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.

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."

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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 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 Twyning 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 to 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) and 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.


**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 Priorex and the Jews* (forthcoming from University of Michigan Press).


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.
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.