

Educating for Lives of Thoughtful Inquiry, Service, Leadership, and Care

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Spring 2008*

Humanities

at



English
Languages & Literatures
Philosophy
Religion

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In the Prism

The Dean's Thoughts for the 2007-2008 Academic Year

Douglas E. Oakman, Dean of Humanities and Professor of Religion

The contemporary importance and relevance of the humanities and humanistic study within the liberal arts seems glaringly evident in a world facing environmental catastrophe, elusive economic welfare, massive human dislocation, warfare, and the politics of global terror. Indeed, the humanities encompass the great questions about human destiny, creative freedom and imagination, and the development of whole and reflexive human beings capable of genuine care for their neighbors and world. The twenty-first century challenge to liberal education is the nurture of realistic hope and humane approaches to a seemingly intransigent set of global problems.

As the following pages of *Prism* amply attest, faculty in the Division of Humanities at Pacific Lutheran University are vigorously involved in educating whole persons, raising hard questions about life, and producing academic work of local and global significance. Preparation for the university's decentennial accreditation visit in April 2008 and conversations about a revised general education program have held central priority in the PLU faculty's conversations this academic year. But many other activities continue as well. For instance, at the beginning of the academic year the division celebrated its collaborations with the School of Arts and Communication with a glorious gathering.

Humanities departments continue to make signal contributions to the university in teaching and scholarship, leadership and programs. English faculty were delighted



Photo by Jordan Hartman

to welcome new faculty member Matthew Levy, who teaches writing and focuses especially on ancient and modern cynicism. The Writers' Series

continues to draw large crowds to evening readings. The Publishing and Printing Arts minor is full to capacity, and the dynamic, low-residency MFA has achieved national reputation.

Languages and Literatures faculty have found themselves very busy with searches in French, German, and Spanish, as long-time faculty members Roberta Brown and Jim Predmore announced retirements and Janet Holmgren departed for other life pursuits. Immersion weekends have proven very popular with students and successful in stimulating interest in language study. Hong International Hall continues its success in fostering everyday use of languages. The Scandinavian Cultural Center received a significant boost to its endowment through the auction of a Nikolai Astrup painting at Sotheby's in London.

Philosophy also welcomed two new faculty: Hannah Phelps in medical ethics

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The Humanities at Work

PLU Alumni Affirm the Relevance of Humanities Degrees in their Professional Lives

April Reiter, '08
Editor, *The Mast*

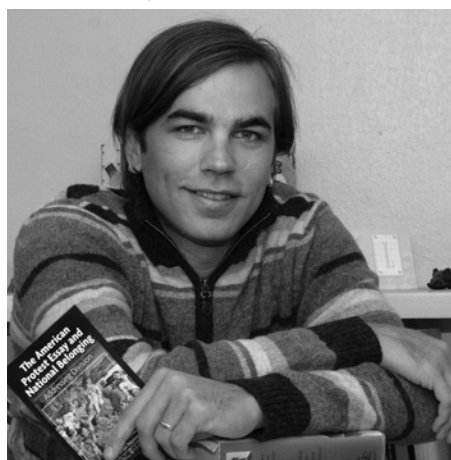


College students often do not know where their degrees will ultimately take them, especially if those degrees do not lead down a steam-pressed career path. Humanities

students sometimes feel unique pressure to respond to the obvious post-graduation question: "What will you actually *do* with your degree?"

The following alumni profiles constitute a sampling of how PLU humanities graduates answer this question. As students of the humanities, they engaged topics in an integrated fashion and sought to connect ideas across disciplines, a practice that built deeper understanding and a vast curiosity that has poured over into their professional lives.

These featured alumni, like many current PLU students, know the value of a humanities education as a foundation for a life of learning.



Brian Norman, '99—French, Women's Studies and Environmental Studies

Brian Norman, '99, currently an Assistant Professor of English and co-director of Women's Studies at Idaho State University, knows that the import of his humanities education extends beyond academia to the political and social arenas.

As an undergraduate, Norman admits he experimented with a myriad of

majors. But he landed in the humanities community because of the desire he found there to enact change in the world where needed. He combined his French major with majors in Women's and Environmental Studies and minors in English and Chemistry. He describes his education, which included study abroad in Cameroon and Cuba, as the "kick in the pants" that inspired him to get involved in community groups addressing social problems.

Today, Norman uses every opportunity—in and outside of the university—to do just that. His recent academic work, including his book, *The American Protest Essay and National Belonging* (SUNY Press, 2007), deals with issues of segregation and protest. He also recently authored a series of op-eds on pluralism for the local paper. His key goals are raising awareness and opening up channels of conversation across boundaries. He accomplished this recently by organizing a regional fight to defeat an Idaho constitutional amendment that proposed to narrowly define marriage. The battle against this legislation, which did not pass, united supporters from different generations, sexual orientations, and ideologies.

Norman emphasizes such social activism in his teaching today. "In the twenty-first century, we need scholar-citizens more than ever, so I think the humanities are as important as ever," Norman said. This spring he is completing a semester as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Center for the Humanities at Wesleyan University (Connecticut). In fall 2008 Norman will begin a new position as Assistant Professor of English at Loyola College in Maryland, where he looks forward to rejoining his liberal arts roots.

Michelle Ryan-Sautour, '91—English and French

For Michelle Ryan-Sautour, '91, a double major in English and French paved the way for her current career as *Maitre de Conférences* (a tenured research and teaching position) in the English Department at the Université d'Angers, France. Originally a Business Administration major, Ryan-Sautour found she was happier studying

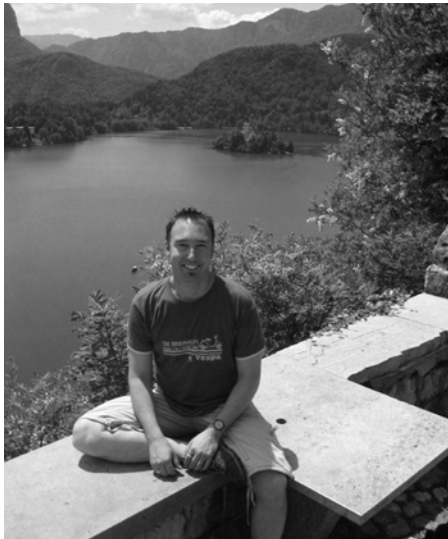


both English and French literature.

But Ryan-Sautour earned more than a degree at PLU; she learned what it takes to be a caring, passionate instructor from her own experiences with dedicated humanities faculty. "I feel very fortunate to have worked with people so personally committed to the teaching of their subject in the humanities," Ryan-Sautour said. For example, after graduation Ryan-Sautour earned a Fulbright Teaching Assistantship position in France with the help and guidance of her professors. "I clearly would not be in France today if it weren't for the courses and people I encountered during my brief stay at PLU."

This dedication and helpfulness she received from professors informs her own teaching in France, although the two educational systems differ greatly. Students in the French higher educational system are required to choose and begin a major in their first semesters at college, a dramatic dissimilarity from the integrated studies education Ryan-Sautour received. However, the French system is about to change to incorporate more liberal arts approaches. Ryan-Sautour will rely on her acquaintance with and affinity for interdisciplinary thinking more than ever as she and her colleagues make this difficult shift.

Although Ryan-Sautour took her education to a career thousands of miles away from PLU, she depends on the lessons she took from her classes and professors as she continues to work with the humanities every day.



Karl Swenson, '91—German and Theater

Karl Swenson, '91, relies on the skills he learned from his foreign language education every day, and he has also reaped the benefits. At his job in finance with Corbis in Seattle, Swenson works with clients from around the globe, which requires him to use his German, French and Italian language skills daily. Swenson readily admits he knew nothing about finance when he applied. He was hired instead for his language and people skills, two valuable areas of expertise that his humanities education provided.

His foreign language fluency also opens doors to travel and to developing international relationships, both professional and personal. At Corbis, he is the only one in Finance who can speak Italian. So when Corbis acquired a new office in Italy, he flew to Milan for two weeks of fulfilling work. Even before his job at Corbis, Swenson knew the perks of foreign language learning. In 2000-2001, he received the Robert Bosch Foundation fellowship to work in his field (public health lobbying) in Germany for a year. Swenson's German degree also helped him enter the Monterey Institute of International Studies, where strong foreign language skills are mandatory. He completed a Master's in International Policy Studies there in 1995.

Swenson believes that a liberal arts degree makes a graduate even more interesting to professionals in the business world, as they can speak knowledgeably about a variety of topics. And he deeply values his choice of a degree in foreign languages. Without it, he admits, "I wouldn't have this job or the language skills."

Kristina R. Knoll, '98—Philosophy and German

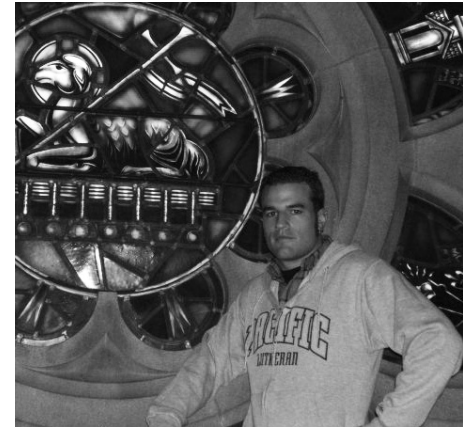
Kristina R. Knoll, '98, was not a typical PLU student. She has a visual processing disorder, which renders many texts inaccessible to her. This disability hindered her from carrying out her studies in a typical way because of a lack of readily accessible audiobooks and other accommodations. But she fondly remembers the activism of her philosophy professors. Knoll recalls faculty accompanying her to the library to find resources for a paper and taking time to deal with disabled student services. Their activism, she says, taught her she had a right to learn and that every student deserves access to the tools they need to succeed.



Knoll carries on this lesson from her humanities education as a graduate student and instructor at the University of Washington. She is currently working on a dissertation, "Locating Feminist Disability Studies," in part by exploring the idea of the validity of knowledge. She asks: "How do we come to accept certain ideas as true and valid?" She came to this topic after her undergraduate philosophy degree led her to feminist theory and to questioning knowledge production. She will focus on how and why oppression of people with disabilities manifests itself and how these issues are influenced by factors like race, gender, and sexuality.

In addition to her studies, Knoll helped develop the Disability Studies Program at the University of Washington. She also continues to raise awareness about the equal-opportunity rights of every type of student in her own teaching.

"Learning shouldn't require a certain type of body or mind," she said. "We need to be more creative in our teaching and our learning."



Kyle Franklin, '07—Religion and History

Kyle Franklin, '07, entered college with what he describes as a 'know-it-all' attitude about religion, an attitude that crumbled after Religion Department faculty introduced Franklin to the process of applying theoretical analysis and scholarly methods to the study of religion. The result was a huge shift in attitude, he says, from arrogance to humility, from narrow thinking to a wider perspective, and to a shift in his life goals.

Franklin now finds an outlet for his desire to positively impact others as the Program Specialist for PLU's Campus Ministry, where he organizes and plans activities for the PLU and Parkland communities. Franklin has organized events ranging from the high-level visit of the scholar and Greek Orthodox hierarch His Eminence, The Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, to a light-hearted "Reformation Party." In his job he has the opportunity to meet and interact with students from PLU's diverse faith community, for which his degree in religion has prepared him well.

Franklin's plans for the future include his desire to organize an event around day-to-day stewardship concerns such as the management of money and time, issues with which students of all faiths struggle. Franklin plans to pursue a Ph.D. in theology at the University of St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. "Had I not been a student of the humanities, my goals would be completely different," Franklin said. "Success would probably be measured in dollars earned, rather than the desire to positively influence others."

Department of English

Finding What Was There

Sharon Jansen, Professor of English

In this excerpt from the introduction to her book *Debating Women, Politics, and Power in Early Modern Europe*, Sharon Jansen discusses her experience writing and later reviving a study of the sixteenth-century “gynococracy” debate that, in this twenty-first century election year, is still relevant and ongoing. The book, published by Palgrave Macmillan, appeared in April.

In the early spring of 1996, I spent a few weeks working intensely, almost frantically, in the British Library at its old Great Russell Street location, moving back and forth between the Main Reading Room, the North Library, the North Library Gallery, and the Manuscripts Students’ Room.

I worked intensely because I was midway through my sabbatical leave, and I was conscious of the passage of time. And I worked intensely because I was more than a little homesick—as long as I stayed busy, I wasn’t missing my son, worrying about how much money my trip was costing me, or fretting about my garden at home. So I planned my days carefully. The reading rooms opened at nine six days a week; six days a week I was waiting on the steps, ready for the Library to open, by 8:45 a.m. During the day, I never left the Library, not even for lunch. On Mondays, Friday, and Saturdays, the reading rooms closed at 5:00, but on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, I worked twelve-hour days because the Library stayed open until 9 p.m.

Although I was working intently, then, I still couldn’t help feeling a little frantic. The British Library was preparing for its move to St. Pancras, and although no one was going to be grabbing the chair out from under me while I was reading, banners announcing the move were everywhere, and it seemed as if new pamphlets and brochures appeared daily. My memories about the frequency of these publications are not completely misleading, since the one I’m holding right now informs me that “This leaflet is number 6 in a series designed to inform readers and users how each stage of the

move will affect them and their use of the collections.” This small pamphlet also reminds me that the well-publicized move to St. Pancras was accompanied by the equally well-publicized “introduction of the British Library Online Catalogue and the Automated Book Request System (ABRS).”

All the signs, pamphlets, displays, and models were intended to be helpful and reassuring, I’m sure, but I found them somewhat ominous. I loved the huge volumes of the printed and well-annotated catalogues in the center of the great Round Room. I loved the old book application

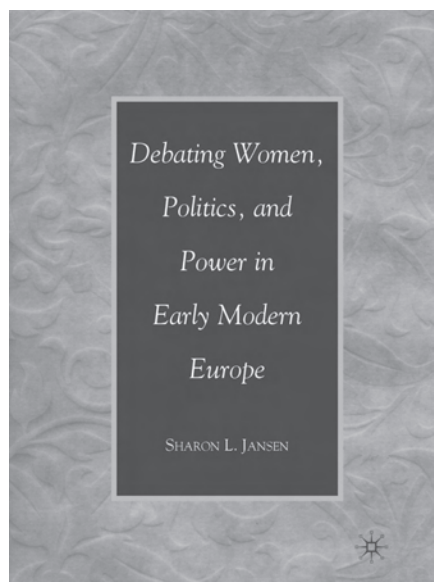


slips, with their bold-faced reminders to “PLEASE WRITE FIRMLY IN BLACK INK.” I loved carefully entering my delivery location, my seat number, and, on the “Application for a Manuscript,” noting my “Students’ Room pass number.” I loved seeing the books waiting for me at my place each morning when I arrived or having tickets returned with a red stamp telling me to “Please present this slip at the North Library Issue Desk” or a green stamp telling me to “Please present this slip at the North Library Gallery Issue Desk.” I loved finding a slip returned to me with the “Please see reason for non-delivery” box ticked. I didn’t mind being informed that the book I wanted was “in use,” because if it was “urgently required,”

I could “apply to the North Library Issue Counter.” I didn’t even mind being informed that I would never get the book I wanted because I was informed so gently: “It is regretted that this work has been mislaid.” I cherish my book application for one volume that failed to appear: “This work was destroyed by bombing in the war, we have not been able to acquire a replacement.”

All this came back to me recently. I was cleaning out a filing cabinet and pulled out a couple of manila folders, one labeled “BL-printed,” the other “BL-mss.” As I removed them from the drawer, they wound up on the top of a slippery stack, and as they fell to the ground from my overloaded arms, a cascade of book tickets fluttered to the floor. I read through them all as I picked them up and carefully sorted them, their titles bringing back those cool March days in London now more than a decade ago. *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjectes, against the late blowne Blaste, concerning the Gouvernement of Wemen. Six Livres de la République. Sphaera civitatis. Politique tirée des propres paroles de l’Écriture sainte. Patriarchia: Or the Natural Power of Kings.* What also came back, as I looked at these titles, was another emotion. I had spent every day in London immersed in a sixteenth-century debate about women’s nature and abilities, and at the end of each day, it hadn’t been easy returning to the late twentieth century. I was a college professor, the single parent of a child soon headed off to college, a socially, politically, intellectually, and financially liberated woman, independent in every way possible, traveling on my own in one of the great cities of the world, yet at the end of every day I was left feeling overwhelmed. I remember leaving the BL each day, walking down the steps and through the gates of the British Museum, emerging into the bustle and traffic of Great Russell Street, and finding it hard to shake off the sense that, despite everything, I was a weak, irrational, incapable, and despicable creature.

And as I sat on the floor in my home office, looking again at those carefully preserved book-order forms, I also thought about the manuscript that sat at the back of the bottom drawer in the same filing cabinet. Maybe it was time to pull it out and look at it again?



When I was in London that spring, I was writing a book about female rulers during the early modern period, and I had decided to prepare myself by reading the primary sources in the “gynecocracy” debate of the late sixteenth-century. I was interested in the argument itself, which was a particularly toxic one, but I was also intrigued by the fact that so many women had gone about the task of governing even while their right—and ability—to do so was being bitterly disputed. I came home to finish that book about women rulers, but I had been so profoundly affected by the texts I read during those weeks at the British Library that I prefaced my study of women rulers with a detailed analysis of all arguments offered by the many combatants in that debate. When she received my draft, my wonderful editor at Palgrave Macmillan tactfully suggested that perhaps a 200-page “preface” was a bit too much. In the end, all that remained from my stay in London and my obsession with the texts of the gynecocracy debate was the title that I borrowed from John Knox and then deliberately subverted: *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (2002).

But even then I couldn't quite get the debate out of my system. Every once in a while I added to my “preface,” eventually embedding my analysis of the gynecocracy debate about female sovereignty in the larger Renaissance humanist debate about women's nature and ability, and then, as their work began to appear in accessible modern editions, juxtaposing the responses of women writers to the arguments of their male contemporaries. When the

whole thing got completely out of control, I shoved it to the back of the file drawer, where it sat. I never forgot it, but I tried to.

Then the book slips fell out of a file folder and onto the floor. Even now I'm not convinced that I would have pulled my book manuscript out again, but two days later, on 18 December 2006, as I was driving home from campus after turning in grades for one of my fall-semester classes, I was tuned into *All Things Considered* and heard NPR's Michele Norris asking a number of political strategists, legal experts, and well-published academics whether Americans were ready to vote for a black presidential candidate—or for a woman candidate.

The subsequent interviews of likely voters from across the country seemed to suggest, at least to me, that there was less resistance to a black presidential candidate—always assuming that candidate was male, that we were talking about Barack Obama and not Shirley Chisholm or Carol Moseley Braun—than there was to the idea of a female candidate. That night, I opened my filing cabinet, pulled out the bottom drawer, reached into the back, and pulled out my manuscript. I left it lying on the floor by my desk.

On 20 January 2007, Hillary Rodham Clinton announced the formation of a presidential exploratory committee. “I'm in. And I'm in to win,” she said. “We will make history and remake our futures.”

Ellen Malcolm, president of EMILY's List, responded quickly, endorsing Clinton's candidacy: “I am one of the millions of women who have waited all their lives to see the first woman sworn in as president of the United States, and now we have our best opportunity to see that dream fulfilled.”

“Clinton Hopes to Make History,” read the headline on my *Sunday Seattle Times/Seattle Post Intelligencer*. The front-page news continued on page A-2, but nearly half of the story detailed the candidate's personal liabilities rather than her political strengths. And four of the five columns on page A-2 were filled not by the continuation of the page-one story but by another piece, this one an extended analysis of the Clinton marriage, the Clinton scandals of the 90s, and the Clinton psyche—Bill Clinton's psyche, that is. “Bill: Will He Help or Hurt?”

In July, just as I was preparing the final draft of this book to meet my 1

August deadline, the story in the news, on television and radio, and all over the Internet was not about Clinton's campaign but her cleavage.

Although it's been nearly 450 years since John Knox argued that “to promote a woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion, or empire above any realm, nation, or city is repugnant to nature,” an insult to God, and a “subversion” of order, equity, and justice, and since he concluded that rule by women is the “most detestable and damnable” of all the “enormities” faced by men, somehow the time seems right for *Debating Women, Politics, and Power in Early Modern Europe*.

English Department Welcomes New Faculty



Matthew Levy
Kristen McCabe, '08

Although the English Department's new Assistant Professor, Matthew Levy, thought he would study math in college, he found himself “on a new course” while taking his first-year English class. The broad command to “Write something!” and assignments to read the works of Faulkner, Morrison, and Eliot led Levy to many long, coffee-filled nights of arguing, writing, and rewriting, resulting in a love of English. As he says, “I had found something good for me.”

While continuing his undergraduate studies at Guilford College in his home state of North Carolina, Matthew focused on taking literature courses; however, in his senior year, he found a rhetoric class “totally engaging,” something both “philosophical and practical.” Having “an inkling” that rhetoric and composition would continue to be compelling, he pursued this field at the graduate level at the University of Texas at Arlington.

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Department of Languages & Literatures

New Multi-Language Capstone Seminar Challenges and Invigorates Students and Faculty

Eric Nelson

Assistant Professor of Classics

This fall, the Department of Languages and Literatures instituted a groundbreaking Senior Capstone Seminar. Unlike many other departments, we had conducted capstones as independent studies. But as the numbers of majors grew, this presented a dilemma for a department with a solid commitment to quality and consistent pedagogy across seven languages and three area studies programs. While we affirmed that independent studies should remain an option for a few majors whose distinctive needs made it appropriate, we also decided that the time had come for capstones to become a part of our regular curriculum.

Only Spanish, however, had the resources to incorporate a seminar into its own program, leaving the rest of us wondering what to do. But through a long period of discussion we came to see that our diversity and interdependence provided a unique opportunity for us to create a course in which students develop the kinds of trans-linguistic and trans-cultural competencies that ought to be a hallmark of a PLU language major.

“Trans-linguistic and trans-cultural competencies” are academic terms *du jour* in languages, but important ones. They emerged from the realization (backed by research, experience, and reflection) that language study at the university is not really about training students to fit seamlessly into other monolingual contexts or to read pre-determined collections of literature. Even if we could train a student to be indistinguishable from, say, a Parisienne when in Paris, or to read Plato without a dictionary, those, in and of themselves, are not our goals. Rather, we want to equip students with the skills and abilities (competencies) to move back

and forth (trans) between languages and cultures far below a surface level.

Why? Because we need people who have more than a transformed consciousness of their place in the world; we need people who are equipped for active transformation of the world. And for this, we need students who can do more than respectfully experience other cultures; we need students who can deeply and thoughtfully engage them. And for this to happen, students must have the tools to do more than enter another culture on its own terms; they have to be able to examine their own culture through the lens of other cultures and to understand the world and themselves—whatever they do—in the context of this enriched perspective.

And for all that to happen, students need language study. In fact, although an enriched international perspective and ensuing engagement are aspirations of many university programs and study-abroad ventures, a sustained program of combined language and cultural study is the *sine qua non* of their development. It cannot be detached from them, it cannot be isolated from their cultivation, it cannot be replaced in their achievement. Besides, language study is not solely an

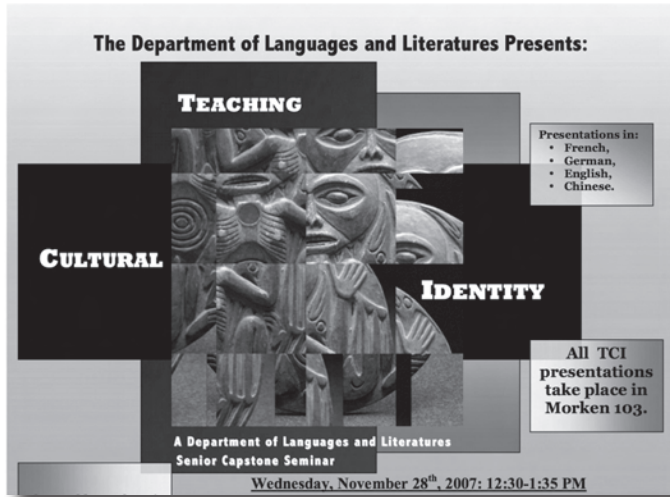
“international” endeavor. As integral as language is to our abilities to conceive and articulate ideas, to understand others and ourselves, and to wrestle with the basic claims of many other disciplines, its sustained study ought to be integrated into our education at every level and into every PLU student’s degree. No single course and no single format can do all of this. It takes a coordinated curriculum.

And here is where our departmental dilemma presented an opportunity to integrate into our curriculum a course where majors utilize their languages in ways that model the actual practice of what we hope they might do.

Indeed, professional life is rarely monolingual—far from it. Professionals interact in French in Europe, North America, the south Pacific, Africa, and the Caribbean; in Norwegian from the arctic to Africa; in German throughout central and eastern Europe, Russia, and Turkey; in Spanish throughout old and new worlds. Classics students, whether they study Troy or the New Testament, move back and forth between ancient and modern worlds often in several ancient and modern languages. And few doubt that working in and with Chinese will be one of the



Professor Eric Nelson discusses Reader Response Theory with seniors Holly Deatherage (French), Nathaniel Woodsmith (Scandinavian Studies) and Marit Barkve (Norwegian) in the spring 2008 multi-language capstone seminar.



professional challenges distinctive of this century.

To enter into this world, students need to develop skills appropriate to international venues and to cultivate the rigorous standards and ethics that characterize professional communities. And so, we based the multi-program seminar on international working groups and conferences in our own disciplines in which participants from around the world bring their respective research interests and backgrounds to bear on a common topic, make presentations, and publish papers. Such a model worked well with the seminar's mixture of participants and the requirements of the capstone (which entail a public presentation and substantial paper), and also reflects the reality of international academic conferences.

To keep oral proficiency a part of the seminar, we decided that formal presentations would be made in the target language according to the requirements of each program. This too comes from professional experience at international conferences, where presentations often occur in multiple languages. Many international scholars (and an increasing number of PLU students) speak and read several languages to some degree, and for them this is less of a challenge than for others who must rely on handouts, pre-circulated papers, or the generosity of colleagues to help them bridge the language gap. But both the presenters and audience must adapt to a multi-lingual environment.

However, although professional conferences themselves, and thus the capstone presentations, are a multi-lingual affair, final publication of materials increasingly occurs in English. Professionals must also master the ability to

contextualized, or explained? The sensibilities of producing trans-linguistic materials require additional sets of skills that undergraduates rarely have the opportunity to develop but that often come into play in the creation of the final papers, written in English, for the seminar.

Finally, there are also languages at conferences—and especially interdisciplinary conferences—that even Berlitz would not recognize. These are the languages of such things as “New Historicism,” “Post-Colonialism,” “Cultural Studies,” and “Deconstruction”—what has come to be known generically as “critical theory.” Theory provides the lens through which scholars understand what they see in the world and make meaningful connections between activities and experiences. Regardless of one’s own use of theory, a basic understanding of major models and terms (like “trans-linguistic and trans-cultural competencies”) is fundamental for communication and cross-disciplinary work in many fields. And so an introduction to theory and its use in the projects was made an integral part of the seminar as well.

There was some understandable skepticism among majors to the new format, but, after more discussion with the students and an open forum last spring, enrollment this fall was strong enough to require two sections of intrepid pioneers. The first section chose “The Ramifications of Foreign Cultural Influences” and the second “Teaching Cultural Influence” as their themes. Each student developed a project relevant to the theme using materials in their own target language. They waded through eleven different approaches to critical theory, made informal presentations, and worked

produce documents written in clear and precise English that communicates research or experience obtained through languages other than English. How does one communicate in one language something learned in another? What parts of the original language texts must be translated, transliterated,

with their program faculty, the seminar instructor, and each other to create formal presentations and papers. Projects ranged from classical antiquity to contemporary China and everywhere in between. To emphasize the collaborative aspect of the seminar, participants grouped their formal presentations not by language, but by the mutual relevance of their research. This led to some interesting sessions where there were presentations in German, French, English, and Chinese!

I am tremendously proud of, and impressed by, the work that our students accomplished. I was also impressed by the breadth of expertise and depth of collegial collaboration among our program faculty, who served as resources for students, assisted with projects, and helped evaluate presentations and target language materials. In such ways the seminar presents opportunities for both students and faculty to model and demonstrate the best of what we are and what we can accomplish as a distinctive part of a PLU education in practice.

Not that there isn’t work to do. Next semester some of the assignments and deadlines will be tweaked, and the organization of formal presentations will be arranged to better accommodate attendance and the diverse needs of the audience. But the concept and place of the seminar, hopefully, is here to stay as a distinctive element of PLU Language and Literatures majors’ academic experience.

Fall 2007 Senior projects

April Reiter (German): *Ein Bild sagt mehr als tausend Worte: Flugblätter und Bauernidentität in Deutschland während der Reformationszeit* (A Picture’s Worth a Thousand Words: Broadsheets and Peasant Identity in 16th-Century Germany)

Ericka Hummel (German): *Abstieg in den Wahnsinn? Eine Analyse von Schoenbergs Pierrot Lunaire* (Descent into Insanity? An Analysis of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*)

Ethan Jennings (German): *Ironische Propaganda: Marxistische Ideologie in Dem Giftpilz* (Ironical Propaganda: Marxist Ideology in *Der Giftpilz*)

Brenden Ryan (Chinese): *Predisposed Dialects: The Cultural Response of China to Beijing*

Courtney Stringer (Chinese): *The Changing Masks of Mao Zedong*

David Larsen (French): *Étranger dans notre ville: Poésie et Identité au Sénégal*

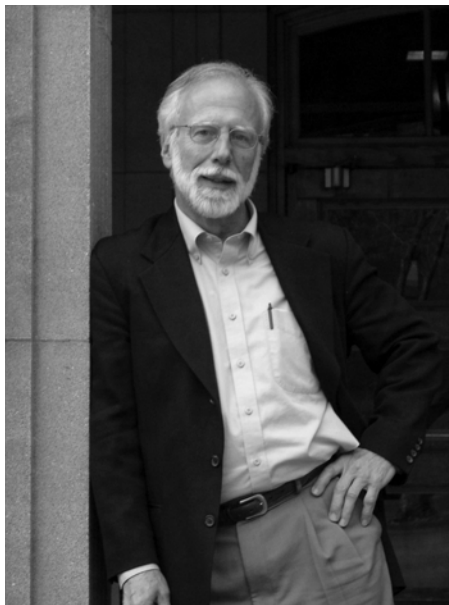
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Department of Philosophy

Observations on the Evolving Vitality of Philosophy at PLU

Paul Menzel, Professor of Philosophy

Menzel joined the faculty at PLU in 1971, fresh with a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt. He served as PLU Provost from 1994 to 2002. Among his publications are two single-authored books, both on philosophical questions about health economics, and an edited book about the Vietnam War.



What happens to a classic discipline like philosophy at a university like PLU, which is not a classic liberal arts college but a more comprehensive university with professional degree programs and an unabashed commitment to engagement with the contemporary world? Pessimists might predict that in such a context, philosophy would barely survive, diminished by insistent demands for an allegedly marketable, thin kind of “relevance.”

In fact, however, philosophy is thriving at PLU. Why and how has that happened over the last three decades? The story—one such story, at least, the one from my vantage point—has several important elements. Three, I believe, are major: national developments in the discipline of philosophy itself, PLU’s distinctive mission, and the creativity and convictions of the faculty employed here.

Changes in American Philosophy Reflected at PLU

Two changes in philosophy nationally have been relevant. One is the arrival of “applied philosophy” in deliberate, scholarly form. The 1960s, with all the contentiousness of the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and “the Warren Court” version of the U.S. Supreme Court, saw philosophy of law achieve new prominence within the discipline. In 1971 the new, soon to be pre-eminent journal *Philosophy and Public Affairs* demonstrated that the highest standards of analytic philosophy could be applied to issues of immediate contemporary consequence. Later in the 1970s, out of largely philosophical roots, biomedical ethics formed as an interdisciplinary field, and feminist philosophy and gender- and ethnic-related philosophical work came to prominence in the 1980s.

To be sure, reasoning about enduring and fundamental issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethical theory, whether in philosophy’s analytic or continental traditions, continued to constitute the bulk of academic philosophy. But the emergence of applied sub-fields arguably changed the tone of the whole discipline. Philosophy had escaped its ivory tower leanings of the previous half-century, regaining the practical and socially engaged character it had had in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with such giants of American philosophy as William James and John Dewey.

A second national development has also been important. By mid-century, British-American analytic philosophy and European “continental” philosophy had increasingly gone their separate ways. Barely understandable to each other (contrast, for example, W.V.O. Quine and Martin Heidegger), many university departments were either torn asunder by fierce conflicts between these traditions or totally dominated by one. While the gulf between them remains considerable even today, co-existence at least, and sometimes positive collaboration, is now manifest in the make-up of many department faculties.

At PLU both of these national developments were visible. George Arbaugh, senior colleague and a true leader for three decades beginning in the

1960s, was both a first-class analytic mind and a passionate teacher of philosophy in the continental tradition, particularly of Kierkegaard and Sartre. In the current department, both Greg Johnson and Brendan Hogan bring continental as well as analytic training to their teaching and scholarship. On the applied front, courses such as Philosophical Issues in the Law, Philosophy and Cults, and Health Care Ethics emerged in the 1970s, and now many others are offered by the department, including Military Ethics, Business Ethics, Feminism and Philosophy, Human Rights, and Ethics, Animals and the Environment.

One spin-off of the growth of applied philosophy has been the greater and more obvious interdisciplinary reach of the discipline. Applied philosophers must immerse themselves in other areas of study—professions such as business or nursing, and disciplines such as biology, psychology, or economics. The resulting effects on students and faculty are significant. Students taking philosophy can more readily see how it relates to other subjects they are studying, and faculty become capable of more sustained academic conversations with colleagues in other fields. Both effects help to make the campus culture more appreciative of philosophy’s contribution to a PLU education, regardless of a student’s major.

PLU’s Distinctive Mission

The very mission of the university, “educating for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership, and care,” has also helped to sustain philosophy. As the life of deeper questions—questions beneath those that initially find answers—philosophy leads students to examine acutely what constitutes truly worthwhile service, leadership, and care. The search for meaning and purpose in students’ lives that PLU aims to nurture requires the harder, more relentless questioning about self, world, and moral values that philosophy trains.

Moreover, education of the “whole person” cannot be segmented into merely separate disciplines. Philosophy is an unusual discipline in that it is distinguished by its radical interdisciplinarity, its dedication to making connections with other disciplines and methods of inquiry. Such interdisciplinary horizons are indispensable if education aims, as it does



Menzel in the classroom in the late 1970s

Creative, Versatile Faculty (and a short swan song)

These connections between the evolving field of philosophy and the distinctive mission of PLU might have remained theoretical were it not for the particular faculty PLU attracted. I came in 1971 to join three acutely thinking colleagues:

George Arbaugh, Curt Huber, and Gunnulf Myrbo. Four years later

when I became interested in applied work in biomedical ethics, and when major interests in philosophical questions about health economics took me in a distinctly interdisciplinary direction just a few years after that, my applied and interdisciplinary turn was received with supportive dialogue and critical argument, not passive-aggressive suspicion. I can assure you that emerging bioethicists I knew elsewhere frequently had far less constructive receptions from their departments. At PLU, other philosophy faculty may not have taken as much of an applied turn as I did, but they eagerly pursued applied work in some of their courses, too, and in any case, they strongly supported me in mine.

Later, another colleague, Jon Nordby, was supported in his applied work, philosophy of forensic science. In more recent decades, with Keith Cooper, Erin McKenna, Greg Johnson, and Brendan Hogan succeeding George, Curt, Gunnulf and Jon, and now with the arrival of Pauline Kaurin and Hannah Phelps coinciding with my retirement, the department has developed a remarkably rich array of courses, with more up its sleeves. Consequently, students find ample options in courses that visibly connect with their other studies.

At PLU, applied moral and social philosophy are not pursued as some sort of mere “critical thinking” about contemporary issues. Connections with classic philosophical views and a wealth of vigorous theoretical work in contemporary philosophy are vital to applying philosophy well. The expanding scope of the department’s work does not dilute its philosophical distinction.

My phased retirement begins this summer, with the opportunity still to

teach one course a year until 2012. That course will provide me the opportunity to use the new version of a classic work that I am writing during my current sabbatical: a complete restatement of Immanuel Kant’s famous work in moral philosophy, *The Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals*, as if it were being written today. Though the most important theories in the history of philosophy are alive and well in contemporary applied philosophy, sometimes, as with this work by Kant, students are put off by overly dense and unnecessarily convoluted language that is not remedied by a different translation. Daring to write a radical restatement of a classic work to make it more teachable reflects the pedagogical and philosophical freedom I have been given at PLU.

The rest of the scholarly agenda from my sabbatical will also have a large influence on the early years of my retirement. Health and sanity willing, I hope to produce a highly accessible book for a much wider audience than academic philosophers, on some unnerving conundrums about the value of human life that have received far too little attention in our culture.

I am grateful, beyond measure, for the context and community that PLU has provided me in which to live an interesting, meaningful philosophical life. It’s been far more than a career—oh, indeed, so much more.

Philosopher Peter Singer Delivers Koller Lecture on the Ethical Implications of Global Poverty

Hannah Phelps

Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Internationally renowned philosopher and ethicist Peter Singer, the Ira DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and laureate professor at the University of Melbourne’s Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics, visited PLU in September 2007 to deliver the Heather Koller Memorial Lecture. In his address, “Global Poverty: What Are Our Obligations?” Singer challenged the standing-room-only audience to shift and widen their conception of moral obligation. A long-time defender of the interests of the global poor, he argued that our obligation to aid knows no political or national boundary, and that we ought to

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at PLU, at the genuinely thoughtful, purposeful lives of whole persons.

If philosophy were to run a more narrowly academic, ivory tower route, then it would have much less to do with such an education. But if philosophy is about living philosophically, then it has a vital role. Beliefs have consequences (or they ought to). If they do, people are accountable for their beliefs as well as their actions, and then they must be able to probe different beliefs appreciatively. The “see every side” and insistent questioning characteristics of philosophy help one do that.

Philosophy taught in PLU’s context thus becomes an utterly serious and deeply personal business. As such it simply must call forth extremely dedicated teaching from its faculty—teaching that strives to make a powerful difference in the life of each and every student.

Framed in this way, philosophy is likely to play a prominent and stable role in the university’s general education curriculum. At PLU in fact it has, in the strong form of a requirement that every undergraduate take one course in philosophy. Core curricula tend to get re-assessed and debated every dozen years or so; in my time at PLU, this occurred in 1979-80, 1990-92, and 2006-2008. In each round of consideration, at first it seemed doubtful to many that a separate requirement in philosophy would be retained. Each time it has been. I would wager that with the inherent fit between philosophy and the mission of the university as strong as it is, and with that mission demanding truly influential teaching from philosophy faculty, this historical result is not surprising.

Department of Religion

2007-2008 Religion Department Lectures Showcase the Vitality and Relevance of the Study of Religion

Brenda Ihssen

Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion

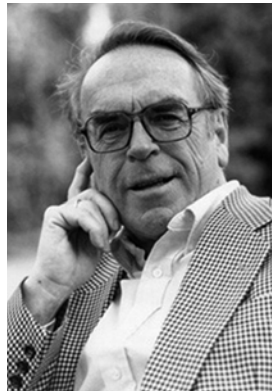
Each year the PLU Religion Department features two of its faculty in public lectures. This year's presenters were Dr. Antonios Finitsis and Dr. Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen. The Department also sponsored two additional lectures featuring the prominent and well-respected scholars Dr. Jürgen Moltmann and the Very Reverend Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. The department continued the David and Marilyn Knutson/Lutheran Heritage Lecture, endowed in memory of David Knutson, a former Religion faculty member, and in honor of his wife Marilyn and her children. The department also introduced two new endowed lectures: the Alice Kjesbu Torvend Lecture in Christian Art, endowed by friends and family of Alice Torvend, PLU alumna and promoter of the arts; and the Paul O. Ingram Lecture in the History of Religions, endowed by Paul Ingram and his wife Gena Ingram. The department gratefully acknowledges the generosity of these donors whose gifts enrich and enliven the study of religion at PLU. Altogether, this year's seven outstanding and well-attended lectures highlighted the vitality and diversity of the many disciplines within the field of Religion: Biblical Studies, Theology, Historical Theology, Church History and Religious Studies.



Dr. Jon Pahl (University of Chicago, 1990), professor of the history of Christianity at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, delivered the first David and Marilyn

Knutson/ Lutheran Heritage Lecture in September. His lecture, "The Desire to Acquire: Shopping Malls, Religious

Violence and Actual Places of Grace," was based on his book *Shopping Malls and Other Sacred Spaces: Putting God in Place* (2003), a critique of malls, Walt Disney World and the suburban home as the new sacred space in American culture. The David and Marilyn Knutson/Lutheran Heritage Lecture honors the contributions of PLU alumnus and Religion faculty member David Knutson and his wife Marilyn by bringing to campus scholars whose theological vision is in tune with the major intellectual questions of our day.



Dr. Jürgen Moltmann (University of Göttingen, 1952), Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen and one of the world's foremost Protestant

theologians, delivered a public lecture sponsored by the Department of Religion in October. In his lecture, "In the End is the Beginning: Christ's Resurrection and the Resurrection of the Flesh," Moltmann furthered his argument put forth in *The Coming of God* (1996) that authentic Christian eschatology is not concerned with endings but with the "new creation of all things." His numerous scholarly contributions to the intellectual world range from the groundbreaking *Theology of Hope* (1967) and *The Crucified God* (1973) to *The Spirit of Life* (1992), *Science and Wisdom* (2003) and his just-published intellectual and theological biography *A Broad Place* (2008). Dr. Moltmann's essay, "The Crucified God: Yesterday and Today, 1972-2002," was published in PLU professor Dr. Marit Trelstad's *Cross Examinations* (2006).

Dr. Antonios Finitsis (University of Chicago, 2007), Assistant Professor of Religion, gave the third lecture of the year sponsored by the Department of Religion in October. His lecture, "Samson and Delilah, Man Versus Woman: A Hairy Issue," examined the story of Samson and Delilah from the perspective of the formation and perpetuation of gender roles in antiquity. Dr. Finitsis focused specifically on what transpires when the relationship



between men and women turns combative and what happens to men when they sleep with the "enemy." Dr. Finitsis, whose research interests revolve around the impact of colonial interests and power structures in the development of religious ideas, teaches courses at PLU related to the Hebrew Bible, including Gender Construction, Religion and Literature, and Method and Ideology in Hebrew Bible Interpretation, as well as Prophets and Politics.



Dr. Robin Jensen (Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, 1991), Luce Chancellor's Professor of the History of Christian Worship

and Art at Vanderbilt University, was the inaugural speaker in February for the Alice Kjesbu Torvend Lecture in Christian Art. Her lecture, "The Victory of the Cross in Early Christian Art: Transforming the Iconography of Conquest," drew from groundbreaking research on the visual expressions of Christianity within their social and political contexts. Dr. Jensen's recent publications include *The Substance of Things Seen: Art, Faith, and Christian Community* (2004), and *Face to Face: The Portrait of the Divine in Early Christianity* (2005). The Alice Kjesbu Torvend Lecture in Christian Art honors Mrs. Torvend's life-long commitment to education concerning the history of Christian art and architecture and her promotion of and sponsorship of liturgical and sacred art.

His Eminence, The Very Reverend Metropolitan Kallistos Ware (University of Oxford), delivered another lecture sponsored by the Department of Religion in early March. He spoke on "Salvation in Christ: The Orthodox Approach," the topic of his 1996 publication, *How Are We Saved? The Understanding of Salvation*

in the *Orthodox Tradition*. In addition to teaching and translating, he is renowned for his texts *The Orthodox Church* (1963) and *The Orthodox Way* (1979), which are standard introductory texts to the history and theology of Eastern Orthodoxy. His Eminence retired in 2001 after 35 years as a professor of Eastern Orthodox Studies at Oxford University, and he now travels widely, speaking on a variety of topics related to Orthodoxy.



Byzantine ascetic behavior and social justice in seventh-century Alexandria. Dr. Ihssen, whose research is focused primarily on social ethics in the writings of fourth-century Greek authors and in monastic and spiritual texts of Orthodox Christianity during the age of the Byzantine Empire, teaches courses at PLU in Eastern Orthodox and early Christian history and theology.

J-Term 2007: Art, Culture, and History in Medieval Rome

Vicky Winters, '07

Rome, the eternal city, became a living, breathing classroom for PLU students who were enrolled in "Medieval Christianity in Italy," a course taught by Dr. Samuel Torvend (Religion) in January 2007. The course focused on reform movements, the struggle between church and state, ethical commitments to the poor and marginalized, and the roles of women in medieval Christianity. Through the exploration of Rome and central Italy, students were able to encounter and study the architectural spaces and artistic images that were the primary means through which Christianity was communicated to the people of the time, the majority of whom were illiterate.

Students visited significant Christian sites, which included the first-century Mithraeum and excavations below St. Peter's Basilica, the third-century

Catacomb of San Callisto, the sixth-century monastery of St. Benedict in Subiaco, the fourth- and twelfth-century basilicas at San Clemente (one built on top of the other!), the Romanesque Basilica of Saint Francis in the medieval hill-town of Assisi, the gothic cathedral in the mountain-top town of Orvieto, the Baroque Basilica of St. Peter, the Vatican Museum, and the Sistine Chapel.

Free time afforded students the opportunity to further explore Rome, attend Mass at the Vatican and plan excursions to Florence, Venice and Pompeii. Most importantly, it provided time to absorb the culture and interact with the wonderful people of Rome. There is so much to see. One touches and walks on history everywhere, and cannot help but leave Rome with the hope of returning one day.

J-Term 2008: In Search of Luther's Legacy in Germany

Dan Peterson

Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion

This January eighteen PLU students traveled to the land of Martin Luther as part of "The Lutheran Heritage in Germany," a first-time course offering taught by Dr. Daniel Peterson of the Religion Department. The course focused on various chapters within the German Lutheran tradition, ranging from Luther's famous "rediscovery" of the gospel in the sixteenth century to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's resistance against the Nazis in the twentieth century. The task was to examine how each of these chapters reinterpreted Luther's insights in light of changing contexts and concerns. Along the way students analyzed important works of Lutheran art, architecture and music, all in an attempt to gain perspective on how a complex religious tradition has lived out its legacy over the course of an often tumultuous past.

Led by Dr. Peterson and accompanied by staff assistant Rick Eastman, the group had the opportunity to visit the following sites: Bonhoeffer's home in Berlin, Luther's home and town church in Wittenberg, the Wartburg Castle where Luther translated the New Testament into German, the first Protestant (Lutheran) church in Torgau, the Francke Institute (center of Lutheran pietism) in Halle, and Johann Sebastian Bach's St. Thomas Church in Leipzig (which provided the opportunity also to hear a wonderful Bach motet). Thanks to the ELCA Wittenberg Center, students even got to meet a Dr. Luther, a current

Dr. Harold D. Roth (University of Toronto, 1981), Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University, delivered the inaugural Paul O. Ingram Lecture in the History of Religions in March, titled "To Treat Yourself as Other: The Psychodynamics of Self-Alterity in Early Daoism." Dr. Roth is a specialist in Early Chinese Religious Thought, Taoism, the History of East Asian Religions, and the Comparative Study of Mysticism. His publications include *The Textual History of the Huai-nan Tzu* (1992), *Daoist Identity: Cosmology, Lineage, and Ritual* (2002), and *A Companion to Angus C. Graham's Chuang Tzu: the Inner Chapters* (2003). The Paul O. Ingram Lecture in the History of Religions honors the scholarship and commitment of Dr. Ingram to Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Dr. Ingram was the first professor to teach courses on the history of religions at PLU.

Dr. Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen (University of St. Michael's, 2004), Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious History, delivered the seventh and final lecture of the academic year sponsored by the Department of Religion in early April. Her lecture, "Strip the rich right down to their shirts: St. John the Almsgiver and the Transformation of the City," examined the eccentric Bishop St. John in his role as a unique model of early



Student Vicky Winters on the Via Conciliazione, with the dome of St. Peter's Basilica behind her.



Prof. Dan Peterson (far left) and assistant Rick Eastman (far right with their J-Term group in front of the Castle Church in Wittenberg where Luther is believed to have nailed his 95 Theses in 1517.

member of Luther's town church today, at the end of their stay in Wittenberg.

In all, students were provided with a critical exposure to the Lutheran tradition in Germany and an opportunity to experience a different culture first-hand. At its end, many expressed the hope of returning to Germany, home to Luther and birthplace of the heritage that gives PLU its middle name.

Recent Publications by Faculty in the Department of Religion

Suzanne J. Crawford O'Brien, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Religion and Culture Chair, Global Studies Program

1. *Religion and Healing in Native America: Pathways for Renewal* (Praeger Press: 2008).
2. "Talking Place: Ritual and Reciprocity at Holy Wells and Mass Stones in the Republic of Ireland," *Journal of Ritual Studies* (Winter 2008).
3. "Well, Water, Rock: Holy Wells, Mass Rocks, and Reconciling Identity in the Republic of Ireland," *Material Religion*:

The Journal of Objects, Art, and Belief (Fall 2008).

Louis A.

Komjathy, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Religion

1. *Cultivating Perfection: Mysticism and Self-transformation in Early Quanzhen Daoism*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
2. *Handbooks for Daoist Practice*. Hong Kong: Yuen Yuen Institute, 2008 (January).
3. "Qigong in America." In *Daoist Body Cultivation*, Livia Kohn (ed.), 203-35. Cambridge, Mass.: Three Pines Press, 2006.

Douglas E. Oakman, Ph.D.

Professor of Religion, Dean of Humanities

1. *Jesus and the Peasants*. Matrix: The Bible in Mediterranean Context 4. Eugene, OR: Cascade Press, 2008.
2. "Batteries of Power: Coinage in the Judean Temple System." In *In Other Words: Essays on Social Science Methods and the New Testament in Honor of Jerome H. Neyrey*, edited by Anselm C. Hagedorn, Zeba A. Crook, and Eric Stewart, 171-85. *Social World of Biblical Antiquity* 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007.
3. "Biblical Hermeneutics: Marcion's Truth and a Developmental Perspective." *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context*, edited by Philip F. Esler, 267-82. Fortress, 2006.
4. "The Radical Jesus: You Cannot Serve God and Mammon." *From Biblical Interpretation to Human Transformation: Reopening the Past to Actualize New Possibilities for the Future*. A Festschrift Honoring Herman C. Waetjen, 218-30. Salem, OR: Chora-Strangers, 2006. Republication.
5. "Il denaro nell' universo etico del Nuovo Testamento." *Il nuovo Ges storico*, edited by Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina, and Gerd Theissen, 203-15. Introduzione

allo studio della Bibbia, Supplementi 28. Brescia: Paideia, 2006. Translated from English.

Alicia Batten, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Religion

1. "The Moral World of Greco-Roman Associations," *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses* 36 (2007): 133-49.
2. "Ideological Strategies in James." In *Reading James with New Eyes: Methodological Reassessments of the Letter of James*. Edited by Robert L. Webb and John S. Kloppenborg; Library of New Testament Studies Series 342. London: T & T Clark, 2007: 6-26.

Kevin J. O'Brien, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Religion

1. "Thinking Globally and Thinking Locally: Ecology, Subsidiarity, and a Multiscalar Environmentalism." In *The Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* (2.2), 2008.
2. "Toward an Ethics of Biodiversity: Science and Theology in Environmentalist Dialogue" in *Eco-Spirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller, eds. Fordham Press, 2007.

Antonios Finitis, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Religion

1. Review: *Faithful Interpretation: Reading the Bible in a Postmodern World* by A. K. M. Adam, *Horizons in Biblical Theology*, Volume 29, Number 2, (2007): 223-224.

Samuel Torvend, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and Chair of Religion International Honors Faculty Project Director, The Lilly Wild Hope Project on Vocation

1. *Lutheran and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
2. "Early Christian and Medieval Social Service Initiatives," in *Lutheran Social Services*, Foster McCurley, Ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

Kathlyn A. Breazeale, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Religion

1. "Dualism without Domination: A Reinterpretation of Dualism for Ecofeminist Theory." In *Constructing a Relational Cosmology*, ed. Paul O. Ingram, 54-68. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006.
2. "Process Perspectives on Sexuality, Love, and Marriage." In *Handbook of Process*

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There, studying canonical rhetorical texts, continental philosophy, and American pragmatism, he found a school that emphasized “writing as thinking.” Matthew wrote his dissertation on the ideology of cynicism and its relationship to U.S. undergraduate writing instruction, posing the question, “When does political enlightenment change the behavior of students?”

After more than ten years in Texas, Matthew is happy to be living near the ocean again. Living in Tacoma, he enjoys playing the guitar and drums, “the beauty of this area and the quality of the people at PLU.” His favorite class to teach is Writing 101; last semester, he chose the theme, “Serious Comics: The Rhetoric of the Graphic Novel,” and was “very impressed with the quality of reading, writing, and thinking” from PLU freshmen. Matthew’s realization that literature and writing were “something good” for him has become something good for PLU students. “We learn a lot together,” he feels.

Joe Oestreich

Ryan Ceresola, '10



Joe Oestreich, PLU’s newest visiting faculty member in creative nonfiction, was born in Wisconsin but has spent most of his time in Columbus, Ohio, where, according to Joe, “a love for the Ohio State Buckeyes is served up like fluoride in the water supply.” After majoring in Political Science, he went back to his undergraduate school, Ohio State, to earn an M.F.A. in Creative Writing.

He is also the bassist and a vocalist for a rock band named Watershed. While touring for two months with the Insane Clown Posse, Joe first seriously explored writing. “Opening for two serial killing clown-rappers from Detroit was so

ridiculous, I had to start writing down the stories,” he says.

Joe’s work has been published in *Esquire*, *Ninth Letter*, *Backwards City Review* and many others. His piece, “This Essay Doesn’t Rock,” was named “Notable Nonrequired Reading” in *Best American Nonrequired Reading 2007*, and he has received a fellowship and writing award at Ohio State. In addition, he was twice nominated for their graduate teaching award.

His decision to come to PLU stems from his desire to spend some time in an area of the country he was unfamiliar with, in the “beautiful and friendly (and not nearly as rainy as advertised)” Northwest. Furthermore, he finds PLU a great fit. “The faculty here are dedicated teachers and scholars, and it was obvious to me that I would grow as a writer, teacher, and thinker while at PLU.”

Both a rocker and a writer, Joe’s philosophy on writing mixes the two. “In rock and roll,” Joe says, “you can’t worry about the people who don’t come; you have to play for the people who do. Readers, of course, are audiences. If someone bothers to flip and read your pages, you owe them your best, your clearest, your most honest.”

Making the Mark

Jacob Carl Harksen, '10, discusses PLU’s student-led creative writing organization’s inception, role, and future.

When you find the William Carlos Williams poem, the Peter Orner short story, the Kurt Vonnegut novel, the Hunter S. Thompson article, or when you first read Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl,” you want to tell someone. What’s more, you want to tell someone who will be as excited as you are, whose eyes will widen as they read it. That moment—when a piece of writing is shared between friends—is what The Mark is all about. Though Frank O’Hara may not have meant it in this way when he wrote, “The poem is at last between two persons instead of two pages,” he may have come the closest to expressing why the organization exists.

The Mark began four years ago with four members. During her senior year at PLU, Stephanie Takase, '05, initially called for the formation of a writing group and was answered by Rase McCray, '05, Nathan Thomas, '05, and Abby Fagan, '08. In



the years since its inception, the group has grown steadily and maintained a high retention rate (those who have graduated often stay on),

contributing greatly to its strength on campus.

Since its beginning, students have met every Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. in Admin 211A. Each get-together is organized around a reading of some published work, a prompt to get members writing, and a workshop of pieces submitted by group members earlier in the week. What separates The Mark from writing classes is the decidedly informal nature of the meetings. Open to all genres, The Mark subscribes to no movements, no schools of thought, and never invests too deeply in opinions that cannot be reconsidered. This creates an atmosphere of shared dialogue enriched by each member’s unique writing and reading style.

The growth of The Mark has brought new opportunities to share the love of the written and spoken word with PLU at large through various open mic events at venues across and occasionally off campus. (Last year’s was held in the middle of Red Square.) This year, the open mic events have continued more frequently with the co-sponsoring of *Saxifrage*, PLU’s student-run literary magazine. Since spring 2007 The Mark and *Saxifrage* have also co-sponsored the PLU poetry slam. The organization also worked with the Visiting Writers Series to bring nonfiction writer Courtney Brkic to campus this year, and it hosted performer-poet Saul Williams in February. Last year also saw the revival of *Markings*, The Mark’s own publication of its members’ writing.

The continued presence of The Mark on campus builds a strong community of writers to ensure that there is always a fresh supply of new material and new ideas. Four years ago a discussion began, and every Tuesday night it continues. The Mark works to bring the literary community at PLU out of its pages and back squarely between people, where the conversation is at its best.

Dean's Notes continued from page 1

and Pauline Kaurin in the ethics of warfare. Paul Menzel, the division's most senior member, enjoyed his final sabbatical before retirement. After a recent detailed self-study with the help of outside reviewers, the department has built unusual strengths in applied philosophy.

Finally, Religion sponsored its well-attended and respected lectureships throughout the year. Chair Samuel Torvend further organized an impressive Arts, Religion, and Peace Conference in February. Religion faculty have been heavily involved in university leadership, so that department welcomed a larger than usual number of excellent visiting faculty. The Religion department spent a good deal of time in the fall working on teaching assessment and reformulating the rationale for the two-course requirement in the general curriculum.

This writer found encouragement and solace from the humanities in a most personal way during the latter half of 2007. An unwelcome recurrence and treatment of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma required my medical leave from July 1, 2007 to February 1, 2008. No person is an island, indeed, nor indispensable! English chair James Albrecht ably stepped in as acting dean; the Chairs' Council continued to function quite well; and the excellent division staff of Tracy Williamson, Theo Skogsberg, and Julie Lao kept things running smoothly.

In early October, as I anxiously awaited signs of success after stem-cell transplant, I contemplated the mystery and complexity, fragility and durability of life. On October 11, positive numbers began to appear in my blood counts where zeroes had been previously, and I felt as though I were witnessing the very beginnings of life! In that experience, I sensed anew how incredibly precious are the poetry and literature, philosophy and theology that enable us to plumb the depths of human existence. Those venerable humanistic disciplines confront us with life's profoundest meanings. How could we ever truly live without them?

Languages & Literatures continued from page 7

(*Étranger dans notre ville: Poetry and National Identity in Senegal*)

Michelle Middleton (German):

MigrantInnenliteratur: Türkische Identität und deutsche Kultur in den Erzählungen von Emine Sevgi Özdamar (*MigrantInnenliteratur: Turkish Identity and German Culture in the Works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar*)

Blake Hovde (Chinese): Viral Admissions: Expanding Cultural Identity in China Through the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

John Yu (Chinese): 挑戰與返文化: 金庸的『書劍恩仇錄』中的性別角色 (*Challenge and Counter-culture: Gender Roles in Louis Cha's The Book and the Sword*)

Tawny Clark (French): *Femme fatale on fetalité féminine: Les conflits idéologiques dans Pluie et Vent sur Télumée Miracle* (*Femme Fatale or Female Fatality: Ideological conflicts in Simone Schwarz-Bart's Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*)

Jason Estes (Classics): Hooked on Learning: Examining Cultural Education in Ancient Greece

Lisa Lennick (German): *Die Mauer im Kopf: Nostalgieentwicklung im unvereinigten Deutschland* (*The Wall in the Head: Emerging Nostalgia in a Dis-Unified Germany*)

Jessica Lona (French): *L'art moral: Les contes de fées de Perrault comme une arme littéraire* (*L'art moral: Perrault's Contes de fées as a Literary Weapon*)

Kristina Garabedian (Chinese): Challenging Gender Roles through Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

Laura Brade (German): *Exilerfahrungen: Identitäten, Kulturen, und Errinern an die Vergangenheit* (*Experiencing Exile: Identities, Cultures, and Remembering the Past*)

Jonna Allen (German): *Ritualien der Rebellion: Nürnberger Fastnachtspiele im 15. Jahrhundert* (*Rituals of Rebellion: Carnival Plays in 15th-Century Nuremberg*)

Shiela White (Chinese): Expressing Change: Repression and Reaction to a Recent Production of *The Peony Pavilion*

Noriko Nagane (Chinese): Survival of the Contemporary: 798 and the Chinese Art Market

Annamarie Whitson (French): *La Haine: Xénophobie et race en France* (*La Haine: Xenophobia and Race in France*)

German Program Welcomes Visiting Faculty Member



Dr. Kamaal Haque joined the Department of Languages and Literatures in the fall as Visiting Assistant Professor of German, arriving most recently from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Kamaal, whose Ph.D. (2006) from Washington University in St. Louis combined studies in German and Comparative Literature, has research interests in the literature and culture of the Age of Goethe, on Middle Eastern influences on German literature and on theories of space and spatiality. Besides all levels of German language, his previous teaching experience includes courses ranging from the Literature of World War I to German Film to German Rap. With an office located at the entrance to the *Deutsches Haus* in Hong International Hall, Kamaal not only supports students in his German classes but also interacts easily and often with them outside of class. He has also contributed to a variety of co-curricular German activities. In October, for example, he helped organize and served as a panelist on a special roundtable discussion titled "Germany's Conflicted War on Terror," which included special guest Rolf Schütte, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany.



focus and increase our assistance toward those who are the world's neediest.

While at PLU Singer also met with a smaller group of students and faculty for a more intimate and wide-ranging discussion of related ethical challenges.

Singer's invitation to PLU was meaningful for other reasons as well: Heather Koller, '94, was a Philosophy major and English minor who died of bone cancer a month after her graduation. The annual memorial lecture, established by her parents Brant and Carol Koller and her sister Jennifer, honors Heather's life by focusing on creative writing or ethics, Heather's interests. The PLU community is grateful to the Koller family for creating a continuing public opportunity to confront these pressing ethical questions.



Hannah Phelps and Pauline Kaurin

New Faculty in Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy is happy to announce the addition of two new tenure-track faculty.

Dr. Pauline Kaurin graduated from Concordia College, Moorhead with a B.A. in Philosophy and International Relations and holds an M.A. from University of Manitoba and the Ph.D. from Temple University in Philosophy. Her areas of teaching and research interest are military ethics, the ethics of warfare, modern philosophy (especially the work of David Hume), and she is currently doing work on the ethics of non-lethal weapons, torture and warrior culture. She is married to the Rev. Gregory Kaurin and has two sons.

Dr. Hannah Phelps arrives at PLU with her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, having written her dissertation on the overlooked relationship between emotion and moral reasoning. Here at PLU she teaches courses primarily in applied ethics, such as business ethics, biomedical ethics, and family ethics, and having herself attended a liberal arts college, she is excited to be part of the dynamic, challenging, yet welcoming community at PLU. In the classroom Hannah looks forward to navigating with her students the shifting intersections of social changes and advances in technology with principles of moral philosophy.

Theology, eds. Jay McDaniel and Donna Bowman, 120-135. St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006.

Patricia O'Connell Killen, Ph.D.

Professor of American Religions
Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

1. "Memory, Novelty, and Possibility in This Place." In *Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia*, edited by Douglas Todd. Vancouver, BC: Ronsdale Press, 2008 (forthcoming).
2. "Midrange Reflection: The Underlying Practice of Wabash Center Workshops, Colloquies, and Consultations." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 10/3 (2007): 143-149.
3. "The North American Pacific Rim: A Response to Frank Pasquale and William Stahl." In *Secularism and Secularity: Contemporary International Perspectives*, edited by Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar. (Hartford, CT: Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture, 2007): 73-81.
4. "Godless in Eden? The Metroscapes' Post-Modern Religious Life." *Metroscapes* (Summer 2006): 6-11.



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Prism, the magazine of the Humanities Division at Pacific Lutheran University, expresses the scholarly viewpoints or deliberations of Humanities faculty, and occasionally others by invitation, while also announcing publications and achievements within the Division.

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