

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES PROGRAM - UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SUMMER 2016

NEWS AND EVENTS

MRST Contributes to the Year of the Humanities: “Interdisciplinarity in Historical Perspective”



Supported by a generous grant from the Provost’s “Year of the Humanities in the University,” we held a stimulating series of reading groups, seminars, and lectures on the history of interdisciplinarity. People working in today’s universities frequently emphasize innovative interdisciplinary scholarship, but they often forget that it is the disciplines themselves that are innovations—that it is only from a modern perspective that “arts” and “sciences” are discrete categories.

Our series continues in fall 2016 with the visit of History and Philosophy of Science Professor Laura Snyder from October 19-20.

She will host a workshop in the Humanities Center on Wednesday, October 19, and a public lecture, “Eye of the Beholder: Johannes Vermeer, Antoni van Leeuwenhoek, and the Reinvention of Seeing,” on Thursday, October 20, at 6:00 PM at the Carnegie Museum of Art Theatre with special guest, Michael White. Visit the MRST website soon for more details.

Newberry Library Awards



Two MRST graduate certificate students received travel grants to participate in national conferences and seminars at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Andrea Maxwell (HAA) participated in the “Poetry as Theology” seminar, and Sarah Conell (HAA) gave a paper at the multidisciplinary conference in January, titled “Globalism in Medieval Passau.”

Call for Applications!



We award travel grants on a rolling basis to Pitt faculty and graduate students to conduct research and participate in seminars and lectures at the Newberry Library in Chicago and the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. For details about upcoming programs for the Newberry Library, click [here](#); for details about programs at the Folger Library, click [here](#). Contact the Program Director, Professor Jennifer Waldron (jwaldron@pitt.edu), to complete the simple application process.

Congratulations to our Graduate Certificate Students!

Congratulations to two MA certificate students from the Department of French and Italian! Eufemia Baldassarre will enter the PhD program at the University of Chicago, while Tylar Colleluori will attend the PhD program at Columbia.

Innovative Approaches to Undergraduate Teaching and Research



Pitt in York! English faculty members Hannah Johnson and Ryan McDermott have launched a new study abroad program in York, England. During the second summer session of 2016, Pitt students are exploring of the world’s best-preserved medieval cities as their laboratory as they study religious culture and folklore. Weekly outings include a seaside hike to a pirate hideout; a pilgrimage to a ruined monastery; a visit to the magical cave-well of a medieval prophetess-poet; and a viewing of a Shakespeare play at the Globe Theatre! For more details, check out the [website](#).

James Coleman (FRIT) developed a new graduate seminar on Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, which included a unit that surveyed the role of digital humanities in Dante studies.

Ryan McDermott (English) received a Bowman Faculty Grant for research related to the new course, *The Invention of English Literature*.

Professor McDermott also supervised a Brackenridge research project undertaken by MRST undergraduate certificate student Nicholas Bruno. The project was titled, “*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in the Context of Medieval Virtue Ethics.”

Chris Nygren (HAA) received funding from Dean Twynning to take his seminar of 14 students to Boston to see an exhibition on Carlo Crivelli and to do a “behind the scenes” tour of the MFA, Boston. Details can be found [here](#).

Nygren also supervised a BA Honors Thesis by Grace Strong, who wrote about Nicola di Maestro Antonio d’Ancona, an exceptional (though relatively unknown) painter from the Marche. The thesis focused on his master work, which is in the Carnegie Museum of Art. Strong’s thesis was awarded the Friends of Frick award by HAA faculty as the most outstanding piece of scholarship produced for an independent project during the last academic year.

Another of Nygren’s students, Annika Napier-Smith, is currently in London with the Field Studies program. In London, Annika is working at the print room of the British Museum with prints by Albrecht Dürer and other sixteenth-century artists. Her project examines how these prints served to disseminate knowledge in the sixteenth century.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS



Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski (French and Italian) was invited give a lecture in November at the venerable Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, a branch of the Académie Française. The title of the talk, which is now an article forthcoming in the *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, was “Pierre Dubois (c. 1250-1320) et Ernest Renan (1823-1892) en communauté d'esprit? Quelques réflexions sur la colonisation et l'éducation des femmes.” With Joël Blanchard, Blumenfeld-Kosinski also organized a highly successful international conference on the concept of Europe in the Middle Ages this May, in Le Mans, France.

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Shirin Fozi-Jones (HAA) published two articles: “The Time is Opportune: The Swarenskis and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston” (425 – 39); and “American Medieval: Authenticity and the Indifference of Architecture” (469 – 80), both of which appeared in *Gothic Art in the Gilded Age*, edited by Virginia Brilliant, special issue of the *Journal of the History of Collections* 27/3, (November 2015).

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Hannah Johnson (English) received a Faculty Grant for Research on Europe from the ESC and published an article in the journal *Law & Literature*, titled “Stories People Tell: The Blood Libel and the History of Antisemitism.” She has also completed her second book, with co-author Heather Blurton: *Ethics, Criticism, Anti-Semitism: Chaucer's Prioress and the Jews* (forthcoming from University of Michigan Press).

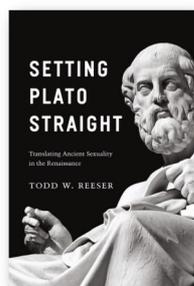
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Ryan McDermott (English) published his first book, *Tropologies: Ethics and Invention in England, c. 1350 – 1600* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016). It is the first book-length study to elaborate the medieval and early modern theory of the topological, or moral, sense of scripture.



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Chris Nygren (HAA) published three articles: “Titian’s Miracles: Artistry and Efficacy Between the San Rocco Christ and the Accademia Pietà,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* (Max-Planck-Institut, 2015), LVII.3, 320-349; “Figuring Miraculous Agency Between Literature and Art: An Analysis and Translation of Eustachio Celebrino’s *Li stupendi et marauigliosi miracoli del glorioso Christo di San Roccho* (ca. 1523),” *MLN* 131:1 (2016), 20-56.; and “Titian’s *Christ and the Coin*: Recovering the Spiritual Currency of Numismatism in Renaissance Ferrara.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 69/2 (2016), 449-88.



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Todd Reeser (French and Italian; Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies) published *Setting Plato Straight: Translating Ancient Sexuality in the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). Reeser also published an online version of “On Gender,” which is forthcoming in print form in *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, ed. Philippe Desan (2016).

In *Setting Plato Straight*, Reeser undertakes the first sustained and comprehensive study of Renaissance textual responses to Platonic same-sex sexuality. Reeser mines an expansive collection of translations, commentaries, and literary sources to study how Renaissance translators transformed ancient eros into non-erotic, non-homosexual relations. He analyzes the interpretive lenses translators employed and the ways in which they read and reread Plato’s texts. In spite of this cleansing, Reeser finds surviving traces of Platonic same-sex sexuality that imply a complicated, recurring process of course-correction—of setting Plato straight.

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NEW PEOPLE



Elizabeth Archibald, who holds a PhD from Yale University, will join the Department of History as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Archibald's research is focused on the history of education and literacy in medieval Europe and the history of the book. She has presented and published on topics including the reception of classical school texts in the medieval curriculum, women's book ownership in early modern Europe, the use of dialogues in early pedagogy, and the modern popular reputation of the middle ages. She co-edited *Learning Latin and Greek from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), and is preparing a book on methods of elementary instruction in the Carolingian era. She is the author of the blog [Ask the Past](#) and the forthcoming book *Ask the Past: Pertinent and Impertinent Advice from Yesteryear* (Hachette Books US/ Square Peg UK, May 2015).



William Rhodes (University of Virginia) will join the Department of English for the upcoming academic year, 2016-2017, as a postdoctoral fellow through the Dietrich School. His research interests include medieval and Renaissance poetry, the literary history of the English Reformation, literature and the environment, and theories of labor, affect, and ecology. Professor Ryan McDermott, the organizer of the Medieval Latin Reading Group and associate professor in the Department of English, will serve as his mentor. Rhodes will conduct scholarly research on the labors of reform during his fellowship. His current book project, *The Ecology of Reform*, considers the intersection of poetic treatments of agrarian land and labor with reformist discourse from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

The DIETRICH School of Arts & Sciences