

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

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Spring 2009

## Humanities

at



English  
Languages & Literatures  
Philosophy  
Religion

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## In the Prism

### 2008-2009 Dean's Reflections and Refractions

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

The humanities focus on "the human experience," and attempt through creative word and imagination, critical reason and analysis to confront and understand that experience in depth and honesty.

Readers of this annual publication will encounter in the following pages attestation to such engagement with human experience as well as wide-ranging academic interests and thought. Indeed, part of the joy of teaching and pursuing scholarly questions at Pacific Lutheran University resides in the breadth of inquiry of colleagues and the challenging questions posed by students.

The engagement with literature ancient and modern, the preoccupation with large and significant questions, the concern that ideals meet reality—for just treatment of prisoners as well as for the health of environment and community—through these qualities and characteristics departments and faculty live out the university's mission of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership, and care. This is purposive learning at its best.

PLU is justly proud of its 2010 global initiative, and the Division of Humanities is an extremely active participant in Wang Center study-away programs. Students who study away often return speaking of the transformative effects of their experiences abroad. They gain perspective on common human problems, and despite barriers of culture and language find reasons to care about the world. They confront the difficulty of strengthening a nation's joint capacities for good government and a flourishing economy while simultaneously fostering justice and peace. Moreover, the



Photo by Jordan Hartman

Humanities Division has taken student-faculty research seriously to heart. Kelmer Roe Fellowships have made possible significant projects in all departmental fields.

As a new administration takes office in Washington, D.C., and inaugurates hopefully a more constructive era in global politics, the world finds itself beset with hot wars on several continents and the most serious financial crisis since the Great Depression. There is plenty to worry about on the national and global scene.

There also is much to fret about on campus as budgets are strained and students' ability to pay tuition is challenged by increasingly tight credit. Nevertheless, there is a strong sense of hope and educational purpose among humanities faculty and students. In the midst of difficulties in life, students receive important mentoring from these faculty and inspiration for life-long patterns of learning—even in times of duress.

It is truly a fine honor and privilege to serve as dean for such accomplished scholar-teachers and such engaged and passionate students. I hope the reader will be equally enticed by the reflections and refractions in this *Prism*.

# The Humanities at Work

Mike Engh, '10



If there was ever a moment that our nation and our world needed a generation of effective problem solvers, it is now. As economic woes plague public and private institutions across the country, individual citizens are confronted with record unemployment rates and a collapsed financial system. The comparisons to the financial drought of the Great Depression are inevitable, and it is only human of us to doubt and worry.

It is also understandably human of us to view pragmatism as the best defense against this era of recession. We have seen the dangers of a collective attitude of lavishness and frivolity, and we have reverted into our shells to wait out the storm.

The trials of the social and economic crisis that is being felt across the globe are indeed testing many of our human attributes. How do we survive when rested with financial problems? How do we express the circumstances that led to this point? At what point must we sacrifice some of our securities to protect our fellow citizens?

In a time like this, the humanities become more important than ever. As we are challenged on a daily basis by questions of morality, responsibility, empathy, and citizenship, we learn more about ourselves as individuals

and as members of our common society when we examine our current problems through an academic lens.

It is plain to see that an appreciation for advanced education in English, Languages and Literatures, Philosophy, and Religion might understandably be lost amid a population that is struggling to pay the bills. Yet it is imperative that we continue to examine our humanity in order to create organic solutions for fixing the moral and societal problems that led us to today. The alumni profiled here exemplify the application of the humanities education toward a meaningful examination of the human condition and the problems that we see today. If it is human to worry and to doubt, then the humanities supplement the part of the human spirit that believes a clearer future is just around the corner.

## Elise Erickson, '03—French



In her current job at PLU's Campus Ministry office, Elise Erickson, '03, serves as the Worship and Music Coordinator. Erickson came to PLU in with a desire to focus on a degree in social sciences; beyond that, she was excited and open to possibilities other courses might bring. This adventurous spirit and attitude towards learning led her to take a French

language course during her first semester at PLU, a decision that ultimately altered her entire college experience when it led to a French degree in the Department of Languages & Literature.

Though Elise had studied Spanish in high school, she discovered a delight for learning the French language that she could not ignore. "Those were the courses I was most passionate about." After studying the language for a few years, she spent a semester in Paris during her junior year. "I felt a great sense of accomplishment," she said, "I continued to learn and express myself more confidently and intelligently in a foreign language."

After graduation, she returned to France to work as a public school teacher in the Normandy region. During her three years in the small northern city of Rouen, she taught at both lycée (high school) and collège (junior high) levels. More so than with her study away experience, her tenure as a school teacher allowed her to immerse herself into French life. "I was more easily able to integrate myself into the life of a smaller city, and befriend locals and people from all over the world," she said. Comfortable with her life in the small city, she was able to interact with the life of the community in ways which were not available to her in Paris. "There, I was always viewed as just another foreigner, and therefore, a tourist."

Erickson returned to the PLU community in 2006 to assume her current role. While she misses having the opportunity to speak French daily, she nevertheless continues conversation as Assistant Organizer for the Tacoma French Club. She affirms that her humanities education is put to use everyday: "The critical thinking skills I gained in mastering a foreign language are invaluable in the work I do to combine sung, spoken, and written word into worship services." That adventurous attitude towards language, cultivated during her time as a student at PLU, is clearly still a part of her nature.

## Nels Flesher, '06—Religion

It is easy to automatically identify an education in the humanities with the elite fields of academia. The development of



innovative philosophies and intellectual arguments is not typically targeted toward the masses. But for Nels Flesher, '06, his major in Religion has turned out to be most useful in talking with the variety of people that he encounters in his daily life.

Religion is a topic that can draw a strong opinion from anyone, and Flesher witnesses people expressing these opinions on the subject every day. "My coworkers are inevitably curious—and often opinionated—about religion."

He understands that many people may judge the religious convictions of another before they fully understand those beliefs. "The mainstream media, or the churches people have attended, do not seem to equip us with a very rich understanding of religion," Flesher said. "Therefore, I may be frustrated with someone who assumes, for example, 'Most wars are caused by religion.'"

Flesher engaged in these conversations often enough during his stint in the Coast Guard, and drew on lessons from his PLU professors to help him gain some perspective. "My coworkers were inevitably curious, so I drew on the theology of Paul Tillich that I read in a seminar with Religion Professor Dan Peterson to provide these conversations with a more constructive religious vocabulary."

Flesher transferred to PLU after spending two years at a university in Alaska. He originally planned to study biology, but was influenced by a course on the New Testament taught by Professor

Doug Oakman. "I loved the way it challenged my intellectual assumptions about the Bible," he said. "Some of my ideas I'd been brought up with had to be abandoned, but ultimately my vision was broadened and deepened of who Jesus and his early followers were."

This new perspective on religion helped Flesher to see the humanities as a practical alternative to the sciences. "I thought there was no utility to an education in something like history or the classics," he said. "By the end of my brief time at PLU, I began to see communities of free intellectual inquiry as essential to ethical democracy as well as to living fulfilling lives."

Flesher originally planned to pursue a graduate degree in order to become a professor and continue teaching and learning about religious history and philosophy. But his plans changed once again when he found himself affected by the sense of community service that he had experienced at PLU. He is now a student at the Yale Divinity School, and he is planning to realize his sense of vocation through ordination as a Lutheran minister once he graduates.

"Because of PLU, I know something about the beauty of a Lutheran college education: intellectual freedom and a desire to participate meaningfully in community," he said. Although Flesher may not be where he expected when he started as a first-year student, he now finds himself prepared to transition his PLU education from the classroom to the pulpit.

#### **Christian Lucky, '89—Classics, English, German and Philosophy**

Developing an analytical mind is a crucial aspect of an education in the humanities. The ability to develop thoughtful questions and possible solutions is useful when one is confronted with a philosophical dilemma. And if critical analysis represents the brains of a humanities education, then the equally valuable ability to demonstrate empathy comprises the soul. Christian Lucky, '89, has used his PLU education to develop these valuable skills throughout his career as an attorney, law professor, and policy reform specialist. "My study



of the humanities at PLU prepared me well to engage in addressing contemporary issues in a global context across cultures and disciplines."

He has demonstrated this global engagement through much of his work. During his career, he has helped facilitate policy restructuring in areas such as post-Communist Europe and western Africa. These projects required Lucky to act as mediator to reach common ground among communities moving out of conflict and into political organization. The academic aspect of his PLU education granted him perspective on how to apply empathy to heated situations, and reading helped him to reanalyze his role in the negotiation process. "By reading literature, the policy analyst develops a more sophisticated relationship between the reasoning self and the emotional self."

After obtaining degrees in English and Philosophy from PLU, Lucky pursued a law degree from the University of Chicago. He continued working with literature as a link between thought and action as the editor of the *East European Constitutional Review*, a collection of essays on constitutional developments in fifteen post-Communist countries. "Contested nationalism was and remains an important issue in many regions," he said. The publication identified many of the problems being confronted by governments; many essays from Lucky's tenure as editor have been used by constitutional courts in these countries to formulate legal precedents

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# Department of English

## Professor Rick Barot Awarded for Essay on Herbert

Jess Lee, '09

Rick Barot's second book of poems, *Want*, was published by Sarabande Books in 2008. His other essays on poetry have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Pleiades*, *New England Review*, *The Yale Review*, and *Virginia Quarterly Review*.

Rick Barot, Assistant Professor of English, has recently been awarded the McGinnis-Ritchie Award for Nonfiction from *The Southwest Review* for his essay titled "Devoted Forms: Reading George Herbert," which investigates the work of the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century Welsh poet and Calvinist priest. The McGinnis-Ritchie Award for Nonfiction is awarded annually to two writers who have contributed to the publication in the previous year.

When asked what sparked his interest in Herbert, Barot replied, "I always knew that Herbert was a part of the universe of poetry, a big part. I always felt that I had to explore him at some point, and when I did...I was surprised that he was as interesting or modern as he was. He was old school, but also somehow really contemporary." So contemporary, in fact, that Barot found connections between Herbert's poetry and Madonna lyrics. "Like any great writer," Barot notes, "[Herbert] is in the DNA of our culture, and therefore, once you start looking for traces of him, you find those traces, Madonna being a part of that. Herbert has touched Madonna somehow."

Herbert's poetry converses with his audience on many levels, and one of the most exciting discoveries made while researching this essay was that of anagrams hidden in the poems. Barot explains, "He hides words in his poems and if you are really careful you can find them in there. To me that is really incredible, that you write to be understood, and hide words in your own poetry. It is like he is having a conversation with the reader and a secondary conversation in the poem with God."



The following is an excerpt from Barot's essay:

"The poems in *The Temple* are evidence of a private inquisition, but in their making they are also meant to instruct their readers. Moreover, they are meant as a display of intellectual power, even of bravado, for his coterie of aristocratic readers, and for God. [...]

Here, in "Prayer (I)," if one reads the first letters of the six left-most lines, the following six letters are apparent there: P, T, E, A, S, T. Point east, the acrostic says, thus giving us a real direction for that "land of spices" mentioned in the final line. In addition, the acrostic also provides something like grammatical completion to the sonnet: the poem's fourteen lines are comprised of a series of appositives; in the poem's acrostic, we get a true

verb. The poem's inventory has a kind of wildness, a gaiety, which the deployment of the acrostic only underscores.

Herbert is wont to show a virtuoso display of technical prowess—an ecstasy of forms—but in his most moving poems the moment of salvific knowledge is a space of surprisingly quiet, abrupt realization, where God's salvation is not so much knowledge as it is "something understood." Herbert's technology is always in tension with the confounding nature of that understood thing. And as wily as his poetic constructions get, the moment of understanding often leads to humility, where form seems chastened by mystery."

— from "Devoted Forms: Reading George Herbert," by Rick Barot. *Southwest Review*, Vol. 93, No. 3, 2008, pages 428-47

Prayer (1),

Prayer the Church's banquet, angels' age,  
God's breath in man returning to his birth,  
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,  
The Christian plummet sounding heaven and earth;  
Engine against the Almighty, sinners' tower,  
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,  
The six days' world transposing in an hour,  
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;  
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,  
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,  
Heaven in ordinary, man well dressed,  
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,  
Church bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,  
The land of spices; something understood.

— George Herbert

## Saxifrage 35

Matt Click, '10

Jake K.M. Paikai, '09

Saxifrage 35 Co-Editors

Invoking this poem annually, PLU's premier, student-run, literary-arts magazine *Saxifrage* is getting ready to split the rocks for its thirty-fifth time, celebrating its history of highlighting the literary and artistic voices of Pacific Lutheran University. Showcasing poetry, prose, creative nonfiction, critical essays, artwork, photography, and music, the magazine provides a crucial venue for student writers.



*Saxifrage* prides itself on being completely student-run, from its two co-editors, to its submitters, to its team of judges who sift through submissions to find

the best art and writing that PLU has to offer. One of the unique features of *Saxifrage* is its judging process: submissions are judged anonymously by a team of volunteers from the PLU community who convene for a highly anticipated marathon editorial event replete with free food and merriment. Volunteering to be a judge is the best way for people to be involved in the making of *Saxifrage*—aside from submitting, of course.

This year, *Saxifrage* has hosted a number of live events, and has endeavored to reach the off-campus community. In November, *Saxifrage* teamed up with *A River and Sound Review*, a local reading series, to host a free show on campus for PLU students. *Saxifrage* also hosts an open-mic every other Tuesday at Northern Pacific Coffee Company, which allows

writers a unique opportunity for public exposure. This slate of events has made *Saxifrage's* thirty-fifth year unique.

In celebration of the anniversary, the editors will be hosting a premier gala, complete with readings from current students and alumni. The gala will be a retrospective sampling featuring pieces from throughout *Saxifrage's* history.

*Saxifrage* is a unique facet of PLU's artistic community. For many, it will be a place for their first published work. For others, it is a collection of work from friends, peers, and colleagues. For current students and alumni alike, *Saxifrage* introduces young artist to the literary world.

For more information, please email *Saxifrage* at [saxifrage@plu.edu](mailto:saxifrage@plu.edu).



### A SORT OF A SONG

*Let the snake wait under  
his weed  
and the writing  
be of words, slow and quick, sharp  
to strike, quiet to wait,  
sleepless.  
—through metaphor to reconcile  
the people and the stones.  
Compose. (No ideas  
but in things) Invent!  
Saxifrage is my flower that splits  
the rocks.*

— William Carlos Williams

# Department of Languages & Literatures

## Remarks at the Seventh Annual Hong International Poetry Reading

Mark Jensen, Associate Professor of French

**The International Poetry Reading, an annual campus event sponsored by the Department of Languages and Literatures, invites students, professors and interested others to select a poem to read in the target language. The following are the opening remarks presented at the reading.**

April 23, 2008

On behalf of the Department of Languages and Literatures of Pacific Lutheran University, welcome to the Seventh Annual Hong International Poetry Reading. My name is Mark Jensen. I'm a professor of French and devotee of nineteenth-century French poetry.

Perhaps you've seen the comedy "Groundhog Day" in which Bill Murray, condemned to live the same day over and over, decides to devote himself to seducing Andie McDowell. On one occasion he's making great progress, until he asks what she studied in college. "Nineteenth-century French poetry," she says, and Bill Murray breaks out laughing: "Nineteenth-century French poetry!" he exclaims. "What a waste of time!" No successful seduction that day.

When I saw the film was released in a dubbed version in France, "nineteenth-century French poetry" was changed to "nineteenth century Italian poetry" — *la poésie italienne du dix-neuvième siècle*.

Later in the film, of course, Bill Murray wises up, learns French, and when Andie McDowell says "Nineteenth-century French poetry," he begins to quote Baudelaire. Quoting Baudelaire turns out to be quite effective.

For what is poetry? Poetry is language at its sweetest. Poetry teaches the enormous force of few words. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of knowledge. Poetry is best words in best order. Poetry

is prose run mad. Poetry is "The poet reciting to Lady Diana/While the footmen whisper 'Have a banana.'" Poetry exists in the hearts of all. Poetry is why we read. Poetry is the record of happiest and best moments. A poem is perfect, a crystalline revelation. A poem is a shot into the air. Poems seldom consist of poetry alone. The lunatic, the lover and the poet/Are of imagination all compact. The poet puts his woes in verse. No one is more confident than a bad poet. Poets are sultans. Poets are like stinking fish. Poets despise money. Poets, pensive, painful vigils keep. Poets steal from Homer. The poet's pen is plundered from the wing of a bird. Poetry gives pleasure by its form.

Like many modern poems, today's event is unstructured. We have a poetical place, here near the flame and flowers that represent whatever you wish them to represent: inspiration, passion, spirit, spring, youth, beauty, promise. Everything else depends on you. Whenever the spirit moves someone, we'll hear some poetry in the original language, with translation or commentary before or after or not at all. As we drink deep this best of wine, please partake also of some humble refreshments that we have prepared for you. Don't be concerned if there are awkward or long pauses, just let the poetry you've heard percolate in you and enjoy this brief hour together in celebration of our brief stay here on earth, and enjoy the pleasures of the afternoon, for

... pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;  
Or like the snow falls in the river,  
A moment white, then melts  
forever. (Robert Burns said that.)

Later, I'll be reading some lines by Aimé Césaire, a poet of the first rank who died last Thursday in Martinique. In honor of his great contribution to world culture, I've put up a photograph of him meeting with my colleague Roberta Brown and students from PLU. But to do so now would try your patience, so I'll get myself a cup of coffee and listen for a while.

## German Diplomat Visits PLU

Kirsten M. Christensen  
Associate Professor of German

In January PLU enjoyed a return visit from the Honorable Rolf Schuette, Consul General of Germany. Consul Schuette, Germany's highest-ranking diplomat in eight western states, is based in San Francisco. He first visited PLU in 2007 when he participated on a panel discussing terrorism in Germany. This January he spoke to a rapt audience of over 100 on "German-Jewish Relations Today." Consul Schuette has significant expertise in this highly charged topic, having been previously posted in Tel Aviv and having served as a visiting fellow of the American Jewish Committee. Consul Schuette's presentation focused on the Holocaust, German-Israeli relations and the growing Jewish community in Germany today. In a letter to German faculty following his visit Schuette expressed thanks for PLU's ongoing commitment to teaching German language and history.

## Igniting Creativity: The FLASH Film Festival

Kirsten M. Christensen  
Associate Professor of German

Sometimes an idea burns brightly enough that it ignites a hundred others: Annkathrin Lange seems to have had one such idea. After teaching a third-year German course in fall 2005, Lange, Visiting Assistant Professor of German in the Department of Languages and Literatures from 2005-2007, sought a new way to foster the creativity she saw in her students. She envisioned a culminating project for students in her 300-level class that would unite them with students at their level in other languages in the department. In collaboration with language faculty in Chinese, French, German and Norwegian, Lange crafted guidelines

## Languages and Literatures Department Welcomes New Faculty

### Jennifer Jenkins

Kirsten M. Christensen  
Associate Professor of German



Jennifer Jenkins, new Assistant Professor of German, has had quite a couple of years. In 2007-08 she was a visiting faculty member at the College of William and

Mary while completing her dissertation. In summer 2008 she co-directed a study abroad program in Münster, Germany for the College of William and Mary before returning to successfully defend her dissertation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She then packed up and moved to Washington. All that activity would make many people head for a vacation, but Jenkins hasn't stopped moving since she landed in the great Northwest. As one of only two faculty members in PLU's German program, she hasn't had the luxury of watching from the sidelines. Instead, she has gotten to know PLU inside the classroom and out.

In fall 2008 she taught a course on authors, artists and intellectuals who lived and worked in exile during the Third Reich, a topic that stems directly from her research interests. Student Grant Stanaway appreciated Jenkins' "dynamic, engaging, and enthusiastic teaching style," and fellow student Jake Paikai says the course enhanced both his German skills and his "ability to ask more difficult questions, to unlock texts even further."

And even as Jenkins got her feet on the ground in her busy first semester, she was planning the department's January-term course in Berlin, which she describes as "a wonderful opportunity for our students to interact with native Germans in host families, with

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for students to produce films in their target language for what would become PLU's first Hong International Film Festival in May 2007. An enthusiastic capacity crowd at the campus-wide screening of the films made it clear that Lange's vision of the festival as "a forum for [students to] present... their accomplishments in foreign language proficiency and cultural understanding to a larger audience" had already been realized and that the festival was an event with potential for the future.

Although Lange left PLU in May 2007 (her daughter Nele was born in July 2007 and she is currently teaching part-time at Harvard), faculty in the department continue to carry the film festival torch with enthusiasm. Although some changes were initiated in the festival's second year, the basics Lange envisioned remain the same: 7-10-minute films in the target language with English subtitles, with students writing the script, acting in, shooting and editing the films. Students also work closely with Nick Butler in PLU's Digital Media Center to learn the ins and outs of film editing.

Under the direction of Scott Taylor, Visiting Assistant Professor of French, the festival was moved in spring 2008 off campus to the Mount Tahoma Theater of the Washington State History Museum, a large, lovely venue in the heart of downtown Tacoma. Taylor and other faculty organizers also decided to expand the panel of judges to include participants from outside the current PLU community. 2008 judges included:

Georgejean "Jewely" Acosta, who graduated from PLU in 2004 with an English major and earned a masters in Film Studies from the University of Bristol in England in 2007;

Patrick Baroch, who has worked in film for almost 20 years, currently with Independent Television Service (ITVS), producers of the Emmy award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*;

Spencer Ebbinga, PLU Assistant Professor of Art and Co-Chair of the Department of Art, who has

many years' experience directing and producing short-format videos;

Donna Poppe, PLU professor and chair of Music Education, who has been a platinum member of the Seattle International Film Festival for many years; and

Brad Young, a 2003 PLU graduate and German major who worked for many years at Tacoma's Stadium Video and has published on film.

From an impressively wide-ranging slate of thirteen films in four languages (French, German, Norwegian and Spanish) on the theme "Ways of Seeing," this distinguished jury awarded prizes for Best Editing, Best Cinematography, Best Use of Theme and Best Film. Audience members also voted for the People's Choice award. The 2008 awards ceremony culminated in a sweep for the impressive Norwegian film "*Summing*" ("Buzzing"), which Assistant Professor of Norwegian Troy Storfjell said represented 120 hours of student work.

Jury member Poppe praised "the obvious student collaboration that took place" for all festival participants as "a tremendous experience in group decision-making for future employment in any field." And jury member Baroque was delighted by "the diversity and high quality of the videos" and impressed by the student filmmakers' ability to "learn the language of film along with an additional language," noting that "every student who participated had something to be proud of."

The 2009 festival will take place Wednesday, May 6, at 7 pm, once again at the Washington State History Museum. This year's festival theme, "Adaptation," seeks films that draw their inspiration from other textual sources or cultural productions.

This year the festival also debuts its new name: the FLASH (Foreign Language Shorts) Film Festival, an acronym that suggests the festival's goal of igniting an interest in film through the creative expression of PLU's gifted language students.

# Department of Philosophy

## Professor Pauline Kaurin Investigates the Morality of Torture

*Hannah Love Phelps  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy*

For many of us, questions about the morality of torture arise only upon seeing images of prisoners in newspaper photos, reading accounts of allegations of torture in prisons around the world, or perhaps more insistently over the last several years when following public and political debates here in the United States over the legality of torture. But for Pauline Kaurin, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, deliberations on the ethics of torture arise out of a broader and deeper framework of other ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical questions.

According to Kaurin, the philosophical and moral debate over the ethics of torture is not new, but the focus has shifted over time. In the past, torture was performed as a mechanism to achieving one of three goals: terrorism, punishment, or confession. Terroristic torture was used to stifle dissent, to silence and eliminate political enemies, and to enforce religious orthodoxies. Torture as punishment included practices such as drawing and quartering or stretching on the rack, among other techniques. And confessional torture was used as a way to extract confessions to crimes. In medieval Europe, a confession was in fact considered invalid unless extracted under torture. It was not until the Renaissance that widespread intellectual movements questioning the ethics of these variants of torture began to appear, side by side with more cogent arguments about human rights and the incompatibility of torture with such rights. Such debates also focused on torture as a tool of political tyranny and were critiques of tyrannical and absolute power.

Prior to the Cold War, torture was thought of as something only tyrannical regimes engaged in, and beyond the moral scope of democratic societies. The current debate over the ethics of torture has taken a new direction, now focused on two types

of torture. The first is interrogational torture, most familiarly exemplified in the 'ticking time-bomb' scenario. Imagine a bomb hidden somewhere in a city, which when it explodes will kill massive numbers of innocent civilians. Imagine also that a terrorist with knowledge of the bomb's location (who also knows how to defuse it) is in custody. Would torture be justified as a mechanism to obtain that information?

There is a related debate as to whether torture can be justified in domestic interrogations where someone's life may be at stake. A typical setting would involve a suspect who has buried a child alive in a location known only to the criminal himself. The child will suffocate and die if not rescued within a few hours. Would it be morally permissible to torture the suspect in order to obtain information about the child's location?

These new questions have only appeared within the last forty to fifty years, precipitated by increased concern and awareness of domestic and international terrorism as well as an ideology suggesting not only that torture may be morally permissible in emergency situations where a life is at stake, but that such torture may be effective at generating

the necessary information to save that life. The latter component focusing on the effectiveness of torture has been part of discussions of philosophical and ethical theory, but not typically part of public discussion about torture.

For Kaurin, her interest in the ethics of torture has two main influences: PLU students and Donald Rumsfeld. When teaching her Military Ethics course, she found students to be very curious about the ethics of torture, especially post-September 11th. In military ethics, torture is seen as dishonorable and unethical, so Kaurin had never closely investigated the question nor focused on its significance. Around the time her students were raising these questions, another debate was taking shape in the United States political landscape: the question of whether Article Three of the Geneva Convention applied to Al Qaeda and/or Taliban detainees imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay. Rumsfeld appeared on national television arguing that Article Three did not apply to those prisoners, but Kaurin believed his interpretation was wrong and began writing a paper on that question. Her interest in the ethics of torture increased as the Bush Administration more vocally put forth two claims: international law did not apply to the detainees, and increasingly harsh interrogational methods, tantamount to torture, could





be employed at Guantanamo Bay.

Over time, her research interests into the ethics of torture have deepened and evolved. Events such as the abuse and torture depicted in photographs leaked from Abu Ghraib beginning in 2004 reinforced Kaurin's concerns about why creating a culture in which torture is permissible is a dangerous path. The Bush Administration had originally claimed such methods were used only in interrogational contexts at Guantanamo Bay, but some of the same methods appeared in those photographs in contexts which were clearly not purely interrogational in nature but seemed designed also to humiliate and denigrate detainees.

Kaurin is pleased, from a policy standpoint, by the actions of the newly elected Obama Administration. Several points of progress have been made. There is the executive order closing Guantanamo Bay, another executive order requiring Federal agencies to follow interrogational methods excluding torture as defined in the Army Field Manual, and the executive order repealing the so-called 'torture memos'. These orders addressed Kaurin's primary concerns about interrogational methods utilized at Guantanamo Bay in particular and whether torture is legally permissible in general. But since executive orders can be undone, Kaurin would like to see legislation passed as a safeguard.

One of her concerns about the current public debate on the ethics of torture has to do with the description of situations in which torture is suggested to be a morally permissible choice. The ticking time-bomb scenario as a frame for the debate is problematic for several reasons. First, the scenario itself is hypothetical and speculative in many of its points. There is scant evidence that such a scenario has actually occurred with the same features as that of the ticking time bomb example. Second, this scenario presents the argument such that if we would justify torture in case X, we would have to explain why we would not justify it in case Y or Z, and such justification would be difficult to offer once torture has been allowed as a viable choice to begin with. Third, this scenario avoids the real moral question in large part by presuming we know

the suspect is guilty, and the victims are innocent. Yet the real epistemological questions of how we know the suspect is guilty or the victims innocent goes unanswered. Fourth, this scenario ignores any compelling moral questions about the long-term consequences for the tortured suspect, the torturer(s), and the society that endorses torture as a legitimate form of interrogation. In short, the ticking time-bomb scenario narrows the debate to a hypothetical situation where the outcome (obtaining information through torture) is presumed from the beginning. When pressed, the defender of the scenario tends to answer "But of course we would never torture an innocent person!" And then, as Kaurin points out, we are thrown right back to the epistemological question: how do we know someone is innocent or guilty?

In teaching on the ethics of torture, Kaurin has found that many students tend to believe some myths. Many think the ticking time-bomb scenario is real or has happened (fueled in part, she thinks, by shows such as *24*). Others think the only reason we as a nation would use or endorse torture is because it has been proven to be a successful interrogational technique. As a challenge to her students, Kaurin presses them to explain what it means to say "Torture works as an interrogational technique." How do we know? What does it mean to say "it works?" Where is the evidence for that claim? She also finds that students tend to consider torture as an exception to a rule, and to think that so long as torture is merely an exception, it can be justified, even by a democratic society with commitments to absolute defenses of human rights, in those unusual circumstances. Kaurin then points out how, if torture is enshrined in law or policy, we cannot think of it as an exception but as a rule, even if applied only in limited or clearly defined situations.

Since PLU is not only in close proximity to military and Air Force bases but also counts ROTC students as well as returning veterans amongst its student body, Kaurin finds a unique opportunity to discuss, in the classroom, the ethics of torture. For the last several years she has begun to teach students who have

served in Iraq or Afghanistan. Those veterans bring not only a unique but intensely personal perspective on torture to the classroom; some of them have known friends or fellow service members killed by insurgents, IEDs, or roadside bombs. For those students, the question of whether torture is ethical is framed in more emotional ways: if information could save a friend's life, would such torture be justified? Teaching at PLU about the ethics of torture is, for Kaurin, an interesting and sometimes emotional experience given that, for many of her students, the question is not merely academic but possesses real-life resonance.

Yet torture is a difficult topic not only for students with some personal involvement in the question, but perhaps for all who study it. In the fall semester of 2008, Kaurin taught the Philosophy Department's Capstone Seminar, and for the first time the ethics of torture was the focus for those months. That presented unique challenges to the students taking part; as a scholar, how do you navigate talking, reading, and thinking about torture constantly as part of a class? Kaurin noted that she and the students wrestled with their own emotional reactions to the intense involvement with the topic. As scholars, they confronted their own reactions to and emotional involvement in the topics of their inquiry and ethical commitment, and how those reactions informed their ethical commitments and formation of their identity. After all, torture often elicits a visceral reaction of disgust, so it was not easy to be confronted with words and depictions for weeks on end. At the same time, for Kaurin the capstone provided a new opportunity to look at the question in greater depth and in more sophisticated ways.

Ultimately, a society must ask itself what sort of community it wants to be as it evaluates the question of whether or not torture is morally permissible and when, if at all, that might be. Answering that question goes beyond a hypothetical or even a real moment and forces a richer discussion of knowledge, values, and ideals, a discussion which is mostly absent from today's sound bytes and opinion pages.

# Department of Religion

## Asian Religions in the Pacific Northwest

Louis Komjathy, Assistant Professor of Religion

During the summer of 2008, Jeff Rud, a sophomore History major and Religion minor at PLU, and I conducted research on teachers and communities in the Pacific Northwest associated with Asian religions. This work was supported by a Kelmer Roe Fellowship for student-faculty research, and particular attention was given to the Lakewood and Parkland areas. Focusing on tradition-based communities, we studied the entire spectrum of religious adherence, including immigrant, ethnic and Euro-American convert communities. The research progressed in three stages: compilation of a working database; ethnographic research; supplemental research on under-represented traditions; and, finally, compilation of our data on these diverse teachers and communities.

We visited temples, interviewed teachers and senior community members, participated in community activities, and photographed the sites and communities. Some of the major sites visited included Blue Heron Zen Center (Korean Son Buddhism; Tacoma), New Kadampa Tradition (Tibetan Buddhism; Olympia and Seattle), Olympia Zen Center (Japanese Zen; Olympia), Open Gate Zendo (Japanese Zen; Olympia), Seu Mi Sah (Korean Buddhism; Tacoma), Tacoma Buddhist Temple (Japanese Pure Land Buddhism; Tacoma), Tsubaki Grand Shrine (Shinto; Granite Falls), Vedic Cultural Center (Hinduism; Redmond), and Wat Sammakirattanam (Cambodian Buddhism; Tacoma). Our research reveals that, in terms of Asian religions, the religiously pluralistic landscape of the Pacific Northwest is heavily influenced by Buddhist traditions, though those traditions themselves are characterized by diversity of nationality, demographics and specific theological schools. The research has had a number of tangible results. My working relationships with local religious teachers have allowed me to include in my PLU courses guest-speakers and field trips. Jeff Rud completed a Google Earth map that incorporates information from the working database. In addition, I presented



Tsubaki Grand Shrine of America (Shinto) Granite Falls, Washington

a public religion lecture based on this research at PLU on in March 2009. Our collaborative research was a truly fruitful undertaking, with two articles on Asian religions in the Pacific Northwest and America in process. We both benefited from the experience, and hope that the success of our project will encourage other student-faculty collaborations.

## ELCA Task Force for Studies on Sexuality publishes *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*

Marit Trelstad, Associate Professor of Religion



Since spring 2006, Associate Professor of Religion Marit Trelstad has been on a Task Force of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) charged with writing a study and proposed social statement for the church on the topic of human sexuality. Social statements provide a theological and ethical foundation for church policy and potential political and social advocacy for 10-20 years. Trelstad was asked to join the Task Force in 2005 due to her area of expertise in feminist and Lutheran theologies. The Task Force represents members of the church who are professional theologians, pastors, lay members, and bishops. Its members were selected to represent a wide variety of

constituencies and opinions in the church. Trelstad has traveled to Chicago for meetings of the Task Force two to three times per year for the past three years and with the publication this February of a proposed social statement, her work with the Task Force is completed. Aside from being involved with writing studies and parts of the social statement, Trelstad has given public addresses to the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the ELCA Conference of Bishops on behalf of the Task Force.

In 2001 the Churchwide Assembly (the highest governing body of the ELCA) issued a call to develop a social statement on sexuality, and since then the ELCA has been engaged nationally in three studies on human sexuality. The first study was an examination of statements on human sexuality from predecessor Lutheran church bodies which merged to form the ELCA (2002). The second study engendered discussion of the church and homosexuality (2003), and the third was a general study of human sexuality today in light of Lutheran theological and ethical insights (2006). Following the completion of the third study, which Trelstad helped author, the Task Force members wrote a draft social statement which was released to the church in spring 2008. The ELCA held over one hundred feedback sessions or "hearings" across the country and gathered feedback from individuals, congregations and interest groups of the ELCA. The Task Forces' responsibility entailed reading this feedback, attending hearings, and composing a proposed social statement which was released in February 2009. This social statement "Human Sexuality: A Gift, a Trust" will, ultimately, be adopted or rejected at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide assembly this summer.

The proposed social statement on human sexuality grounds its ethics in the Lutheran understanding that God's grace and love frees one to live in loving service to one's neighbor. Lutheran theology and ethics do not begin with a legalistic adherence to moral codes and Lutherans do not expect the world or individuals to be perfect. Rather, one engages a complex world to seek what is loving and best for God, one's neighbor and oneself. Since Lutheran theology declares that trust in God's promises forms the basis of Christian belief and life, the statement on human sexuality likewise focuses on building relationships and communities of trust. A relationships' level of sexual intimacy should

be matched, ideally, with an equivalent level of trustworthiness. The statement denounces demeaning and abusive forms of sexual exploitation and objectification within intimate, personal relationships and in the media and examines the means by which we can build and maintain relationships of mutuality, stability and trust. The social statement itself was co-written with other members of the Task Force. All in all, the aim of such a statement is not to present the views of one author but to create a document that most members of the Task Force can agree would best serve the church and the world today. The social statement itself can be read online on at [elca.org](http://elca.org).

The Task Force was also charged with creating recommendations for church policy concerning the ordination of pastors in same-gender long-term, committed relationships. Thus, the largest amount of feedback and controversy has come from the social statement's and accompanying policy recommendations concerning same-gender committed relationships and its implications for future policy concerning the public blessing of same-gender relationships and the question of whether pastors who are in a committed same-gender relationships may serve as pastors in the ELCA. The ELCA currently has no official policy on the blessing of same-gender relationships (thus it is a decision made at the pastoral level) and gay and lesbian pastors are allowed to serve ELCA congregations if they remain celibate. These policies could change or remain the same, depending on the adoption or rejection of the social statement and implementing resolutions by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in summer 2009.

In current church practice, there are several ELCA congregations who have "illegally" ordained a partnered gay or lesbian pastor to serve their congregation. While this is against current church policy, Trelstad notes that traditional Lutheran understandings of ordination – that the congregation calls and ordains its pastor rather than a Pope or bishops – can certainly be used to support such insubordination to authority. Such examples of congregational challenge to current policy also illustrate that the church is *not* deciding on whether or not it will change through this social statement and ministry policies. It is, rather, determining how it will choose to deal with the change that is already occurring within it.

While the hot issues in this process concern primarily same-gender relationships,

Trelstad herself hopes that the message of the social statement could have a broader influence. While she does not personally agree with all parts of the social statement, she would like to hold all members of the ELCA—heterosexual and homosexual—responsible to the social statement's call to bettering their own intimate relationships through building relationships of trust, trustworthiness, justice and mutuality and correcting the many abusive ways we deal with sexuality as a society. Seeing as congregations surely include both perpetrators and survivors of sexual violence, she would like to see the social statement be helpful in protecting and encouraging the flourishing of women, children and the most vulnerable in our society.

In this study, Trelstad was asked to outline the basis for a Lutheran approach to ethics and human sexuality in relation to the book of Galatians in the Bible; her address to the 2007 Churchwide assembly can be watched at <http://archive.elca.org/assembly/video/070811.html>.

## Hebrew Idol: Pop Culture Invades the Academy

*Tony Finitsis, Assistant Professor of Religion*

Teaching the Hebrew Bible to twenty-first century students is a challenging task. While I do not have to argue too much about its importance, still I have to argue quite a bit for its relevance. More to the point I have to show why we should take the Hebrew Bible off of the shelf of venerable—yet outdated—heirlooms. Students are not all that willing to touch it, much less

engage with it, because they see a chasm separating themselves from the Hebrew Bible. The customs people practice in this book are alien, the times are archaic and most importantly the characters in this book speak with peculiar words. The language barrier blocks access to a process essential for every contact: communication. Students encounter some of its words for the first time, and often it takes several efforts just to read it correctly. The biblically entrenched teacher is left to wonder: "exactly when did words like 'obeisance' disappeared from the radar screen?" I learned that if I was to establish communication between my students and my field of expertise I had to find the answer to a simple question: "How can I make a two millennia old book conversant with the i-tech generation?"

Establishing conversation is a perennial challenge for teachers. Admittedly, I had confidence in my ability to bridge the communication gap in the classroom. However, I did not want their Hebrew Bible experience to be strictly a "parental guidance" occurrence. My goal was to set the class in such a way that my students would feel confident to continue their exploration of the text outside the classroom too. Somehow, I had to help them realize that they can—and should—grapple with the text on their own. Scriptural interpretation after all is a never-ending process. Therefore, I decided to set up a task that would have them take a biblical story and comment on its contemporary relevance. This task would culminate in a twenty-minute presentation in class, in which students would show what the particular passage of their choice had something to say in



*The Finalists with the Judges. Top row the Finalists from left to right: Kelley Walker, Curt Kohlwe, Joshua Miller, Daniel Baker, Bryan Stiles and Jeff Rud. Lower row, the Judges from left to right: Moses a.k.a. Dr. Rona Kauffman, Queen of Sheba a.k.a. Sam Porter, Queen Jezebel a.k.a. Nicollete Paso, The Burning Bush a.k.a. Dr. Brenda Ihssen, King Solomon a.k.a. Dr. Samuel Torvend. You may find the "Hebrew Idol" website at: [www.plu.edu/~finitsak](http://www.plu.edu/~finitsak)*

the "here and now." It seems to me I was unconsciously following the old proverb: "Give one a fish and you feed her for the day, but teach one to fish and you feed her for life." So I pushed them into the water.

Good teaching is always a two-way street. When the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible became a bilateral enterprise in my class I found myself at the learning end of the teaching relationship. Some of my students were very creative, and their interpretations were both enjoyable and thought provoking. My next step was to nurture those newly discovered capacities. I simply could not let such talent stay confined in the walls of our classroom; I had to find a way to share it with the rest of our community. Therefore, I asked my students to turn their presentation projects into short movies. I would then stream those movies in the PLU website for everybody to see. I believe that was when I turned my students into teachers.

The forum within which their work became available to the PLU community became a contest, whose name "Hebrew Idol" was a play on the popular show, "American Idol." The goal of the contest was to recognize and reward hard work and creativity. PLU students had a month and a half to watch the videos and vote their favorite. Last year over one hundred students cast their vote. They determined the top three videos that went to a live final, at which "celebrity judges" interviewed the creators of those videos and dissected their thought process in creating their movie. As fitted the playfulness of the title, the live event was a celebratory and humorous occasion. Thunderous laughter reverberated several times across the room and audience, judges and contestants enjoyed themselves immensely. The game forum combined successfully "business" with "pleasure."

The "Hebrew Idol" project accomplished many goals. First, it bridged the intimidating communication gap. The students reached to a biblical story and took a stab at making it relatable to their peers. In the meantime, they developed their presentation skills and learned how to put together an argument for an audience. Most importantly it made the process of interpretation personal. Students may forget the rest of the class content but their videos and memories from the contest will most likely stay with them for a long time. Lastly, students now view the Hebrew Bible as "iPod cool."

## Recent Publications by Faculty in the Department of Religion

**Kathlyn A. Breazeale, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor of Religion

*Mutual Empowerment: A Theology of Marriage, Intimacy, and Redemption.*  
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

**Suzanne Crawford-O'Brien, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Religion  
Chair, Global Studies Program

*Religion and Healing in Native America: Pathways for Renewal* (Praeger, 2008).

"Native American Religious History," in *Columbia Guide to Religion in America*, Paul Harvey and Edward Bloom, eds. (Columbia University Press, 2009).

"Introduction," in *Religion and Healing in Native America: Pathways for Renewal*. (Praeger Press, 2008).

"Healing Generations in the South Puget Sound," in *Religion and Healing in Native America: Pathways for Renewal*. (Praeger Press, 2008).

"Big Fish Story: Using Media in the Introductory Theory Course," *Teaching Theology and Religion*. (2009).

"Talking Place: Ritual and Reciprocity at Holy Wells and Mass Stones in the Republic of Ireland," *Journal of Ritual Studies*. 22.1 (2008): 1-20.

"Well, Water, Rock: Holy Wells, Mass Rocks, and Reconciling Identity in the Republic of Ireland," *Material Religion: The Journal of Images, Objects and Beliefs* 4.3 (2008): 326-348.

**Brenda Llewellyn Ihssen, Ph.D.**  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion

"Basil and Gregory's Sermons on Usury: Credit Where Credit is Due," in *The Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16.3 (2008): 403-30.

Review of Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* by Fortress Press, 2007. *Journal of Church and State*. 50.1 (2008): 153-55.

**Louis Komjathy, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Religion

"Daojiao dianji de fanyi (II)" 道教典籍的翻譯 (II) (Daoist Texts in Translation). Translated by Zhang Lijuan 張麗娟 and Huang Yongfeng 黃永鋒. *Daoxue yanjiu* 道學研究 (Daoist Studies) 2008.1: 133-45.

"Mapping the Daoist Body: Part I: The *Neijing tu* in History." *Journal of Daoist Studies* 1 (2008), 67-92.

"Mapping the Daoist Body: Part II: The Text of the *Neijing tu*." *Journal of Daoist Studies* 2 (2009).

**Kevin J. O'Brien, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Religion

Review of Christopher Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Westminster John Knox, 2008) in *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion*, 2009.

Review Essay of Ernst Conradie, *An Ecological Christian Anthropology* (Ashgate, 2005) and James Martin-Schramm & Robert Stivers, *Christian Environmental Ethics: A Case Method Approach* (Orbis, 2003), in *The Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 2007.

Review of David M. Lodge & Christopher Hamlin, eds., *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World in Flux* (Notre Dame, 2006) in *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion*, 2007.

**Douglas Oakman, Ph.D.**  
Professor of Religion  
Dean of the Humanities

"The Social Origins of Q: Two Theses in a Field of Conflicting Hypotheses" (with Ronan Rooney). *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 38/3 (2008): 114-21.

*Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* (with K. C. Hanson). Second edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

**Samuel Torvend, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor of Religion  
Chair, Religion Department

*Luther and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

*Christian Initiation in a Post-Christian World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009).

"The Relief of the Needy in Their Distress: Early and Medieval Christian Social Initiatives," in *Social Ministry in the Lutheran Tradition*, Foster McCurley, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 26-49.

"Epiphanies in This World," in *Cross Accent* 16:1 (2008): 4-8.

"Inspector Brunetti's Dilemma: Can there be Beauty without Justice, Justice without Beauty?" in *Call to Worship* 42 (February 2009).

"The Silence of the Earth in the Christian Assembly," in *Call to Worship* 43 (May 2009).

*The Humanities at Work continued from page 3*

in their fledgling societies. "In many circumstances, national claims play out in literature simultaneously with developments in politics, social dynamics, law, or with the eruption of violence."

Lucky currently works for a Seattle law office, where several of his current projects demonstrate the same passion for empathic public policy he began learning at PLU. He is working on developing protocols for caring for children separated from their parents during a catastrophe. He credits social science literature with familiarizing him with the pertinent information for his project. "We cannot understand childhood or hope to build consensus regarding treatment of children unless we adequately take account of how literature has informed our understanding of childhood and the agency, rights and duties attributed to children."

He also acts as a special counsel to the Department of Emergency Medicine at New York University's Bellevue Medical Center, participating in medical ethics research and policy formation at the public hospital (oldest of its kind in the country). He credits one of his philosophy classes with laying the foundation for the work he does in this prestigious position. "The notes from the philosophy of science course I attended 22 years ago are above my desk, and I refer to them often," he said.

Lucky also applies principles from his philosophy education to his career in law. He recognizes many people unconsciously view institutions of law as entities that "are able to stand aloof from the grubby details of the world and mete to each person her due under a set of impartial rules." He credits this philosophy of equal distribution of justice under a completely objective set of laws with fixing many problems, but thinks legal issues are becoming more complex in an increasingly intricate global society.

"Not all problems given to lawyers to address are solved by according each her due under a system of rules," said Lucky. In his opinion, the solutions will come from deeper understandings of humans through the perspective of history and philosophy, as well as the ability to contextualize empathy for people through policy. "As ever, the speculative, poetic, analytical, narrative and linguistic traditions of the humanities will be indispensable

resources for those who work with public institutions to advance human well-being."

### Julie Wade, '01—English



Since graduating from PLU, Julie Wade's life has been a whirlwind of writing, studying, and teaching. Currently completing her Ph.D. in Humanities at the University of Louisville, Wade, '01, has also earned graduate degrees in English and Fine Arts from Western Washington University and the University of Pittsburgh. She has taught a wide ranging number of courses, from the university to the high school level. Wade is already an accomplished poet and nonfiction writer, having published over sixty poems and a steady stream of creative essays.

This writing life was not always her plan. When Wade decided to attend PLU, she was certain a degree in psychology was the right choice for her. Though she had a passion for writing, and had designated a secondary major in English, her interest in the workings of the human mind led her to major in psychology. She avoided English as a primary field of study because it didn't seem practical. "If I wasn't going to be Danielle Steel or John Grisham or some other best-selling author with novels made into Hollywood films," she wondered, "what was the point?"

During a semester abroad in London during her junior year, Wade realized she had her priorities backwards. As a writer, she had always used her interest in psychology to help her develop her characters and

broaden her creativity. "I was studying the social sciences for their concepts and their vocabulary, but the humanities was my real vocational home." Her professors in both majors helped put her studies into perspective. She remains grateful to her psychology professors for "affirming for me that doing what you love matters. They challenged me to be honest with myself about what life-course would truly make me happy, even if it wasn't in their discipline." Wade credits her professors in the English department at PLU with stressing the importance of learning for learning's sake as a way to encourage the university's mission of inquiry. "PLU was a place where asking questions of the world and of myself was not only encouraged but expected."

Wade admits that she has a hard time keeping her studies focused to just one area. Her preference for different areas of study started in her undergraduate years. "At PLU, I learned that I was happiest and most productive when I was multi-tasking." Her appreciation for the study of the humanities comes from what she calls its interdisciplinarity. "The humanities is, by its nature, an interdisciplinary field, of which my traditional English major is only star in a much larger constellation of art, history, philosophy, religious, and so on."

In each of her graduate degree programs, Wade has received fellowships that allow her to teach undergraduate courses in the humanities. This teaching has given her the opportunity to share her knowledge with her students, and in turn to have her students question her own knowledge of the curriculum. When she first began teaching, she found that "the more I taught, the more I wanted to teach, and the more questions I asked, the more questions I had." Her current Ph.D. program allows her to teach several undergraduate classes while working on her dissertation, an ambitious book-length lyric memoir.

Wade hopes to continue writing and eventually to publish a book of her own works. She also plans to continue teaching at the university level. The humanities have helped her see her own vocation as extending PLU's mission to "educate for lives of service and thoughtful inquiry." "Teaching and writing are my forms of service," she affirms, "where I probe my questions in a way that teaches others to do the same."

other international students in their language courses, and with German culture through excursions in Berlin, Nuremberg, Munich, and Salzburg.”

Jenkins embodies in many ways the multilingual, multicultural emphases of the department: she speaks German, Swiss-German dialect, Dutch, Swedish, and some French. And she has lived, worked or studied in Germany, Sweden and Belgium, experiences that give her special understanding for the challenges of learning new languages and adjusting to new cultures.

### **Giovanna Urdangarain**

*Paloma Martinez-Carbajo*  
Assistant Professor of Spanish



The Spanish Program is delighted to welcome Assistant Professor of Spanish Giovanna Urdangarain as a new colleague this

academic year. Giovanna comes to us from Indiana University, where she received her Ph.D. in Hispanic Literature in 2008. The title of her dissertation was “Bodies Lost, Bodies Recovered? Memory, History and Identity in the Post-dictatorship Cultural Production by Women of the Southern Cone.” Taking as a starting point the framework and context of Memory and Trauma Studies, Giovanna, in her dissertation, addresses topics of significant importance in the field of Hispanic Literary Studies, specifically, studies dealing with the legacy of violence in the Southern Cone that plagued the region during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Themes of this research include sexual violence inflicted on women, and the experience of women ‘insiles’ ... those women who despite not having been incarcerated remained captives of the repressive atmosphere prevailing in their countries.

Her research also deals with critical

approaches to the construction and representation of memory/*memoria*, as well as questions of exile, displacement, testimonial accounts, victimization, infamy and cosmopolitanism, among other current thematic foci, both in Brazilian and Latin American Literature.

Originally from Uruguay, a country that directly suffered the effects and consequences of a dictatorship, Giovanna comes to PLU with significant experience in the profession. After graduating from the Artigas Teacher Training Institute in Montevideo with a degree in Secondary Education Literature, she started her career as an educator by teaching and working as a student counselor at the secondary level in an impoverished neighborhood on the outskirts of the capital city. She also has worked as a Spanish teacher for the Peace Corps. She continued working in the field of education when she moved to the United States in the late 1990s, teaching both at Indiana University and DePauw University. Finally, while carrying out her graduate studies in Bloomington, she served both the Hispanic and the local communities as a cultural translator.

It is a great pleasure to have Giovanna as one of our colleagues. Her expertise and willingness to collaborate make her a wonderful addition to the Spanish faculty. We are looking forward to working with her for many years to come.

### **Rebecca Wilkin**

*Mark Jensen, Associate Professor of French*



Assistant Professor of French Rebecca Wilkin began teaching at PLU in September 2008, a month after she arrived in Tacoma with her husband and their six-

year-old daughter Marian. Wilkin holds a B.A. in French from Brown University in 1994 and a Ph.D. in French from the University of Michigan in 2000, and she has taught previously at Indiana

University-Bloomington. But as the daughter of a professor of French and a high school teacher of French, it can be said that her involvement with the field is truly lifelong. Parochial school in Paris at the age of five, eavesdropping under the *table française* at the College of Wooster, and high school French class with Mme Mathys were early formative experiences. Wilkin pursued research for her dissertation on Chateaubriand fellowship in 1997-1998 in Aix-en-Provence, a year that culminated in her marriage to Cédric Picard.

Wilkin has published many articles on the history of ideas in early modern France, feminist criticism, mysticism and demonology, and colonial history. Her important new study, entitled *Women, Imagination, and the Search for Truth in Early Modern France*, was published by Ashgate in 2008. The volume revises notions about how the idea of woman contributed to the emergence of modern science in a period filled with anxieties about not only knowledge but also about witchcraft, sex, and torture. Descartes, by opening the search for truth “even to women” as part of his appropriation of skeptical arguments, plays a key role in her argument. Descartes “not only legitimated women’s full participation in the search for truth, but also was the first to provide the philosophical justification for the reform of institutions that produced and maintained inequality between men and women,” she writes.

In January, Wilkin led a group of PLU students to Martinique for a J-term course, and is very busy this semester teaching French Civilization and Culture and Francophone literature as well as a section of beginning French language.

# Support Humanities Students and Programs

The plunging stock market and rise in unemployment has impacted everyone, including families struggling to keep the dream of a college education alive for their daughters and sons. PLU is committed to working with families of current and incoming students who have been hit hard by the economic downturn to ensure they can continue with their studies.

The university is committing an additional \$3 million in financial aid to its students for the coming academic year, and it is looking toward the community to help raise \$1 million of this total through Project Access. This amount will provide scholarships of \$3,500 to an additional 300 students in need, including Humanities students.

Other gifts can help support important Humanities program initiatives: the FLASH Film Festival and the foreign language film series in Language & Literatures, the Visiting Writers Series in English, public lectures in Philosophy, and Knutson and Religious Studies lectures in Religion are only a brief sampling of the Humanities programs that enrich the lives of students at PLU.

All gifts to Project Access or PLU are welcome. By making a gift of \$3,500 a donor can name a scholarship in honor of him or herself or a loved one. To learn more, go to [www.plu.edu](http://www.plu.edu) and click on the "Make a Gift" link. Or, call Laura Rose in the Office of Development at (253) 535-7177.



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"Pacific Lutheran University seeks to educate students for lives of thoughtful inquiry, service, leadership and care – for other people, for their communities and for the earth." – PLU's mission



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