



GORDON
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History

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History Majors Earn Honors Using Languages to Explore the Ancient World

Three history majors earned departmental honors in history in May by presenting their theses to an eager audience of faculty and peers. Achieving honors in history requires two semesters of original historical research on a subject chosen by the student and faculty supervisor. This recent cohort of scholars and their research topics include:

Katie Gilbert: "Understanding the Person of John Climacus: A Syriac Codex, Ladder Illuminations, and Byzantine Iconography"

Nathan Landis: "*Humus Romanus*: Evidence for Ecological Responsibility in Roman Agricultural Thought and Practice"

Haley Drolet: "Between Artemis and Astarte: A Study in Religious Psychology and Literary Transmission"

All three of these honors students have studied ancient languages, including Latin, Greek and Syriac, to equip themselves to pursue their research topic. Katie Gilbert '16 and Haley Drolet '15 (*magna cum laude*) both combined their history majors with a Pike major in ancient languages and the Jerusalem and Athens Forum, an interdisciplinary great books honors program. Haley Drolet is now in England pursuing a master's degree in classics at King's College London. Nathan Landis '15 (*summa cum laude*) also minored in Outdoor Education and Sustainable Development. He now works at the Creation Care Study Program in New Zealand, a program in which he participated as a student.

From the editor: I hope you enjoy our bi-annual update from the History Department. Enclosed you will find updates from the department and alumni, as well student news and accomplishments.

—Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, Professor of History
Newsletter Editor

Department News

Gordon History Faculty Accept New Positions at Valparaiso University

Professors Tal and Agnes Howard will conclude 16 years of service in Gordon's History Department. They have accepted positions at Valparaiso University in Indiana. Tal will become Professor of History and the Humanities and holder of the Phyllis and Richard Duesenberg Chair in Christian Ethics, a chair formerly held by the distinguished theologian Gilbert Meilaender. Agnes will be appointed as Lecturer in Christ College, the four-year honors college of Valparaiso. The Howards will be deeply missed at Gordon by faculty and students alike. History major Mary Hierholzer '16 explains, "The Howards have continuously elevated the level of academic integrity both in the History Department and at Gordon as a whole. Although the college will sorely miss these genuine scholars, I am thrilled to see their excellence recognized through this new opportunity at Valparaiso."



The Howards continue to serve at Gordon this academic year, Tal teaching in the Jerusalem and Athens Forum, Gordon's great books honors program, and Agnes teaching at Gordon IN Orvieto. These are two of the many significant programs the Howards have invested in over their years at Gordon. Professor Jennifer Hevelone-Harper will continue the department's work with the Jerusalem and Athens Forum, leading the honors seminar this fall.

Teaching about Islam

On September 21 the Center for Faith and Inquiry (CFI) at Gordon hosted a one-day conference entitled "Islam in the Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching about Islam in a Post 9/11 World." The purpose of this conference was to bring several leading scholars together to deliberate well and wisely about how accurate and insightful knowledge of Islam can be taught in the college classroom.

"Americans realize now, more than ever, how critical it is to have a sound understanding of Islam," said Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, Professor of History at Gordon College and conference speaker, said. "But in an environment overwhelmed by the 24-hour news cycles and loud, competing voices from many quarters, how can we bring together resources to help faculty and students think clearly and prudently about the history of Islam and its role in our world today?"

The conference was funded by the CFI and by a grant from the Lilly Fellows Program, which supports scholarship at church-affiliated schools, both Protestant and Catholic. Conference organizers and history faculty Tal Howard and Jennifer Hevelone-Harper invited Protestant, Catholic and Muslim speakers from evangelical Protestant and Catholic institutions. The conference speakers included Amir Hussain, Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University and Editor of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*; Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, Professor of History at Gordon College; Gabriel Said Reynolds, Professor of Islamic Studies and Theology at University of Notre Dame; and Judith Rood, Professor of History and Middle Eastern Studies at Biola University. Sandra Keating, Director of Development of the Western Civilization Program and Associate Professor of Theology at Providence College, moderated the final panel discussion.



The conference was well attended by faculty from many colleges and universities and by Gordon students. Samuel Florez '19 described the event: "Everything about it was engaging, meaningful, and powerful even. It left me feeling very convicted to approach religious others with a great deal more humility than I am naturally inclined to." Reflecting on the religious beliefs and practices of Muslims made some students think more critically about their own Christian faith. Cana Short '17, currently enrolled in HIS 344 Medieval Islam and the Middle East, explained: "Dr. Rood's talk reinforced my desire to seat my own faith-understandings within a larger historical framework, for her talk illustrates the importance of historical knowledge for any faith or any people group."

Student Activities

Interning at the Institute for Global Engagement | by Hope Zigterman '16



This summer I had the opportunity to live and work in Washington, D.C. I interned for the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE), a nonprofit which promotes religious freedom in countries where freedom of conscience is greatly restricted. IGE's work rests on a foundation of relationships and knowledge as it seeks to build trust between religious leaders and political officials. Much of my work for the summer was to aid in information gathering. I attended discussions and lectures at think tanks around the city. The events I went to generally focused on current major world issues—from ISIS in Iraq and Syria to Putin's foreign policy moves in Ukraine. I took notes on what diplomats, analysts, historians, politicians, business persons, faith leaders and many more had to say on these important issues. It was incredible to spend the summer listening to some of the world's leading decision-makers, all while getting to explore the nation's capital.

Spending a summer in the working-world of D.C. has provided a lot to contemplate regarding the future. This fall I have a different vantage point on world politics. I am studying in Amman, Jordan, with the Middle Eastern Studies Program. But that is a story for a future newsletter!

As part of my internship this summer, I wrote an op-ed about the migration crisis in Europe. It was published by Cornerstone, the blog of the Religious Freedom Project at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. Read my analysis here: <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/cornerstone/migration-crisis-europe-s-failed-response>

JAF Alumni Trip to Iceland | by Mary Hierholzer '16

In mid-September, six alumni of Gordon College and the Jerusalem and Athens Forum accompanied Center for Faith and Inquiry Director and Professor of History Tal Howard on a research trip to Iceland. With a diverse set of academic backgrounds, we combined efforts to better understand the unique country's politics, culture and religious history. One of the topics that highlighted our trip was examining the recent resurgence of Norse paganism in Iceland, where the official religion is Lutheranism. A professor of history at the University of Iceland spent a morning with us to lecture on and discuss Iceland's fascinating and much-disputed religious history.



Our excursions were based in the capitol city of Reykjavik. From there we visited historical sites, hiked and explored museums. Every day we found ourselves dumbfounded by the country's overwhelming nature and otherworldly beauty—fields of lava rock, glaciers, mountains, geysers, waterfalls, hot springs, coastal cliffs and pure blue water. Needless to say, we got our fill of seafood, though only one in the party intends to eat shark ever again.



History Majors Study Abroad in Orvieto

Three history majors, Kate Lindsay '16, Nora Kirkham '16 and Aimee Lotz '16, studied abroad with the Gordon IN Orvieto program last year. They shared their experience with other history majors recently at a department convocation. Aimee describes her time in Italy: "With something as simple as a cappuccino, as a Gordon history major I was entrenched in the culture and livelihood of Orvieto. The Gordon IN Orvieto program has given me a chance to view the world in God's light, naturally and with the promise of a better, more beautiful tomorrow." Find out more about Gordon IN Orvieto here:

www.gordon.edu/orvieto



What Our Alumni Are Doing

Dan Berkowirz '11 | *1st Lieutenant, Armor, U.S. Army*



As I write you I'm lying on a cot typing from a place 7,000 miles away. I am performing the duties of a commissioned U.S. Army Officer, a leader of soldiers. It's a little warmer here and the sand doesn't exactly sing like it does on the North Shore, but I'll be home soon. I can't wait to feel the cool winter air New England is known for.

As I studied history at Gordon I learned what it meant to be a leader by studying the likes of Lee, Patton, JFK and FDR. Through the instruction of Gordon's History Department, I learned how to have one's faith intertwined with this study. How to ask questions yet respect another's beliefs. It is rare to find such a place. The study of history is so often turned politically one-sided. Agendas are usually hidden inside a professor's instruction and a person's beliefs are discredited without cause.

At Gordon, though, history was honest; it was evidence centric and it was open to fact-based interpretation. Through these examples of academic thought within a framework of a loving Christian attitude I was able to learn lessons that I would later bring to my job as an Army leader.

Thomas Hunter '11 | *Fred W. Edwards Academy*



For those of you who are considering becoming teachers, I would like to share the following notes from the trenches of public high school in Temple, TX.

First of all, you can, and will, teach any and every topic in history. I work in an alternative high school, with students who are at risk of not graduating. Much of our curriculum is computerized; one student may need four years' worth of history in a truncated period, while the student sitting next to him may need only her senior-level classes. Most of the direct teaching I do is in U.S. History. I consider myself a medievalist. But, the basic skills are the same. So if your true passion is eighteenth century Flemish bakers, and you end up teaching a World History class that spends the majority of its material on Asia, don't be alarmed.

Second, your students may not be all that passionate about history. They may not even, perish the thought, care much for learning. Many of my students don't. What I have seen grow, however, is their confidence in their *ability* to learn. You can instill that. And if history is the class they find their footing in, they may decide to stick with it down the line.

Your career probably won't unfold in the way you're currently envisioning it. That's ok. It's ultimately in God's hands. He's given you great tools to work with at Gordon. Wherever He sends you, you'll be well equipped.

Gabe DiMauro '10 | *Teacher and Administrator, France*



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*. I am now working in a bilingual school as both an administrator and an eighth, ninth and tenth grade history teacher (twentieth century mostly). Next year, I'm looking forward to pursuing doctoral studies with my master's thesis advisor.

What are you doing with your love of history? We invite all Gordon history alumni to send their updates and photos to j.hevelone-harper@gordon.edu.



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