 CELJ Voyager Award**

In January 2015, SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900 received the 2014 Voyager Award from the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ), recognizing excellence in any journal covering the period between 1500 and 1800. Judges’ praise for SEL was high: “In its four substantial issues per volume, Studies in English Literature has been and remains one of the premier journals of early modern English literature. Each issue reads as an achievement.”

Logan Browning said, “This award is especially meaningful coming from such a distinguished organization of peers. I accept it on behalf of all those who have contributed to SEL’s excellence since its founding.”

**Peer recognition:** The CELJ Voyager Award was presented to Logan Browning, publisher and executive editor of SEL.
2014–15 Conferences

Borders and Encounters — Humanities Graduate Student Association’s 2nd Annual Conference

Jan. 31, 2015

Rice’s Humanities Graduate Student Association hosted its second annual interdisciplinary graduate student conference, Borders and Encounters. The daylong conference fostered collaboration across all the humanities departments and developed productive relationships among graduate students and faculty. Nicolas Shumway, dean of the School of Humanities, delivered opening remarks and Timothy Morton, the Rita Shea Guffey Professor in English, gave the keynote speech, The Uncanny Valley is in Fact a Gigantic Plain, Stretching as Far as the Eye Can See in Every Direction. There were four panels: Colonial, Post-Colonial and Global Narratives; Creating, Changing and Crossing Identities; Unfamiliar Spaces, All Too Human Places; and Rhetoric, Transcendence and Everyday Life.

Organized by: Mark Schmanko, president (religion); Rachael Pasierowska, external vice-president (history) Minji Lee, treasurer (religion); and Hannah Fullgraf, secretary (art history)

Earth, Air, Water, Fire: Brenda Hillman and the Art of Ecology

Feb. 13, 2015

Earth, Air, Water, Fire considered the work of award-winning American poet Brenda Hillman, who visited Rice University in February for two events. On Feb. 12 in the Rice University Chapel, Hillman read from her recent tetralogy of books, four collections on ecology and the elements. On Feb. 13 in Herring Hall, Hillman delivered a talk on poetry, ecology and activism. A meditation on her works by Rice undergraduates, graduate students and faculty as well as two distinguished visiting poets accompanied this talk. All events were co-sponsored by the Humanities Research Center, the Center for Energy and Environmental Research in the Human Sciences, the Department of English and Fondren Library’s Cherry Reading Series.

Organized by: Joseph Campana, the Alan Dugald McKillop Associate Professor of English

Minter Symposium on Medieval and Early Modern Society — New Directions in the History of Gender and Sexuality: Self, Family and the Social

Feb. 7, 2015

This international, interdisciplinary symposium explored new directions in the history of gender and sexuality in late medieval and early modern Europe. Specialists in art history and literature examined love lyrics concerning domestic slaves; images of serial marriage; the gender of envy; images of animal sex; incest and kinship; the eroticized maternal breast; the sacred eroticism in Caravaggio’s art; the metamorphosis of the body; and gender and sexuality in the Baptistry of Padua. This was co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality; Department of Art History; Humanities Research Center; and Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

Organized by: Diane Wolfthal, the David and Carol Minter Chair in Humanities and professor of art history

Africa at A.D. 1000: Scalar Transformations and Global Interactions at the Turn of the Millennium

March 27, 2015

This conference explored regional transformations that occurred across Africa in the crucial centuries that straddle A.D. 1000. Papers addressed the period leading up to and beyond the end of the millennium, thus exploring the basis for dramatic transformations that occurred at that time: the emergence of large-scale complex societies, significant increases in long-distance trade and transformations in the scale of production and consumption. Through this focus, the conference challenged the way that A.D. 1000 is often offered as a hard break in the historical trajectory of the African past.

Organized by: Jeffrey Fleisher, associate professor of anthropology and ancient mediterranean civilizations
Cherry Reading Series Brings Visiting Writers to Campus

Five acclaimed authors read from and discussed their literary works this spring as part of Rice University’s Cherry Reading Series. Administered by the creative writing faculty of Department of English and supported by Fondren Library through the Robert Foster Cherry endowed funds, this series brings a range of emerging and established writers of national repute to read their poetry, fiction and nonfiction for the Rice community. Each year, selected readers offer a public reading, visit creative writing workshops taught on campus, and meet with faculty and students in the program.

The spring 2015 series kicked off Feb. 5 with former Rice University Parks Fellow Tiphanie Yanique, who read from her recent book, “Land of Love and Drowning,” the winner of the 2014 Flaherty-Dunnan First Novel Prize.

Brenda Hillman, acclaimed American poet and recipient of the 2014 Griffin Poetry Prize, read from “Cascadia” and “Seasonal Works With Letters on Fire” Feb. 12. Hillman also offered a lecture on poetry, activism and the environment at an event co-sponsored by Rice’s Center for Energy and Environmental Research in the Human Sciences and the Humanities Research Center.

Author and screenwriter Susan Minot read March 31, and Paul Otremba, assistant professor of English at Rice, was joined by Rice alumna and poet Cecily Parks April 14.

“There’s nothing more important to young writers than the chance to see great practitioners of the literary arts live and up close,” said Joseph Campana, the Alan Dugald McKillop Associate Professor in English and director of the creative writing program. “The Cherry Series brings important writers, both emerging and established, to Rice to offer our undergraduates just that opportunity. All events are free and open to the public, which means we also can welcome Houston’s literary community to campus regularly for these excellent readings.”

The Cherry Reading Series is sponsored by Rice’s Fondren Library and coordinated by the Department of English’s Creative Writing Program. It is named for Robert Foster Cherry, a member of the Rice Institute Class of 1930 who created an endowment to support purchasing books, visiting lectures and creative writing student prizes.

Acclaimed voices: (L-R): Spring 2015 Cherry Reading participants Cecily Parks ’99, Tiphanie Yanique, Susan Minot, Paul Otremba and Brenda Hillman.
2015 Campbell Lecture Series
‘The Trouble With Michael: Artist and Rice Alum Discusses 30 Years of Art Production’

The 2015 Campbell Lecture Series featured Michael Petry ‘81, the Texas-born multimedia artist, author and director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, London. The April 7–9 lectures were held at the Rice Media Center. An alumni reception, co-hosted by the Rice Alumni Pride and the Society of Latino Alumni Rice, followed the April 9 lecture. A coinciding exhibition of Petry’s work, “AT the Core of the Algorithm,” opened April 11 at Hiram Butler Gallery and is on view through May 30, 2015.

This year’s series, titled “The Trouble With Michael: Artist and Rice Alum Michael Petry Discusses 30 Years of Art Production,” featured three lectures. The opening lecture, “Growing Up in Public,” was an overview of his work. Petry referenced his time as a Rice student (1978–81) and how these initial influences continue to be reflected in his work. “Reading a Life” explored his work as an author, curator and librettist. This included his groundbreaking books on installation art; the relationship between artists and artisans; art and sexuality; and the still life tradition. The final lecture, “The Art of Ethics,” looked at the role played by artists, institutions and audiences in presenting art in an ‘unethical’ world. Petry focused on institutional sexism, racism and homophobia and the impact of different sources of funding.


The Campbell Lecture Series is supported by a generous gift from T.C. Campbell ’34 through the Campbell Fund. Each year, the series brings a distinguished humanities scholar to campus to give lectures on a topic of broad humanistic interest. Through a special arrangement with the University of Chicago Press, the lectures are later published as a book. Visit campbell.rice.edu for more information.
Faculty Publications and Shows

**ART HISTORY**
- **Gordon Hughes**
  - Assistant Professor
  - “Resisting Abstraction: Robert Delaunay and Vision in the Face of Modernism” (University of Chicago Press, 2014)

**GERMAN STUDIES**
- **Christian J. Emden**
  - Professor
  - “Nietzsche’s Naturalism: Philosophy and the Life Sciences in the Nineteenth Century” (Cambridge University Press, 2014)

**HISTORY**
- **Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu**
  - Dunlevie Family Chair in History
  - “Transpacific Field of Dreams: How Baseball Linked the United States and Japan in Peace and War” (University of North Carolina Press, 2015)

**PHILOSOPHY**
- **George Sher**
  - Herbert S. Autrey Professor
  - “Equality of Inegalitarians” (Cambridge University Press, 2014)

**RELIGION**
- **Marcia Brennan**
  - Professor
  - “The Heart of the Hereafter: Love Stories From the End of Life” (Axis Mundi Books, 2014)

**ART AND DRAMATIC ARTS**
- **Natasha Bowdoin**
  - Assistant Professor
  - B) “Damn Girls” McClain Gallery, Houston, April 24–May 31, 2014

- **Karin Broker**
  - Professor

- **Carlos Hernandez**
  - Lecturer
  - E) “Live and in Person,” Visual and Dramatic Arts Main Gallery, Rice University, Jan. 16–20, 2014

- **Brian Huberman**
  - Associate Professor
  - F) “Alligator Horses” Documentary film, producer, director, editor and cinematographer (with Ed Hugetz)

- **Allison Hunter**
  - Humanities Artist-in-Residence
  - G) “Silos II: Inter/action for Buffalo Bayou Silos” Commissioned work by the Houston Arts Alliance for “Transported and Renewed” Sep. 11–Oct. 31, 2014

- **Christina Keefe**
  - Professor in the Practice and Rice Theatre Program Director
  - H) “Bound” Production director, Houston Grand Opera, Feb. 8–16, 2014

- **John Sparagana**
  - Christian Grace Vietti Chair of Visual and Dramatic Arts

- **Christopher Sperandio**
  - Assistant Professor
  - J) “Cargo Space” Heuser Art Gallery, Peoria, Ill., Oct. 1–Nov. 6, 2014
  - “Cargo Space” Inova (Institute of Visual Arts), Peck School of the Arts, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, Aug. 27–Sept. 20, 2014
Rice’s Humanities Research Center (HRC) received an award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to host a John E. Sawyer Seminar on the Comparative Study of Cultures, Platforms of Knowledge in a Wide Web of Worlds: Production, Participation and Politics. The 2015–16 seminar will be led by Farès el-Dahdah and Melissa Bailar of the HRC and Lisa Spiro, executive director of digital scholarship at Fondren Library.
Faculty Highlights

New Faculty

Niki Clements (Religion)
Watt J. and Lilly G. Jackson Assistant Professor of Religion • Ph.D., Religion and Critical Thought, Brown University • M.T.S., Harvard Divinity School • B.A., Sarah Lawrence College

Clements works at the intersection between the history of Christian practice, philosophy of religion and religious ethics. She specializes in Christian asceticism in late antiquity, highlighting its resources for thinking through contemporary ethical formation and conceptions of the self. She is currently working on the first comprehensive treatment of the ethical thought of John Cassian (circa 365–435), a Catholic architect of Latin monasticism doctrinally marginalized for his optimistic views on human agency. She is the volume editor for “Mental Religion: The Brain, Cognition and Culture.”

Before joining the Rice faculty, Clements was a Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellow at Wheaton College. She now is associate director of undergraduate studies in religion and an associate at Jones College. She teaches courses in theories and methods in the study of religion, late antique Christianity, asceticism and mysticism, and religious ethics.

Farès el-Dahdah (Humanities)
Professor and Director of the Humanities Research Center • D.Des. and M.A.U.D., Harvard University • B.Arch. and B.F.A., Rhode Island School of Design

el-Dahdah joined the School of Humanities after having been on the School of Architecture’s faculty for 20 years. His ongoing research focuses on the creation of Web maps that interface with datasets and that describe places over time, as they once existed and as once imagined (e.g., “imagineRio: A Diachronic Atlas of Rio de Janeiro’s Social and Architectural Evolution,” to be released Aug. 2015 in collaboration with Alida Metcalf). His books include “Lucio Costa: Arquiteto,” “A doce revolução de Oscar Niemeyer” and “Roberto Burle Marx: The Modernity of Landscape.” As director of the Humanities Research Center, el-Dahdah is responsible for identifying, encouraging and funding the research projects of faculty, visiting scholars, and graduate and undergraduate students, while devising new initiatives in the humanities and beyond.

Sophie Horowitz (Philosophy)
Assistant Professor • Ph.D., Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology • B.A., Studio Art and Philosophy, Swarthmore College

Horowitz works on epistemology, focusing on questions regarding the connection between rational belief and truth, and the relationship between rational belief and rational action. She is especially interested in how we should rationally regard our own beliefs and the processes by which we came to form them, particularly when we have reason to believe that those processes were rationally defective, biased or flawed. She currently is working on a formal project that aims to explain accuracy and inaccuracy of partial or degreed beliefs and to provide a new argument for rational requirements on partial beliefs.

Horowitz has presented work at several peer-reviewed national conferences and has published in Noûs, Philosophical Studies and Res Philosophica. She teaches epistemology at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and in the future plans to teach courses in metaphysics and the nature of persons.

Lisa Lapinski (Visual and Dramatic Arts)
Assistant Professor • M.F.A., Art Center College of Design, Pasadena • B.A., University of California at San Diego

Lapinski’s most recent solo exhibition, “Captain Hook at Eton,” was presented in 2014 at Johann König Gallery in Berlin. She has mounted solo exhibitions at Richard Telles Fine Art, Los Angeles; Studio Guenzani, Milan; Taka Ishi, Kyoto, Japan; Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. A participant in many national and international group exhibitions, Lapinski was included in the 2006 Whitney Biennial. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2004.

Lapinski’s essay, “The Lizard King,” a meditation on Larry Johnson’s seminal photograph, “Untitled (Ghost Story for Courtney Love),” will be included in Johnson’s forthcoming exhibition catalogue to be published by Raven Row, London.

Before joining the faculty at Rice, Lapinski was an assistant professor and head of sculpture at USC in Los Angeles. She teaches studio courses in beginning and advanced sculpture.
Paul Otremba (English)
Assistant Professor • Ph.D., Creative Writing, University of Houston • M.F.A., English and Philosophy, University of Maryland

Otremba received his M.F.A. in poetry from the University of Maryland and a Ph.D. in literature and creative writing from the University of Houston. He is the author of two poetry collections, “The Currency” (Four Way Books, 2009) and “Pax Americana” (Four Way Books, 2015). He has published widely in journals and has received a fellowship from the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, a Barthelme Memorial Fellowship, a Krakow Poetry Seminar Fellowship and a prize from the Academy of American Poets. His essays, poetry reviews and food writing have appeared in Tikkun, The Houston Chronicle, Spoon Magazine and the anthology, “American Poets in the 21st Century: The New Poetics.”

Otremba was a visiting assistant professor of creative writing at Southern Methodist University before joining Rice as a lecturer of creative writing. He currently teaches writing courses in poetry.

Sonia Ryang (Asian Studies)
T.T. and W.F. Chao Professor of Asian Studies and Director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies • Ph.D. and M.Phil, Social Anthropology, Cambridge University • M.Phil, Politics, University of York • B.A., French, Korea University of Tokyo

Before coming to Rice, Ryang taught Korean studies and anthropology at the University of Iowa, where she also directed the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies and served as the director of Academic Programs for International Programs. Ryang currently holds a National Science Foundation grant researching North Korea and anthropology of totalitarianism. By revisiting the American cultural anthropological tradition of Study of Culture at a Distance, Ryang is exploring a mixed-method approach to studying a closed society (North Korea, in this case) by deploying anthropological logic.

As the director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies, Ryang is strongly interested in creating a collaborative, faculty-focused research environment that also offers a wide range of opportunities for Rice students. Reaching Asian and Asian-American communities in Houston and beyond is another important area that Ryang intends to focus on as one of the center’s main charges.

Sayuri Guthrie Shimizu (History)
Dunlevie Family Chair of History • Ph.D. and M.A., History, Cornell University

Shimizu is a historian of the United States’ international relations, with a particular emphasis on U.S.-East Asian relations since the mid-19th century. Her research interests, cutting across historiographical and national boundaries, include the history of U.S.-Japanese relations, comparative colonialism, the transpacific world, sports in international relations and global governance.

Before coming to Rice, Shimizu taught at Michigan State University and has been a fellow at Cornell University and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. She is the author of “Transpacific Field of Dreams: How Baseball Linked the United States and Japan in Peace and War” (University of North Carolina Press, 2015) and “Creating People of Plenty: The United States and Japan’s Economic Alternatives, 1950-1960” (The Kent State University Press, 2011). Shimizu’s current book project examines the rise and transformation of international ocean resource management regimes in the North Pacific in the first half of the 20th century.
Retiring Faculty

Robert Lane Kauffmann
(Spanish and Portuguese)
Associate Professor
Ph.D., Comparative Literature, University of California at San Diego
B.A., Romance Languages and Literatures, Princeton University

Mark Kulstad
(Philosophy)
Professor
Ph.D., University of Michigan at Ann Arbor
B.A., Macalester College

Allen Matusow
(History)
W.G. Twyman Professor of History
Ph.D. and M.A., Harvard University
B.A., Ursinus College

Robert “Lane” Kauffmann has been a professor at Rice University since 1976, teaching courses on Spanish literature and painting, Latin American short fiction, and literary theory and translation. His research areas include modern Spanish literature and philosophy, comparative literature, literary theory, and the essay genre in European thought since the Renaissance. Kauffmann has been a contributor and editorial board member of Transculture and Encyclopedia of the Essay, and a committee member of Arena Romanistica, an international interdisciplinary journal of romance studies. In 2006, Kauffmann was one of a dozen invited specialists — and the only scholar from the United States — to participate in the public colloquium, “L’Essai: La Liberté de L’Esprit,” held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

While serving as department chair for Hispanic and classic studies (1996–2002), Kauffmann was a leading advocate for expanding the Latin American academic opportunities and helped increase the number of Latin America faculty in the School of Humanities. He has been a faculty associate at Hanszen College since 1978 and remains involved in university committees and faculty groups. In recent years, he has actively participated in the department’s Global Hispanism Workshop, which focuses on the changing role of intellectual practice and critical thought in 21st-century Latin America.

Mark Kulstad joined the philosophy faculty of Rice in 1975. He served as department chair from 1988–1992 and has been the department’s director of graduate admissions for more than 20 years. Kulstad’s research interests include metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind and psychology, and philosophy of religion. However, his focus is on the history of early modern philosophy, primarily on Leibniz. Recent research considers relations between the philosophies of Leibniz and Spinoza. He is the author of “Leibniz on Animals, Apperception, Consciousness and Reflection” (Philosophia Verlag, 1991) and has edited multiple publications including “The Philosophy of the Young Liebniz” (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009) and “Central Themes in Early Modern Philosophy” (Hacket Publishing, 1990).


Matusow served as the dean of humanities (1981–1995; 2009–2010) and since 2002, he’s been the director of academic programs at Rice’s James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy. He received the Association of Rice Alumni Gold Medal (2010) and numerous teaching awards, twice receiving the George R. Brown Prize for Excellence in Teaching, Rice’s top annual teaching award. In 2012, Matusow was selected as a finalist for Baylor University’s Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching, the only national teaching award given by a college or university to an individual for exceptional teaching.
When religion major Allen Simon ’16 shared his research on alien encounters and out-of-body experiences with Rice professor of religion Jeffrey J. Kripal last summer, he knew each tale could spark a meaningful conversation.

“Dr. Kripal looks at things that most people probably wouldn’t consider in the realm of religion,” Simon said, “like the paranormal, UFOs and abduction accounts. Some elements are very similar to religious experiences.”

As an undergraduate research fellow in the Humanities Research Center, Simon worked with Kripal to explore compelling intersections between religious narratives and science fiction.

“My work involved collecting and reading material that Dr. Kripal had not yet seen and explaining it to him,” said Simon. “I was really excited to have such an eminent scholar treat me as an equal in that way.”

The Undergraduate Research Fellowship gave Allen Simon the chance to merge his work in the classroom with a dynamic research experience.

The Initiative for Students seeks to create more in-depth, intensive research opportunities for undergraduate students in the School of Humanities. To learn more about the initiative, please contact Jeanette Zey, senior director of development, at jzey@rice.edu or 713-348-4669.

Visit owledge.rice.edu/simon for more about how Allen Simon is gaining an Owl Edge and how Rice supporters can keep leading the way.

“Dr. Kripal and the fellowship experience helped me to see myself more confidently as a source of valuable and unique knowledge.”

Allen Simon ’16

+ religion major + undergraduate research fellow + summerlong sci-fi scholar

owledge.rice.edu
Rice University
School of Humanities–MS 33
P.O. Box 1892
Houston, TX 77251-1892
http://humanities.rice.edu

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