



GORDON
COLLEGE

Department of History

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A view of the courtyard at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Museum Highlights from Boston

by Ashley Holm '15

From a musical staircase and “Shipwrecked” exhibition to a Victorian mansion, Boston offers some of the most amazing museums in the world. Last April, Prof. David Goss’s Case Studies in Museum Management class traveled to the Boston Science Museum and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (which houses a collection of fine and decorative arts) for our major field trip of the semester. This was not only a fun experience to enjoy as a group, but was also practical and educational.

One of the main objectives of this course is to observe the inner workings of a museum and the challenges that affect decision-making at various institutions. To thoroughly understand the practical applications of the theoretical maxims included in the educational groundwork for this industry, we must see it in action from multiple perspectives. For this particular trip, we did not meet any of the administrators at either museum, as we have occasionally during our other field trips. Instead, we experienced this outing from the perspective of “average” visitors, who just happened to be enrolled in a college course on the administration of museums; because the majority of the staff didn’t know we were students, we received a more genuine, universal interaction and reaction from the staff. This perspective only added to the educational benefit of the trip.

The courses for the public history and museum studies concentration are rigorously involved in providing opportunities and experiences to enhance our learning and preparedness for the real-life work in the field of museums. The academic side of this discipline should not drown out the passion and excitement involved in sharing knowledge and aesthetic enlightenment with the general public.

Historical Endeavors in France

by Gabriel DiMauro '10



After spending some time working for Gordon IN Aix, I briefly studied theology at the Faculté Jean Calvin in Aix-en-Provence before getting married to a lovely French girl in Marseille. I then went on to a master's program at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po Aix) in law and economics which focused on religion, culture and society. In October 2013 I successfully defended my thesis, "L'Esprit gastronomique: les contours d'une cosmologie nationaliste, ontologique et exclusive," which was awarded with *félicitations du jury* (18,5/20). I am now working in a Bilingual School as both an administrator and an 8th, 9th, and 10th grade history teacher (20th century mostly). Next year, I'm looking forward to pursuing doctoral studies with my master's thesis advisor.

Teaching the World's Teachers

by Lauren Owen '12

Too often, history is written from the perspective of the victors. It's impossible to pinpoint any one factor that leads to this. But in my two years as a Teach for America corps member in North Carolina, I learned that sometimes, it's because those people who have not won have not been given the voice that they deserve in the history that is being written.

I encountered this every day in my classroom: due to the poverty levels in the district that I taught in—



poverty levels that trace back to slavery—my students did not receive a quality education. Resultantly, many of them struggled immensely. Hopes for college and then having a chance to influence history grew distant simply because of the lack of education available.

And sadly, this is true not just in the United States. In many countries, students do not receive the education that they deserve; and in a world where education leads to money and money to power, these students have little chance for power, and therefore little opportunity to write history.

When I graduated from Gordon, I thought that I was going to stay in the classroom for years, imparting my love for history to my students. But when the chance arose to join a nonprofit and develop curriculum to train teachers in third world countries, I knew that this was a chance to be part of a global picture of writing history—that giving teachers the tools for success in the classroom would in turn give their students the opportunity to rise in the world, make their voices heard, and write their own history.

The Museum of Russian Icons

by Anna Obert '16



One of twelve icons comprising the newly acquired, mid-17th century iconostasis on exhibit at the Museum of Russian Icons.

To further our understanding of Byzantine history and culture, the History of Byzantium and the Caucasus class, led by Dr. Hevelone-Harper, took a trip to the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, MA. As soon as we entered the museum we were met with a juxtaposition of past and present. While the museum's exterior was traditional, fitting in with the town square's aesthetic, the interior had subdued colors, modern lines, and soft lighting, all of which highlighted the sacred complexity of each icon on display. Surprisingly, some of these had been created only within the past few decades. Yet these more recent icons were either replicas or new embodiments of old familiar images, reflecting the longevity and power that icons

have, and more importantly, their continuing relevance to the church.

The museum is beautifully designed: it is large with lots of gallery space and places for functions. It also appeals to many audiences, including a children's section that provides relevant activities. The museum does more than display icons. Its vision statement says it also aims to enhance relations between Russia and the United States through the medium of religious art. The Museum of Russian Icons' willingness to engage various audiences, despite the extensive and highly valuable collection it holds, provides an example that other museums could learn from. The museum provides an accessible window into the beautiful world of iconography. Our class greatly benefited from this tangible experience, and found the museum is well worth the trip.

Understanding Islam

by Peter Story '14



Pictured left to right: Dr. Hevelone-Harper, Sarah Stacey, Alec Jones, Peter Story, Natalie Assad, Emily Richey-Smith, Katie Gilbert, Ye Eun Bang.

Last February, members of the Dr. Hevelone-Harper's Islam and the Middle East class attended a symposium at Brown University, titled "Christians and Muslims: Early Encounters." Speakers Sidney Griffith, Susan Harvey, Nancy Khalek and Michael Penn discussed themes related to Christian and Muslim cultural interactions in the Middle East. Topics included the presence of the Bible in Arabia as an oral tradition prior to the revelation of the Qur'an, the interaction of oral and written cultures, and the frequently peaceful coexistence of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle East.

Student Achievements

- ◇ Ashley Holm '15, 2013-2104 recipient of the Governor John Endecott Memorial Scholarship, completed a year-long project studying the crucial first months of the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. With her work supported by the Endicott-Endecott Family Association, Ashley studied Endicott's efforts to bring together groups of settlers around a new plantation at Salem. Endicott helped build concord among settlers, continue peaceful trade with Native Americans, and shape colonial churches. At a presentation on May 1, Ashley presented the findings of her research to faculty, students, and members of the family association. To build on her studies, this summer Ashley is interning at Plimouth Plantation, creating a finding catalog for their institutional archive.
- ◇ On May 8, history major Dave Hicks '14 successfully defended his honors thesis, "Community Planning in Postwar Boston: A Political and Social History of a Renewing Urban Landscape."
- ◇ History majors Sarah Miller '14 and Katie Gilbert '15 were chosen to attend the Logos Workshop on Biblical Manuscripts, Vocation, and the Christian Mind at Oxford University this summer. They are both working with Drs. Ute Possekkel and Jennifer Hevelone-Harper on a Syriac translation project sponsored by the Green Scholars Initiative. Paul Johnson '11 was also invited for his work with Dr. Graeme Bird on Greek papyri.



Governor John Endecott overseeing the planting of an orchard at his plantation homestead "Orchard Farm" c. 1632.

Celebrating Freedom

On a rainy Saturday in April, the History Club gathered for its annual Freedom Trail Walk in Boston. P.J. Cook '15 co-led the group of seven students through the trail beginning at Park Street. The tour included the old and new Massachusetts State Houses, Granary Burying Ground, and King's Chapel. The group enjoyed a tour of the restored Paul Revere House on their way to the history-rich North End. After some local cuisine and fellowship, the group heard the story of Old North Church before ending with a view of the USS Constitution from Copp's Hill Burying Ground. The historians celebrated with dessert in the North End as they reflected on the day's events. The Freedom Trail Walk was a splendid excursion, despite the rain. If you missed it, please join the History Club in the fall semester for another visit to historic Boston.

by Victoria Wittke '14



Old State House.

Alumni and Student Updates

We would love to hear from you! Please send contributions to: katherine.ells@gordon.edu.