

HISTORY HOUSE HERALD

Message from the Chair

By Prof. Anthony Daly



Welcome back from the break and to a new semester. On behalf of the department and our two programs, we are excited and look forward to continuing to help you maximize your opportunities and reach your potential at MCLA. This newsletter aims to highlight offerings in both coursework and extra-curricular opportunities as well as the great work of our students in areas such as internships. Understanding national and international history and politics has never been more important, and we look forward to an enriching semester of teaching and learning.

In addition to the variety of regular course

offerings, there are several special classes underway in spring 2017. In February, Professors Cupery and Pettey led the now-traditional MCLA contingent to the North American Model United Nations (NAMUN) that takes place at the University of Toronto. Professor Cupery will also be teaching a Peru travel course, a course that meets over the semester to explore Peruvian history and culture, highlighted by a trip to Peru during the break in March (Professor Huang will be joining students on the Peru trip, but plans to offer his travel course to Japan again in 2018).

Continuing our tradition of providing insight and analysis on state, national, and international issues, our Public

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We've had some great events happening on campus. After Cokie Roberts last fall, we are hearing from journalist Joanna Slater, former Governor Jane Swift and Congressman John Lewis during the spring semester.

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What's happening in the History House? We have students participating in an innovative COPLAC course, representing a diversity of nations at Model United Nations, and gaining valuable experiences in all sorts of internships.

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Are you thinking about post-MCLA options or how to close out your MCLA career? Check out where life has taken recent MCLA alum, Sara Hamilton, class of 2015! Also, learn about Zach Feury's - class of 2016 - innovative senior project.

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"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now." -Dr. MLK, Jr.

Policy Lecture Series will feature the Honorable Jane Swift, former Governor of Massachusetts, on Thursday, April 13 in the Church Street Center. The event follows on the successful November visit of national political commentator Cokie Roberts, who spoke only a few days before the election. As always, these events include dedicated time for students to meet our speakers and learn **Continued on page 6...**

As Always, There are Great Events on Campus

From the Harlem Renaissance to the global refugee crisis and everything in between

Several excellent on-campus events have been lined up for the spring semester.

In January, the department helped to bring a performance, "Of Ebony Embers: Vignettes of the Harlem Renaissance" to campus. Featuring a three piece chamber ensemble – cello, piano, and percussion – and one actor portraying figures such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Aaron Douglas, "Of Ebony Embers" combined music, poetry, and theatre to bring the Harlem Renaissance alive. Over 100 students, faculty, and staff enjoyed the performance and many stayed behind for a conversation with the performers.

In February, we heard from Canadian journalist Joanna Slater about her experiences covering the mass movement of refugees across Europe for The Globe and Mail newspaper. The event, which was sponsored by MCLA's International Conflict Prevention and Resolution Speaker Series, and made possible by a generous grant from The Boschen Peace and International Understanding Fund, drew a standing-room – only crowd to Murdock 218. Slater, whose coverage of the crisis garnered her recognition as Canada's 2015 Journalist of the Year at the National Newspaper Awards, combined a wealth of knowledge of the relevant data and international law with moving stories of families leaving

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Award-winning Canadian journalist Joanna Slater spoke to a full house on February 8th about her experiences covering the global refugee crisis in Europe in 2015.

Highlights from Around the Department: Fall 2016 & Spring 2017



Madeleine McKeon and Elizabeth Kurz Michel are participating in the spring 2017 COPLAC seminar entitled, "Divided Houses: Secession and Separation." As the COPLAC website notes, "In this course, students will identify a secessionist or separatist movement in the vicinity of their home campus and learn digital skills to help them design a website presenting and analyzing the history of that movement."

Kurz Michel writes, "working on a digital project employs the different tools that are discussed throughout the history degree, but encourages employing these skills in a different way. For example, rather than a traditional paper, we are currently working on creating a Wordpress site. The site content and tools exemplify the types of analysis used in the course. Through discussing different religious and political separation movements, we are dealing with the different time and location based issues that have to do with secession and then organizing our analysis using software such as Timeline JS and Storymap JS and incorporating this analysis on the Wordpress site."

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The MCLA Model UN delegation stopped at Niagara Falls after participating in the 2017 North American Model United Nations conference in Toronto, Canada from February 23rd-26th.

Looking Forward: Alumni Notes

As you near graduation, you may be asking yourself how to wrap up your college years or what comes next. Our department works hard prepare you for the competitive ever-changing job market. We want your next steps to be fulfilling and we want your college years to be the most conducive to that end. With that in mind, this section of the newsletter highlights stories from recent graduates. First, we spoke with 2015 History graduate, Sara Hamilton.

Could you tell us a little about your professional path since MCLA? Where are you currently working/studying and have you completed any additional education after graduating from MCLA?

Almost immediately after graduating from MCLA in the spring of 2015, I was hired as a long term substitute teacher at St. Joseph Central High School. I was then offered a full time position there teaching US History and Psychology for the following school year. I taught there for one year and then received a job at Lenox Memorial Middle and High School for the fall

of 2016 and am still there teaching 10th grade US History today. Along with teaching, I have taken a variety of coaching positions at the high school level and currently am assisting the women's basketball team at MCLA.

What is your long term professional goal and how has it changed, if at all, since you started out at MCLA?

My long term professional goal is to get my dual Masters degrees in history and education within the next five years. Then, later on, I would like to go back to school to get my PhD in history. When first starting at MCLA I did not think I would do much more than get my masters. After really discovering my love for history at MCLA, it has made me realize I would like to eventually work at the college level after obtaining my PhD.

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Alumni (con't.)

Do you have a favorite memory or course from your time in the History and Political Science Department?

One of my favorite courses at MCLA was a class with Bob Bence, Modern Middle East. I enjoy keeping up with current events, and understanding the Middle East and its history really helped me understand some of the conflicts over there today. We went to the New Museum in NYC and saw art that was connected with the refugee crises over there. It was a class I'll never forget! I often times refer to that class when teaching my students.

Are there particular skills, knowledge or experience that you gained as a part of the History and Political Science Department that have come in handy for you professionally? If so, how?

Being a History major at MCLA comes with a lot of hard work. One of the most valuable skills I achieved was being able to effectively research. As a teacher, I am required to know the material inside and out. While I'm still learning my curriculum, I often times do a lot of independent research in order to bring forth more than my students' textbook can. Including more in-depth articles and readings only helps enrich my curriculum

Do you have any advice for our current students? Is there something you wish you would have done differently in college or maybe an opportunity you regret not taking advantage of?

My only advice to current students is to use the opportunities presented to you by the History Department. Whether it is field trips or guest speakers, I would just advise to current students that they should take advantage of all that MCLA and its History department has to offer!

Next, 2016 History and Political Science double major **Zach Feury** tell us about his senior project. . He writes, "One of the greatest attributes of MCLA's history department is how willing the faculty are to help students explore the subjects about which they are most passionate – something I experienced during my senior thesis. My senior thesis arose from an independent study on French history with Professor Daly. Having developed an interest in the Dreyfus Affair, and already possessing a strong passion for film, I approached Professor Daly with idea of adapting the primary and secondary historical literature on the Affair into a screenplay for a full-length feature film. Professor Daly was quick to greenlight the project.

The Dreyfus Affair is a fascinating historical event replete with human drama – it is a wonder that it has been eighty years since it has been the subject of full-length feature film. The victim of well-orchestrated, anti-Semitic plot and subsequently convicted of treason, Captain Alfred Dreyfus was sentenced to a life in exile on Devil's Island in the farthest reaches of French territories. While there, Dreyfus was forced to endure a brutal punishment for a crime he never committed, yet his wife and brother fought tirelessly for exoneration. After five years in exile, Dreyfus returned home.

My senior thesis was, and will likely remain, the most gratifying experience of my entire education. It allowed me to explore my interests in passions in a creative and innovative way with the full support and mentorship of multiple members of the faculty. In addition, the coursework for my thesis culminated with a public defense in front of faculty, staff, administrators, and a few of my peers.

In March, **Lauren Casola '09** will return to campus to talk with the students in HIST 450/POSC 450 Career and ePortfolio Workshop. Lauren graduated Magna Cum Laude with a major in History and earned her Juris Doctor (JD) degree from the Roger Williams University School of Law in 2013. She is employed with The Hartford insurance group, and she will be bringing the benefit of her experiences in law school and the "real world" to a conversation with the class and then to a lunch with faculty and students. Lauren's visit is part of a regular program that brings History and Political Science alumni back to campus, supported by funding from the MCLA Hardman Special Initiative Fund.

Highlights (con't.)**Students gain valuable experiences through internships**

Internships are a critical part of the college experience in the 21st Century. In the HIST/PSPP department we want to make sure students get the internship experience they want and need. In the last year we've had students doing a variety of internships. Here is a sampling of them:

Senior **Nathan Buchanan** interned at the North Adams Historical Society, aiding in its mission to preserve the history of the city. To do so, he helped to run the museum, greeting guests, maintaining its collections, and creating new exhibits. He also helped with the museum's cataloging efforts, helping to build a complete and detailed record of their collection. He also helped recording the dates of death in an old graveyard as well as going through recently donated railroad documents. Nathan writes: "A history major emphasizes the ability to comprehend and summarize information. In interning at a museum, I had to read through unread historical documents and interpret their meaning. Not only did I have to be careful in my understanding of the document, I also had to pull out relevant information to convey to the historical society. This was a rewarding opportunity, as I was able to see firsthand how the skills of history can be used to study both major historical events and the history of smaller cities. Cities like North Adams have interesting histories which need to be studied and preserved rather than forgotten."

From September to mid-December of 2016, **Kate Rowell** completed a legal apprenticeship with North Adams criminal defense attorney Richard Taskin. During this period she observed proceedings in both District and Superior Court, analyzed case materials, sat in on meetings with clients and other attorneys, and engaged in investigative research. She writes, "the need to consider case evidence and reports from diverse perspectives, coupled with practical experience working with and interviewing defendants, greatly enhanced my critical analysis abilities. I learned that unlike the morally polarized situations presented via crime TV shows and other similar media, real cases consist of myriad

ethical and legal gray areas from which prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges strive to extract a balanced result. Considering the law from the defense's point of view has afforded me a newly nuanced perspective on not only the criminal justice system, but the social, psychological, and economic factors which fundamentally shape our community's relationship with the law."

Amanda Vernola interned at the Susan B Anthony Birthplace Museum. She writes, "After graduation, I had hoped to work in a historical museum, and this internship reinforced that desire and made me even more excited about that possibility. My main area of study is World War II and the Holocaust, so my goal is to move down to Washington DC and work in the Holocaust Museum, or the Smithsonian to do research, curation, tours, or conservation work. At the museum, I was able to observe the work my supervisor did; as well as do research on new artifacts the museum was receiving. I was also the gift shop attendant and docent. Being docent, I had to learn and memorize the specific information that needed to be said in each room. During the internship, the classes I have taken at MCLA have helped me improve my skills for choosing reliable sources, as well as citing sources correctly when needed.

Save the date! Department end-of-year banquet Tuesday, 4/26

On the evening of Tuesday, April 26th, we will hold our annual department banquet to celebrate our seniors, including those who completed their degrees in December and those who will graduate in May. On that night we will also formally induct our 2017 class into Phi Alpha Theta, the national History honor society, and Pi Sigma Alpha, the national honor society for Political Science. Seniors, please mark the date in your calendars to be a part of the banquet. If you are a junior or senior and would like to find out more about Phi Alpha Theta or Pi Sigma Alpha, please visit our department web sites.

Looking Forward: Fall 2017 Courses

In the HIST/PSPP department, we pride ourselves on offering classes that students want to take. If you have an idea for a class, be sure to discuss it with the professor for whom you think it would be most relevant. For Fall 2017, the department plans to offer the following upper level courses.

History

- England, 1066-1603
- Ireland from 1600
- Women in U.S. History
- History of American Radicalism seminar
- US and China seminar
- Career and ePortfolio workshop (w PSPP)
- CCAP 300: Conversations on Race

In fall 2017, the department will offer the first in a series of new 200 level HIST courses. HIST 230 War, Science, and Society will employ a variety of case studies from European and world history; the course concentrates on increasing students' understanding of how conflict and scientific innovation have combined to change societies. Students will research and analyze a broad range of source materials to develop their ability to construct arguments and interpretations and express them logically and persuasively in speech and writing. Possible topics include atomic energy, medicine, transportation, and weaponry.

Message (continued)

from their experiences, an example of the opportunities offered at a small liberal arts college. As you work through the semester, don't hesitate to contact us to ask for advice or assistance about your coursework or your career plans after graduation. Send an email or look up our office hours on the department web sites (www.mcla.edu/hist or www.mcla.edu/pspp) and drop by 72 Porter Street. We are proud of your effort and accomplishments and look forward to helping you complete another successful year and joining the celebration of students and families at Commencement in May.

Political Science and Public Policy

- International Relations
- Inequality & Social Policy
- State and Local Politics
- American Political Behavior
- Modern Middle East (w/ History)
- US Foreign Policy Seminar

In January 2017, the department officially added a new minor in Public History, which provides students with knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience that can be used as preparation for a variety of careers in public history such as local, state, and national historic sites, archives, and museums. This program will draw on the strengths of our department and courses in the Arts Management that examine topics such as museum studies and fundraising. As part of the minor, students will complete an internship at a site such as a museum, archive, or library, either in the Berkshires or perhaps a summer internship near their home. For more information, visit the History web site at www.mcla.edu/hist or contact Professor Daly.

Spring Events at MCLA (con't)

war-torn homes in search of opportunities in Germany and beyond.

After generously fielding nearly a half hour of questions, Ms. Slater joined MCLA faculty and students for dinner and continued conversation about recent political developments and her professional path.

On April 13th, the MCLA community will have the pleasure of hearing from former Massachusetts Governor Jane Swift, who will help us make sense of our country's recent political developments. The event, part of MCLA's Public Policy Lecture Series, will take place in the Church St. Center and will be free and open to the public.

The Department of History, Political Science & Public Policy is always available to you – the students. Please do not hesitate to come see us in the History House at 72 Porter Street. Also, if you are participating in something academically or co-curricularly please let us know so we can put it in the newsletter. To see what's going on all the time, 'Like' us on [Facebook!](#)

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