

Humanities Newsletter

February | 2017



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Message From The Dean

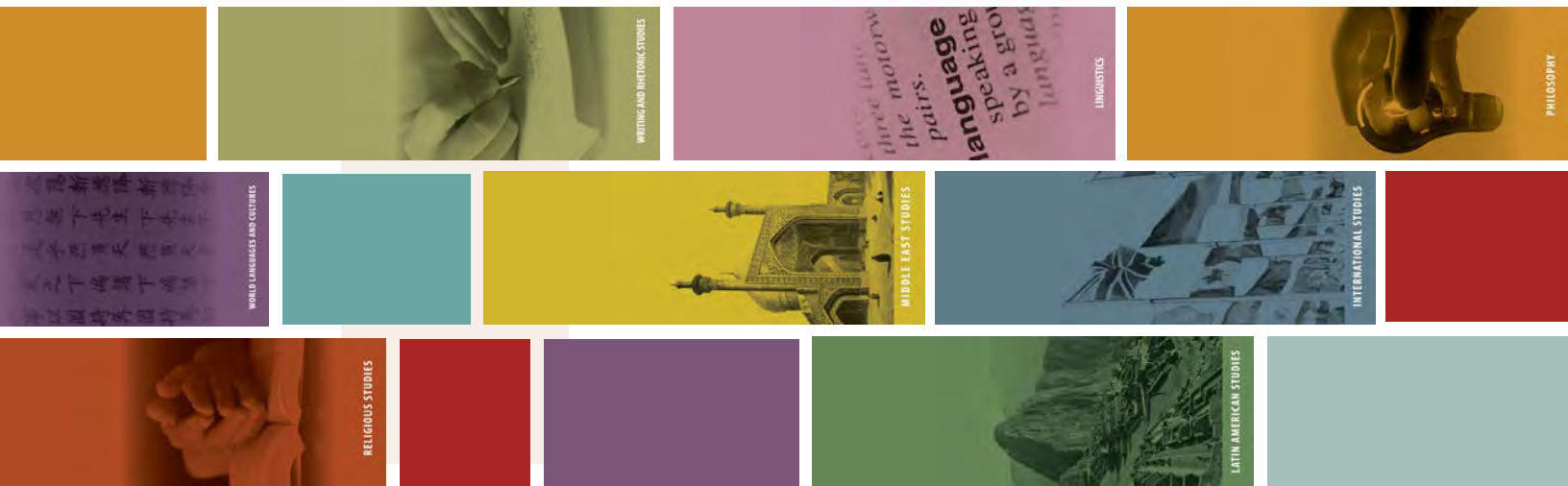


Dear Friends,

In turbulent times, the Humanities shine. When we seek answers to the great moral and ethical dilemmas in which we find ourselves, or look to the past to help us understand our present situation, or when we seek to understand cultures that are not our own, we call upon our education in the humanities. When we search for the perfect words with which to communicate our deepest and most heartfelt passions, we utilize our education in the humanities. And when we examine with informed scrutiny the events of our day, we can once again deeply appreciate our education in the humanities. In difficult times, and in those that are more tranquil, the humanities enrich our lives beyond measure just as they also play a key role in the continued health of our democracy. Every time I meet one of our College of Humanities alums--wherever they are, whatever they are doing--they tell me the same thing: They wouldn't trade their humanities degree for any other, because they know it has made all the difference in their success and in their personal fulfillment. We are so grateful for your support as we work every day to provide the outstanding College of Humanities education you experienced.

Wishing you peace,
Dianne Harris, Dean

P.S. Please don't forget to join me on March 1st at Brighton Resort as we "Ski For Scholarships." See you there!



Featured Alumni



Photo Credit: Busath Photography

Scott Cheney

B.S. in Philosophy

Scott, a Philosophy alum, founder of a wealth management company and an outdoor enthusiast, fell in love with Utah after a quick visit to the University of Utah. "I became enamored with skiing at a young age while living in Idaho and Tahoe, and couldn't wait to return to the West upon

graduating from high school in Charlotte," he recalls. "I had wanted to attend school in Colorado for many years, but one trip to visit the University of Utah was all it took to choose the U."

In 1989, Scott began his freshman year at the U with plans to graduate with a degree in Mathematics. With his parents having three PhDs between them, he grew up in a household that valued education. Growing up, Scott was always good with numbers, so naturally, he decided Mathematics was the best degree option. After some more thought and course experiences, he moved briefly to studying architecture, but then decided on business. As a Business major, he was required to take a Philosophy course, which gave him his first introduction to his eventual final major. Scott says he found himself relating more to the people in the Philosophy courses than his other classes and quickly became invested in the department and their way of thinking.

"Philosophy is a discipline that touches all other fields," he says. "It requires you to think critically and deeply about a huge variety of meaningful subjects – from art to math, religion, and business. One of my Philosophy professors used to say studying in this field is like mental weightlifting, and that really resonated with me." Scott stayed in the Philosophy department and graduated with a bachelor's degree two years later.

Today, he is the founder and President of Twin Peaks Wealth Management, an independent investment firm located in Salt Lake City. Scott provides personal wealth management to individuals and retirement plan consulting services to employers. Prior to starting his own business,

he worked for Northwestern Mutual. After 10 years of work with Northwestern and with his first baby on the way, Scott decided to make a career move to found his own company, and he has never looked back.

"Those basic skills so valuable in humanities – successful communication, critical thinking, and forming cohesive arguments – are all things I incorporate into my own business in wealth management," he says.

In his free time, Scott and his wife, Laura Nagle Cheney, hit the slopes as often as possible. After graduating from the U, Scott worked for 15 years as a ski instructor in the winter, where he and his wife, Laura met. Scott, Laura and their two young sons place high importance on time spent in the outdoors. Aside from skiing, they also enjoy biking, hiking, and camping.

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

COMMUNICATION

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Featured Faculty



Matt Basso

Associate Professor, History

Matthew Basso, associate professor in History and Gender Studies, is the State Scholar for the Smithsonian Institution's "The Way We Worked," a traveling Museum on Main Street (MoMS) exhibition that is beginning its year-long Utah tour. The exhibition was created by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Archives and examines the strength and spirit of American workers through archival images and compelling videos and interviews. Presented by Utah Humanities, the year-long tour debuts in Ogden from Jan. 28-March 18. See more about the exhibition [here](#).

In addition to spending the last year helping train local community historians in telling their communities' stories of labor, as the State Scholar, Professor Basso also wrote a long interpretative essay about the history of work in Utah. The essay was co-authored with History Ph.D. student John Christensen, who is also penning a large number of "Beehive Archive" radio stories about Utah's work history. 5,000 copies of the essay have been printed by Utah Humanities and State History and will be available at all of the six local museums hosting the tour, as well as online [here](#).

Professor Basso's research and teaching expertise align very well with this exhibit, including labor and working class history, the theory and history of masculinity, U.S. Western history, and more. See more about his research and teaching [here](#).

Featured Student

Danielle McLaughlin

Middle Eastern Studies and Political Science



Danielle McLaughlin is double majoring in Middle Eastern Studies and Political Science at the U while living in the Humanities House at Fort Douglas. Originally from a small town in central Vermont with 700 people, she lived in the same town with the same people her whole life. Upon graduating from high school, she decided it was

time to "broaden her horizons" with a new culture on the other side of the country. "The U was the right choice for me because it made sense financially, had great degree programs and research, and, of course, has the best snow on earth!" she exclaims.

Danielle chose to major in Middle Eastern Studies based on a fascination she developed in highschool with the

Arabic language and culture. She is pairing her degree in Middle Eastern Studies with Political Science and minors in Economics and Campaign Management to get a full breadth of understanding of different fields before she enters the US Air Force.

"I feel that being a student of the U's College of Humanities has given me a great edge as I am on the cusp of the professional world. As a student of the humanities, I have been given experiences and taught techniques to help me become a better public speaker," she reflects. "Public speaking is a skill that I have struggled with since I was a child; however, through my experiences and great professors at the U, I have been able to make hefty strides in becoming a confident speaker. I am very grateful for the time I have spent here as a student of the humanities and I look forward to putting the skills it has given me to work."

After graduation and her military service, Danielle would like to go to graduate school to continue her studies. She's got many great options, but is leaning toward a master's degree in Public Policy or a law degree. In the meantime, she is deeply diving into her studies of the Middle East and beyond.

Featured Event Recap: Bears Ears Public Discourse

In response to the 2016 presidential campaign and election, and to the national turmoil that has ensued, leaders in the College of Humanities gathered in late November to consider what we might do together to improve the quality of dialogue and debate in our communities about the most pressing and often controversial issues of our time. We share a strongly held belief that healthy, constructive, open dialogue and debate is of profound importance to the continued health of our democracy. We also believe that our disciplines in the College of Humanities uniquely position us to lead and participate in such conversations. As a result, we decided that each department in the College will organize and convene an open community dialogue focusing on one controversial topic at a time, with a goal of improving understanding across our campus, community, and broader region. Each session will be facilitated by Dr. David Derezotes, Director of the Peace & Conflict Studies Program, and a Professor in the School of Social Work.

On January 26th, we launched this initiative with a public discourse about the establishment of the Bears Ears National Monument. Organized by Environmental Humanities Director Jeffrey McCarthy, the event was by all accounts a resounding success. Including a range of constituents and interested parties from across the spectrum of viewpoints, the event's goal was to establish an opportunity for respectful dialogue and thoughtful listening. Director McCarthy noted that the event was not intended to change minds about the national monument, but instead its purpose was to create an opportunity to learn from the full range of perspectives, and was not "about winning an argument, or berating an opponent." State Senator Evan Vickers participated in the conversation, noting "We've become so polarized and it's so difficult to have these kinds of conversations. That's why I appreciate having this environment." Others noted that the event provided their first opportunity to have their voices and perspectives truly heard and (hopefully) understood. The audience of 100 participants included students from a range of campus departments and programs, politicians, environmentalists, artists, community members, representatives from several Utah tribes, and leaders of the Intertribal Coalition, among many others.

**Please keep an eye out for future such events.
We welcome your participation.**

A special thank you to Jeff McCarthy and Dave Derezotes for organizing and moderating the event.



Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk



Natalie Gochnour



Jeff McCarthy



Senator Evan Vickers



Events

Skiing for Scholarships at Brighton

March 1, 2017 | Brighton Ski Resort

Ski with the Dean of Humanities and Swoop to help support U of U Humanities Scholarships!

\$75 Lift Tickets and BBQ Lunch

30% of every ticket will benefit the College of Humanities Scholarship Fund.

[Find out more here](#)

For more information, contact Director of Development Lexie Kite at lexie.kite@utah.edu

Economy and Materiality: Land and water from the Mexicas to El luto humano

February 8, 2017 | 4:30 PM | CTIHB (Jewel Box)

Until very recently Mexico was mostly a country of campesinos (farmers), so much so that the 1920 revolution has been considered an agrarian revolution fought to achieve a just redistribution of the land. This talk will analyze how the Mesoamerican so-called cult of Tláloc (God of water) dilutes religion into a moral and political economy through a commitment to land and water. In El luto humano (1943), José Revueltas goes back to that commitment and posits it as the undercurrent guiding the Mexican Revolution and the stubborn affirmation of campesinos who chose to remain such against all odds.

SKIING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

WITH THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES



WHEN | **WED, MARCH 1ST**

Day Pass: 9am - 4pm

Twilight Pass: 12:30pm - 9pm

WHERE | **BRIGHTON SKI RESORT**

COST | **\$75 LIFT TICKET AND BBQ LUNCH**

- To get the deal, let Brighton know you're with the U
- 30% of all ticket sales go to Humanities scholarships

SKI WITH SWOOP, DEAN HARRIS & WIN SWAG!

SEE THERE



CONTACT US FOR SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Contact Lexie Kite at lexie.kite@utah.edu

News



Peter Davidson, Diego Catalan, Sharon Anderson Morris, and Jeff Metcalf

Finding Your Voice Through Film

Future in Review Films partnered with the University of Utah's Humanities in Focus program for a private film screening during the Sundance Film Festival on Jan. 19 in a private home in Deer Valley, UT. Created by students in the program, the film, "Diego's Dream," is a 15-minute documentary that tells the story of Diego Catalan and his astounding journey crossing the Mexico border into the United States when he was just 8 years old.

Humanities in Focus was founded eleven years ago by U English professor Jeff Metcalf. The course blends non-traditional adult learners and students from the Honors College to teach them the skills needed to make documentary films. More than 60 documentaries have been created through the program.

"Several years ago I was involved in an experimental program that offered a year-long humanities course to people with great dreams but limited means," said Metcalf. "It was a richly diverse population of adult learners and what fascinated me as much as anything were the stories that spilled out of the students before and after class. Stories of being homeless, of living with domestic violence, of addiction and of being a refugee of war. These stories were deeply compelling and needed to be told. These voices deserved to be heard."

Metcalf promised these students he would help them tell their stories, and he always makes good on his promises. So, with absolutely no prior film experience, he decided

to start a documentary film class at the U. He connected with Craig Wirth, Emmy Award winning feature director and adjunct associate professor at the U, and Humanities in Focus was born.

[Continue Reading Here](#)

Philosophy's Peggy Battin Honored with Gardner Prize

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy Peggy Battin has been honored with a Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters Gardner Prize.

Founded in 1908, The Utah Academy of Sciences was organized "to promote investigations and diffuse knowledge in all areas of science." In 1933 the Academy was enlarged to include the arts and letters, and it was during the decade of the 1940's that the Academy began the practice of presenting awards to men and women of special note in Utah's scholarly community.

The Gardner Prize is due to the generous support of the Gardner Family in memory of John and Olga Gardner and Willard and Viola Gardner. The recipient receives a UASAL medal and \$1,000 prize.

Peggy was nominated at the Utah Academy board meeting, held in early January, based on her reputation and extensive contributions in Utah during her career. The Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters Conference, held this year at Utah Valley University, will take place on April 7th, 2017. Peggy will be honored at the conference, along with the other recipients.

Congratulations Peggy!

For all **news stories** and to read more about these, please visit our website at:

humanities.utah.edu/news

Give to the Humanities

Your contributions provide scholarships for students, help develop new programs, and fund innovative research that keeps this college on the cutting edge.

humanities.utah.edu/giving.php

Our theme for the year reflects a powerful truth: **Humanities Gives You the Edge**. Alumni of Humanities not only lead lives of extraordinary fulfillment, but they also excel at whatever they do. Our thousands of alumni unanimously tell us that **Humanities gave them the edge** that helped them succeed as excellent communicators; multi-lingual and culturally sophisticated global citizens; critical, ethical, and logical thinkers; and outstanding creative partners. And research backs this up! Studies show that Humanities students find careers that provide financial security and job satisfaction that matches those of students in nearly every other major. Employers increasingly seek employees who have strong skills learned in Humanities (writing, problem solving, listening, speaking, critical thinking, etc.). Humanities gives people the edge they need to thrive today. How does Humanities give YOU the edge?

