BETWEEN THE LINES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

50 years of Humanities

What’s inside:

Q&A with author & alumnus David Morris

The future of African American Studies with Jessica Millward

Advice for new students from recent graduates
As one of UCI’s founding schools, the School of Humanities has relentlessly positioned itself at the very forefront of critical developments in the liberal arts. We have assumed unparalleled leadership intellectually, pedagogically, and institutionally. It is truly astounding to reflect on what our school has accomplished these past 50 years.

Over the years, we have proven that “innovation” is not confined to the sciences; it is indeed that spirit of committed critique and creativity that built the foundation of our school and what has pushed us to develop whole new fields of inquiry, to challenge the status quo, to envision thoughtful alternatives, and to seek opportunities where others saw none. This critical and imaginative spirit is captured in the milestones listed below:

- Our faculty leaders have created a stunning array of major research centers and programs, including the UC Humanities Research Institute, the Critical Theory Institute, the International Center for Writing and Translation, and more recently the Humanities Commons, the Vietnamese American Oral History Project and the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.
- Faculty and administrative leaders have worked together to take the growing challenges of graduate study in the humanities and propose a solution in our 5+2 Ph.D. program.
- Our school is home to incredible programs that rarely exist elsewhere, including Literary Journalism, Global Cultures, Critical Theory, Culture and Theory, and Visual Studies.
- Our faculty member, Vicki Ruiz, Distinguished Professor of history and Chicano/Latino studies, recently became the first UCI faculty member to receive the National Humanities Medal for her work on Latina and civil rights history.

In the pages that follow, you will get a glimpse inside of the innovation and creation that is taking place in the School of Humanities today. From graduate student Maria Bose’s research on branding and environmental sustainability, to Marcello Fiocco’s creation of a public outreach program teaching philosophy and critical thinking to school-aged kids, to our alumni’s contributions to the world as exemplified by David Morris’ work on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, our extended family of humanities scholars continues to build upon our school’s legacy of meaningful interaction both inside and outside the institutional walls of the School of Humanities.

Yours,

Georges Van Den Abbeele
Dean, School of Humanities
Professor of English, French and Comparative Literature
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Between the Lines is a quarterly publication produced by the School of Humanities for faculty, staff, alumni, students, parents, community members and School of Humanities’ supporters. Issues are published in January, April and October.

Have a comment or suggestion? Please email SOHCommunications@uci.edu
Faculty

Book of poetry by Amy Gerstler, professor of English, is longlisted for the National Book Foundation’s National Book Award for Poetry

Vicki Ruiz, Distinguished Professor of history and Chicano/Latino Studies, receives National Humanities Medal from President Obama

Great summer reads by School of Humanities faculty

Jonathan Alexander, Professor of English, featured for his Hurricane Katrina exhibition
You were recently an Honoree for Excellence in Undergraduate Education by the Division of Undergraduate Education. What is, or has been, your favorite undergraduate class to teach and why?

I really don’t have a particular class I could name! I teach both upper-division courses in German and lower and upper-division courses in English that reach a broad population of students across the SOH and the campus. I like both, and am happy to have the opportunity to teach so widely. I like working with our majors on both their German language and their analytic skill set, but also really enjoy teaching students from different disciplines. Many have had little exposure to European history and culture in high school, yet they still have many ideas about “Europe.” Even in this generation of students, the Cold War looms large, and it’s fun seeing them reevaluate their original ideas. For many, a whole world opens up, which is exciting to experience as a teacher. For example, in winter quarter 2015 I taught again our European Studies 11 course, “Contemporary Issues and Institutions,” with 70 students from all walks of life and fields, many of them freshmen. We study 20th century history and political entities such as the European Union, alongside social issues such as gender equality, the welfare state, and, of course, cultural issues such as literary movements and the history of European film. While one can only brush the surface here, it is my hope that they will come back and take one of the other classes we offer in the ELS department, be it in European Studies, German, French, Russian, or Italian.

How do you think language learning is going to change over the next 10 years?

That’s a fascinating (and difficult) question. Language learning today already relies a lot on smart, connective technologies, and I think this will continue to be expanded. We can already do amazing things by integrating these technologies into the language classroom, and as the Digital Humanities continue to grow, language learning will certainly be affected as well.

As the UCEAP Study Abroad Director for Northern Europe, why do you think it is important for students to travel abroad (both from the US to Europe and vice versa)?

I firmly believe that studying abroad is one of the most valuable experiences a college education can offer. Being a foreigner abroad, having to navigate a different language and culture, and being independent and self-reliant helps students develop in ways that on-campus classroom experiences simply cannot teach them. Ideally, students grow academically and as people and develop a global awareness and a cultural literacy. They also realize how insulated the United States really is due to its size, and that there is a whole world out there that’s exciting and different. Of course in times of smart phones and Skype, “home” is never really far away, which is a very different experience from when I studied abroad in the U.S. and a phone call cost $4 a minute! Yet the constant connectivity students experience also eases their anxieties about being far away from home, which generally is a good thing. I have found that
students who study abroad really thrive later on – they serve as mentors or EAP ambassadors for us on campus, and many manage to parlay their new skills into their post-college careers.

What’s next for you in your research?

I am working on a book manuscript with the working title *The European Imaginary in Contemporary German-Language Literature*. In Germany, every tenth person has a migratory background now, and the study focuses on contemporary prose texts of both ethnic German and transnational German-language writers and their configurations of “Europe.” Working within the framework of transnationalism, I am particularly interested in notions of cultural identity, citizenship, and political participation. It’s an exciting new topic that literary scholars have not worked on much in the German-speaking context. I hope that my book will make a difference in our understanding of what a European mindset might entail. Being based in Berlin, the literary center of Germany, will greatly benefit my academic work. It’ll be much easier to follow debates, go to readings, and meet with authors, and I also look forward to connecting with European colleagues who do research on similar issues. And Berlin as a diverse, international city has so many official and unofficial cultural venues that bring people together and celebrate the arts. Culture really matters here, and one can only feel inspired by how seriously people take it. That’s a good place to be for a writer!

As our conception of the world becomes more transnational, how do you see language programs adapting?

That’s one of the million-dollar questions that are being discussed in the profession right now. First, we need to recognize that being “transnational” and “globalized” are often used as buzzwords. We pay lip service to them (just look at our “Global Village” in the Student Center), but don’t do enough to help our students become global citizens. We should build more on the fact that we have a diverse student body at UCI. Many of our students are bilingual already, and we need to do a better job explaining to the ones who are not why speaking different languages is an asset, not a chore, even in a big, insular country such as the United States. Secondly, combining languages with another field of study that offers career prospects and international experiences is an exciting option as well. Our German program is going this route by offering a joint major with Engineering that starts enrolling students this fall quarter. We hope to expand this eventually to the Business school, to bolster an international business degree. It’s worth noting that in 2010, Germany’s economy had the fifth-largest GDP in the world. Yet its population is aging and the country desperately needs immigrants. So, the sky truly is the limit for us in getting students interested in all things German, and sending them abroad to study and work there.

German Studies at UCI

Learn more by clicking here!
You were awarded an ADVANCE Spirit Grant for Inclusive Excellence to launch TH!NK, a 4-week, 16-hour program in which you and philosophy graduate students went into a local school to introduce 5th-graders to philosophy-focused activities. What did you find most surprising or encouraging while working with these young students?

What I found most surprising was how very similar the responses the students had to the activities were to those of undergraduates when undergrads are first exposed to the same issues. There was, with the younger students, similar perplexity, prejudices, excitement—even similar answers to questions I have raised in my undergraduate courses. This showed me that 5th-graders are capable of thinking critically (and thinking critically is the essence of philosophical thought), but also how rare the opportunities to develop this capacity are between elementary school and university. I couldn’t help but think of how much better prepared college-bound students could be—to find the box and then think outside of it—if they had more opportunities to think critically through middle school and high school. What I found most encouraging was how much the students seemed to enjoy the activities (despite the frustration that comes with critically evaluating things one usually just takes for granted) and how eager they were to participate. Most of the young students weren’t inhibited by concerns about getting it wrong. One rarely sees that sort of openness in college-aged students.

What are your plans to further develop the program?

I am pretty pleased with the methodology and content of TH!NK. So any real development will come just through expanding the program. The more people we reach, the better it will serve its two objectives. TH!NK has a general, social objective and another, more specific disciplinary one. I really believe critical thinking is crucial to a fulfilling life. It’s a very natural form of thought, especially for children—I just want to encourage them, push them, to think critically with more awareness, in order to improve their chances of having a more satisfying life. That’s the social objective. The disciplinary one is to help address what is called the “pipeline problem” in philosophy (other analytic, critical disciplines have the same problem). There are too few people from outside the dominant social and economic
groups teaching and doing research in philosophy. There are some from outside these groups in introductory courses, but fewer in upper-division ones, fewer still in graduate school, then deplorably few in academia. So one of our objectives is to encourage everyone to think critically, to let each student know he or she can do philosophy before it even occurs to them that they can’t (because, as they might come to believe, it’s too hard, esoteric, or impractical). If we can do this, the hope is that there will be even more students in those intro courses, more who stick with philosophy and so more to emerge, at the end of the pipeline, as professors. Once they’re there, there will be more role models to keep students in the discipline.

The “value” of philosophy seems to spark a perpetual debate. How might we better frame this question in the future?

I think those who argue about the value of philosophy have a very limited view of what it is. I suspect they think it is just a bunch of nit-picking about very abstract ideas that most people couldn’t care less about. There is plenty of this in the field, but it is not what the discipline of philosophy is (or need be). The essence of philosophy is just asking questions in order to examine presuppositions, to discern connections, to uncover alternatives—all for the sake of understanding something. One can direct this sort of critical examination at existence itself or God or goodness, but one can also direct it at what car to drive, what to eat, whom to spend time with. Critical thinking is the most portable, most translatable skill. Given that this is at the heart of philosophy, philosophy is the most practical and valuable discipline. So if one is going to question the value of philosophy, one should take into consideration what it really is, not merely how it is sometimes practiced.

What’s next for your research?

My research is on the sort of thing that often gives philosophy a bad name: I’m examining questions pertaining to the nature of reality in order to provide an account of what the world is like independently of the contributions of conscious beings. This mind-independent reality provides the raw materials out of which are made all the artifacts and institutions so familiar in our daily lives. Understanding what the world is like in itself provides insight into what we are as persons and what has to be and what could be otherwise. Having a better sense of this will enable us to more easily change what can be changed given the restrictions that nature presents. It sounds all very abstract and impractical, but really these sorts of questions underlie all scientific inquiry and can illuminate the mundane things we take for granted. I’ve recently received a fellowship from the Austrian government, so I’ll be continuing my research abroad this upcoming academic year.

How do you think the field of philosophy will (or should) change over the next 10 years?

I think the field will become more inclusive. There are already efforts being made by many to include more members of under-represented groups on syllabi and on conference programs. I’m sure this will continue, and have positive effects in terms of diversifying the field. This will lead to more ideas from more perspectives, and this will benefit everybody. I hope that changes in the field, with more people from different backgrounds working on a greater variety of issues, will change how the discipline of philosophy is viewed. It shouldn’t be regarded as the exclusive domain of privileged intellectuals. As I mentioned before, it is the most practical of disciplines. Once this is better realized, I would love to see it as a standard part of education—at all levels.

DID YOU KNOW?

UCI offers a minor in Humanities and Law. The minor introduces students to the critical study of law in the context of history, philosophy and literature.
I became a historian because in 1955 three white men in Mississippi lynched a 14-year-old African American child from Chicago named Emmett Till.

I was 17 years old attending a college lecture on the Civil Rights movement when I first heard this account. The professor described how Emmett Till violated Southern norms by speaking to a white woman. Till was awakened in the middle of the night and taken from the home of his relative. He was tortured before being shot in the head. His body was weighed down by a cotton gin tied to his back and thrown into the Tallahatchie River to sink. When he was pulled from the river, the handsome young man was unrecognizable. The story of Emmett Till has stayed with me all these years.

This violence is not in the distant past. Rather, as the cases of police violence against African Americans and the massacre of nine church goers in South Carolina bare witness to the fact, violence and death are ever present. Making sense of this violence is ever critical to the future of African American Studies and African American history in particular.

Violence is not new to the African American experience. What is new is that incidents can now be recorded with a smart phone, uploaded to social media and viewed across the globe. In essence, social media stands as an immediate witness to acts that were once done in secret.

Concerned scholars of African American history have created a series of teaching materials which can be found on Twitter and other social media under the hashtags such as #fergusonsyllabus, #freddiegray, #charlestonsyllabus, #ifidieinpolicecustody, #sayhername, #whathappenedtosandrabland? #samdubose to name but a few.

If the very essence of the humanities is to produce well-balanced citizens who ask challenging questions, the role of African American historians is even more so. African American historians are increasingly finding themselves in a state of mourning. Not only do we have to digest and process the various mediums telegraphing information, but we also then have to explain to our various fields and inevitably to students with questions, that violence and pain have always been part of the African American experience. However, even knowing this, we must also guard against becoming desensitized to the onslaught of brutality as the continual replay threatens to cancel the very human aspect of pain and suffering.

Activism has always maintained a cornerstone in Africa America and it will continue to do so. But it is equally important to allow the space for mourning those lost.

When Emmett Till’s body returned to Chicago, his mother Mamie Till insisted on an open casket so that the world could bare testimony to the violence done to her son. She sent her only child away for a summer to have him returned in a casket. In some ways her pain is something only a parent can understand. Yet, as community members and world citizens, we witness...
Jessica Millward in an associate professor in the Department of History. Her research focuses on comparative slavery and emancipation, African American history, the African diaspora, gender and women and law and society. Her book, *Finding Charity’s Folk: Enslaved and Free Black Women in Maryland* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, Race in the Atlantic World, 1700-1900), will be published this fall.

References:

“Bold and daring in both chronology and content. With incredible new sources, Jessica Millward recovers the lives of African American women in rural Maryland, courageously tackling the complexities of emancipation in early America. Finding Charity’s Folk makes an essential contribution to African American women’s history and to the narrative of American freedom.”

—Erica Armstrong Dunbar, University of Delaware

“Digging deeply into the county court records of Maryland, the author presents a remarkable picture of how some enslaved women, including Charity Folks, acquired their freedom. In doing so, she broadens our perspective on female slaves, African American family relationships, and free blacks. Thoroughly versed in a broad literature, she authoritatively discusses a wide range of related topics, including interracial sex, violence, rape, and the relationship between enslaved women’s bodies, freedom suits, and manumission laws.”

—Loren Schweninger, Elizabeth Rosenthal Professor Emeritus of History, University of North Carolina, Greensboro
New Faculty

William Bridges joins us from St. Olaf College as an assistant professor in our Department of East Asian Languages and Literature. His research and teaching interests include modern Japanese and African American literature, anime, hip hop, and African American literary theory. He is currently working on a manuscript entitled *Playing in the Shadows: Fictions of Race and Blackness in Postwar Japanese Literature*, which considers the confluences of African Americana and postwar Japanese fiction. Dr. Bridges received his Ph.D. in East Asian studies from Princeton University.

Ian Coller joins us from La Trobe University, Australia as an associate professor in our Department of History. His research focuses on French and Middle East history with a current project on the history of the French Revolution and the muslim world from 1789 to 1799. His book *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe 1798-1831*, based on his Ph.D. research, was published by The University of California Press in 2010, and was the recipient of the W.K. Hancock Award of the Australian Historical Association. Dr. Coller received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Desha Dauchan joins our Department of Film & Media Studies as an LPSOE/Filmmaker. She is an award-winning screenwriter and Film Independent Project Involved participant who was mentored by filmmaker Kasi Lemmons. She wrote and directed “Episodes” and “Whispers,” which secured her The Directors’ Guild of America Student Award, taking her to Cannes as a Kodak Emerging Filmmaker. Both films were finalists in the HBO Short Film competition. As a writer, Dauchan explores folklore and the supernatural in her feature length screenplays. Dauchan received her MFA from UCLA.

David Fedman joins our Department of History as an assistant professor. He recently received his Ph.D. from Stanford University and focuses his research on environmental history and historical geography of Japanese imperialism, East Asian cartography, and the history of the earth sciences in Asia. His work has been supported by prestigious grants from the Japan Foundation, the Fulbright IIE and Fulbright Hays programs, as well as the Social Science Research Council. He is the recipient of both the Journal of Historical Geography Prize and the Ristow Prize for best essay in the history of cartography from the *Washington Map Society*. 
Andrew Highsmith joins us from the University of Texas at San Antonio as an assistant professor in our Department of History. His research examines the political-economy and race relations of Flint, Michigan, and more broadly, the conditions of race and class in urban America. Dr. Highsmith received the best dissertation award from the Urban History Association and the John Reps Dissertation Prize from the Society for American City and Regional Planning History and his book, *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (University of Chicago Press, Historical Studies of Urban America), published in summer, 2015. Dr. Highsmith received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan.

Margherita Long joins us from UC Riverside as an associate professor in our Department of East Asian Languages and Literature. She teaches modern Japanese literature, thought and cinema, with interests in feminist culture and media studies. Her first book, published by Stanford in 2009, was *This Perversion Called Love: Reading Tanizaki, Feminist Theory and Japan*. Her current project is titled *On Being Worthy of the Event: Thinking Force, Affect and Origin after 3.11*. This fall, she is forming a graduate reading group in East Asian ecocriticisms to workshop papers and support conference travel. Dr. Long received her Ph.D. in East Asian studies from Princeton University.

Karl Shafer joins us from University of Pittsburgh as a professor in our Department of Philosophy. He specializes in ethics, early modern philosophy, Kant, and epistemology. He has been a Lawrence S. Rockefeller Faculty Fellow at Princeton University’s Center for Human Values and a Humboldt Fellow at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. Dr. Shafer received his Ph.D. in philosophy from New York University.

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu joined us from Ohio State University as a professor in our Department of Asian American Studies earlier this year. Her research and teaching interests focus on analyzing intersecting social hierarchies, such as those based on race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship. She is the author of *Dr. Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: The Life of a Wartime Celebrity* (University of California Press, 2005) and *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Viet Nam Era* (Cornell University Press, 2013). She is currently working with Political Scientist Gwendolyn Mink on a political biography of Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color U.S. Congressional Representative and the co-sponsor of Title IX. Dr. Wu received her Ph.D. in history from Stanford University.
Alumni

Vanessa García, ‘15 M.A. in English, has two plays and a novel out

David Benioff, ‘99 MFA in Programs in Writing (Fiction), brings home 12 Emmys for HBO’s “Game of Thrones”

Annessa Stagner (left), Ph.D alumna from our Department of History, has been appointed dean of Academic Services at Lamar Community College in Lamar, Colorado

Nasir Malim, ‘13 African American Studies, recently participated in a white coat ceremony at his medical school
a broad term, a term that encompasses history, language learning, literature, and more. Discussions about history, language, and literature then provoke conversation about the human character, culture, and social inquiry. But that’s just it, human character, human culture, and human social inquiry. That is what the humanities boils down to. And what does it mean to boil something down? It means to boil away some of what is mixed in, consequently seeing better what it was made of.

In my journey through a humanities education, I not only studied what humanity was made of, but also was given a look in the mirror at myself. I learned that I had been viewing my world from one limited perspective. I had not really seen the world, but only my world. The humanities allowed me to travel around the globe and, figuratively, through time as well. It ultimately led me into a Ph.D. program. It showed me how to evaluate experience from many viewpoints. It enabled me to live many lives. It is the School of Humanities at UCI that created the person I am today.

The way in which I was able to live many lives was through the study of foreign language. I did not begin my life or my college career as a friend to foreign language. I was a friend to foreign people all of my life, however, because in our town of Downey, California, we had neighbors from England, Czechoslovakia—at the time, Holland, and Germany. I thought I would learn to speak a second language, like many of my European neighbors, since junior high school Spanish class was so easy. It got harder in high school however. It was high school Spanish grammar that made me realize that I would never learn to speak Spanish, and that language learning was not for me.

My unintended study of foreign language at UCI began when I discovered the major of classics. When I started my life at UCI, I was not familiar with the School of Humanities. I was not sure what I would study but as long as I did not have to study any languages, I was happy. I had never thought much about history, other countries, or languages. My whole world was Southern California. I began my academic journey trying out courses in ICS, psychology, biology, and anthropology. Students who took biology classes also took Humanities Core Course. In HCC lectures, I was captivated by the oldest of the literature we studied. We studied Dante’s “Inferno” and his Circles of Hell. The professor lectured on topics such as the belief of the ancients, as he put it, that the wheel of fortune could turn at any time, causing a good life to become a life of misery and want. It was captivating to me to study the thoughts of people of long ago. I discovered that I wanted to concentrate on the oldest literature possible. The best way to study the oldest Western literature was to become a classics major. What I did not know was that, as a classics major, I would be studying language, and this was foreign language on steroids!

The Latin and Greek courses we classics students studied were great classes for teaching one English grammar and vocabulary, as it turns out. As I began to understand the underlying grammar of language by taking these courses in ancient languages, I began to appreciate foreign language, and learn
my own language, in a new and masterful way. Classics made it possible for me to become one of the few people in the country that can speak English grammatically correctly. English and its cousin Indo-European languages were coming together for me. I began to see the languages of "others" as "our languages," especially since I had learned how each goes back to where languages meet up on the language family tree, where they had once been the same language.

One day, walking through Humanities Hall, an idea came into my mind so suddenly, and with such certitude, but, as if from a source outside of me. I would go to Greece and live there for a year after graduation. Even though this was impossible for a starving college student, I never doubted for a moment that it would happen. For the next year, I lived at my parents' house to save money so that I could pay off my debt. I commuted to school in the morning traffic each day. I stopped paying sorority dues and said I was going "alum" status. I don't think I was allowed to do that, but I am glad it worked because I wasn't around on nights to attend meetings anymore—I drove home with the rush hour traffic most days—and I needed to sink every spare penny into paying off my debt. By the time I graduated, I had paid it off, but had to charge my $450 one-way ticket on Air New Zealand to Greece, via the U.K. Three days after graduation, I flew on a one-way ticket to Greece. I took a four-hour-per-day Modern Greek course in Athens, and, within several weeks, began to think and even dream in Greek.

This was only the beginning. The coupling of language and travel had now taken root in who I had become. I began to learn more languages. From Greece, I spent time living in Australia, with my new Australian husband. From there, we settled in California. Once we had children, we took them to spend periods of time in villages of other countries. My vantage point had gone from a girl who thought her country was everything, to a complete person who shared vantage points with people of the world. There is a Czech proverb that says, "For each language you learn, you live another life." This rings true for me. Each language I study enriches my life experience as if affording me the opportunity to live simultaneous lives at multiple levels.

Where will the humanities take its newest recruits? I can only speak to what I know best. There are students who would not attempt to take a foreign language because they would think they could never learn it. They’re right; but they are wrong about not taking the classes. One never has to say that they "speak" a language. I heard once that the safest way to put it is to say, “I am a student of ...” And I would recommend to any humanities student who cannot learn languages, to become a life-long student of one or two languages. It may result in the discovery of delicious new foods, comical quips that do not exist in your language, and new acquaintances you value, and, maybe, in the discovery of an inner self not yet awakened.

Kavatas attended UCI in the eighties. Immediately following graduation, she left on a one-way ticket to Europe and, fortunate enough to find employment, lived abroad for a year. After marrying an Australian in Athens, Greece, and traveling to Australia, she began graduate study in California. She and her husband have lived in both the US and Australia, and have two children. Kavatas treasures the work of authors such as Noam Chomsky, Joseph Campbell, and more specifically, the work by Thomas King, The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative, for how it delivers an indictment on injustice in a unique manner. Kavatas began her writing with poetry, and continued it with personal narrative. Her publications have appeared in multiple magazines. She is currently in a Ph.D. program at Union Institute and University, continuing to study humanities and culture.
While a student at UCI, you majored in history with an emphasis on Soviet Studies. Why did you choose to major in history?

When I transferred to UCI, I was struggling over whether to major in History or English. I loved History, but I thought English might make more sense if I wanted to go to grad school. During the first week of school, there was a meeting of the English Department, which had a reputation for being one of the university’s toughest. The dean introduced the top student in the Department. His GPA was a mid B. Suddenly, my decision about the right major got a lot easier.

What was your experience like as a student at UCI?

It was terrific. I lived in Newport Beach and majored in a subject matter – Soviet history – that still fascinates me. Classes in the morning, some beach time in the afternoon, and work and study after that. It’s a lifestyle I hope to replicate at some point.

After receiving your B.A., you attended George Washington University Law School and received your J.D. Did your humanities education at UCI prepare you for, or inform, your study of law?

At some level, Soviet History is a study of committees, of how they can be organized, influenced and directed. Obviously, the same can be said of law and politics, although hopefully without a Stalin at the head of the table. On a practical level, I was very fortunate. Early on, one of my professors introduced me to a student who knew how to study. He was older, married, and clearly more mature. The lessons and techniques he shared with me over the course of one evening helped me survive not just college but law school as well.

Would you walk us through a typical day at the MLBPA?

Every day is a fire hose of opportunities. At one moment, the issue could be agent regulation. Next it might be working on something for the bargaining table, only to have to jump over to helping decide what to do about the broken AC unit in the computer room. No day is ever the same, except for the intensity. What drives all of us on staff is the chance to work for 1200 men who are the best in the world at what they do. Trust me, it’s a powerful motivator.

You are involved with the School of Humanities’ newly-formed Northeast Alumni Committee. Why did you become involved and what are you hoping to accomplish with this group?

I now understand that in many ways, my professional life began at UCI. I thought that by working with the Alumni Committee there might be a chance to be a resource for some students and recent graduates, as others were for me. I had no idea that as an added bonus I’d get to meet some remarkable people here in the city who also graduated from UCI. They are an extremely talented group.
Q&A with alumnus Kevin McGuiness

You've had a lobbying firm since 2004 and have represented the MLBPA along with the NFL, NBA, NHL and MLS’ players’ unions. At the risk of putting you in a pickle…do you have a favorite sport?

Obviously, there is no sport like baseball. Nothing else comes close to mirroring the vagaries of life so completely. But, to be honest, in the past, my favorite sport was whatever sport my children were playing. Hopefully one day soon it will be whatever sport my grandchildren are playing.

What is your advice for humanities students who want to explore careers outside of academia?

I might not be the best person to ask for advice. After all, I majored in a country that no longer exits. But, since you asked, I recommend that you study what you love. Don’t worry whether it all makes sense at the beginning because, if you're lucky, you’ll have no idea where your life is going to take you. I’m certainly proof of that. And when in doubt, go to a baseball game. It’s truly good for the soul.

"I NOW UNDERSTAND THAT IN MANY WAYS, MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE BEGAN AT UCI."

Your Alumni Connection

The School of Humanities is interested in connecting with its alumni on a local, regional and global level.

We invite you to join the growing list of UCI alumni who are now proudly committed to the Northeast Alumni Initiative, launched by the School of Humanities to include all UCI graduates. Our goal is to sustain and enhance an active alumni network on the East Coast, guaranteeing that those now far from Irvine will feel an ongoing connection to the life of the campus and its programs.

If you are interested in connecting with Humanities alumni in the Northeast—or in becoming connected with alumni in your area—please contact Marijana Lekousis, major gifts officer, for further information at Marijana@uci.edu.
The Evil Hours is a provocative, exhaustively researched and deeply moving analysis of traumatic memory and how we make sense of it...an essential book not just for those who have experienced trauma, but for anyone who wants to understand post-9/11 America. Reading it will make you a better and more humane citizen.” —New York Times Book Review

“This book has the hypnotic appeal of authenticity. David J. Morris is a writer, warrior, and sufferer, his words carry an inescapable truth. His story glides through the drifting incredulity of trauma, terrible memories, and the struggling science of comprehension. There is something addictive in his way of drawing you in. The Evil Hours is fascinating uncovering of the mind, unnervingly profound.” —Joe Simpson, author of Touching the Void

You have written about SERE, the Marine Corps' Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training, and you have called for the abolishment of this dubiously effective training. And you have taken some real grief for doing so. Have you read The Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Torture, and if so, are you surprised by any aspect of it in particular?

Well, first off, I should say that SERE is a program that pertains to the entire US military and owes its origins to the Korean War and the resultant “brainwashing” scare of 1950s America—best exemplified by “The Manchurian Candidate”—which grew out of the fear that Communists had somehow seized the psychic high ground and found a way to turn average citizens into sleeper agents. SERE was an attempt by the Pentagon to create a prophylactic for this perceived threat and “inoculate” American servicemen and women against such brainwashing techniques. The medical metaphor used here is telling and remains in wide use in military circles.

What continues to surprise me is the rank amateurism that dominated the decision-making of the Bush era that we are only now fighting our way out of. Any military professional worth his salt will tell you that torture doesn’t work and that it undermines the credibility of any work you are trying to do. The SERE program—which is where waterboarding came from in the US—was never designed as an intelligence-gathering methodology and its use by the CIA continues to haunt us and will be remembered along with WMD as one of the central strategic blunders of our time. Add to these realities the fact that the Iraq War and the torture scandal were both self-inflicted wounds. As a former Marine officer who was schooled to value clear operational thinking, it angers me in a way that is hard to fully capture to see how the people in power who should have known better wasted lives in order to serve a corrupt political agenda.

SERE, the WMD controversy, combined with the first battle of Fallujah, which I saw firsthand, served as a departure point for me as an American and drove me into a kind of moral twilight zone occupied by Siegfried Sassoon and Tim O’Brien, soldiers who’d seen their idealism exploited by politicians. It is difficult to explain how such disillusionments work their way into the
divide. When I was in Iraq as a reporter, soldiers would often describe to me their actions under fire as relating to a specific scene in a specific movie that everyone in their unit had watched. After patrols in Anbar Province, it was common to see Marines playing first person shooter video games in their living quarters. One Marine captain who was later killed by a sniper described to me a scene where he went into an internet café in Fallujah and began playing “Call of Duty” as local Iraqis looked on. It was as if he was fighting the war virtually as the real war went on around him.

With respect to commentators’ expectations of military veterans and the presumption that all veterans are staunch Republicans, I think there is a generational element at play. During the Reagan era, pro-military sentiment became heavily associated with the right wing and I think younger veterans and their civilian counterparts are less prone to such a bifurcated view today. Many of my veteran friends are quite liberal and it is a mistake to assume that all veterans are Republicans but the skepticism towards the right is a relatively new thing and has grown considerably in the wake of the Iraq War.

I think it is fair for me to claim that literature means a tremendous amount to you, both as a means by which a more complex and equivocal portrait of soldiering can be had, but also as a way to question our nation’s lack of moral clarity on some very important topics. Would you please give us a “must read” reading list, particularly fiction. I know that you are a great admirer of Phil Klay’s *Redeployment*. What other novels or collections of short stories, or even collections of poems, have appealed to you recently? And why?

I am not a great reader of Iraq War literature right now for a variety of reasons, the most salient of which is that I lived through it and I am content to not revisit the war these days, though I know that will change. That said, I think Billy Lynn’s *Long Halftime Walk* is a great book and a savage, DeLillo-esque depiction of our media-saturated post-9/11 world. Every time I see an American flag waving on cable news I think of Billy
This is a difficult question to answer in some ways but PTSD to my way of thinking is built on the idea of dealing with one’s own annihilation, what Robert Stolorow calls one’s “essential finitude.” While the specter of nuclear annihilation is less on people’s minds today, our basic anxieties haven’t changed much. We remain a culture cut out of the wilderness and our imagination tends towards the feral and the post-apocalyptic. The trope of the lone man with a gun wandering the landscape remains our strongest image and it doesn’t take too much work to imagine that man in a place like Iraq or a post-apocalyptic America a’la Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*.

As for literature that deals somewhat directly with PTSD, say with Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*, what one VA psychiatrist described to me as “the ultimate PTSD novel,” we see the spectre of death or near-death as obliterating coherent consciousness itself, rendering the protagonist Billy Pilgrim into a temporal itinerant, “unstuck in time.” Death itself remains an opaque surface, essentially unknowable. Vonnegut describes it at one point as nothing but “violet light.” This relates to what Freud said about the mind being unable to process its own annihilation. This is what PTSD is, at its heart, the mind collapsing into itself, unable to function in the face of its own extinction. The mind stops recording in the normal way and becomes spastic, overrecording some things and under-recording others.

When William Faulkner accepted his Nobel Prize for Literature, his speech addressed the anxiety of an entire generation over the very real possibility of nuclear obliteration. Faulkner said, “Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat. He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid: and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed . . . .”

Faulkner’s speech is interesting on so many counts, but I’m never quite sure it makes sense. Do you think some of the better writing on PTSD captures both the abject fear of annihilation and, say, the verities of the human heart, whatever those might be?
NYT ranks UCI No. 1 in nation for outreach to low-income students

Lucena Lau Valle, graduate student in visual studies, serves as the 2015-16 Humanities Out There Fellow

Article on the New Swan written by Isis Huang, senior majoring in English with a creative writing emphasis in poetry

Anjali Vaidya, Ph.D. candidate in history, authored a book review for the Los Angeles Review of Books
The journalist’s journey: for two students, it was a different path with the same destination

By Annabel Adams

When meeting with Michaela Holland and Max Richter, I knew I was in the presence of the next generation of journalists. Smart, driven and tech-savvy, Holland and Richter were still reeling from their recent success launching Anteaters Who Will Change the World—a digital multimedia project highlighting nine undergraduate students who were nominated by professors, friends, and professional staff for their unique stories.

There was a clear yin and yang to their relationship. In Richter’s words, Holland is “madly efficient”; Holland says Richter is teaching her how to “chill out.” It was obvious to me that they had a sibling-like relationship with Holland playing the role of the younger sister—energetic (it’s no wonder she had a stint portraying “Mulan” on a Disney cruise line) and full of ambition—and Richter the role of older, been-there-done-that brother. He was a senior at the time of my interview and had taken time off before coming to UCI. He wore his experience—and his trials—on his sleeve. Their combined energy generated a project that won awards and became a platform for student voices.

In many ways, Holland and Richter’s journeys to the Literary Journalism Program and throughout it, mimic scholar Joseph Campbell’s “hero’s journey”—an archetypal narrative he discovered which is centered on The Hero who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of his or her group, tribe, or civilization. The difference? Holland and Richter journeyed together.

The call to adventure

Neither Holland nor Richter knew they wanted to major in literary journalism; both agree it was serendipity that led them to the program. Richter was a student at University of Oregon before dropping out in his junior year. “I hated it,” he said. He interned in public relations for a while then decided he wanted to go back to school. He hadn’t even heard of UCI’s program until his mom, while on the bus, struck up a conversation with a stranger whose daughter was a student at UCI in the Literary Journalism Program. When Richter applied and was accepted, he was in disbelief—so much so that during his freshman orientation he asked the Dean of Admissions if it was a mistake. “I don’t know what happened, but I’m here, and I’m really happy,” Richter said.

Holland wanted to pursue a professional dance career in Los Angeles straight out of high school, but her parents weren’t fond of the idea. She applied to UCI as a business major, but found herself accepted into Literary Journalism. She’s glad. “[Telling people’s stories] has always been in the back of my mind, but it wasn’t until I was forced to explore the actual thought of making it a career that I actually chose it. It more or less chose me,” she said.

Meeting with the mentor & crossing the threshold

After developing a style of story-telling that consists of a subject narrating a story while a slideshow plays in a class taught by Professor Amy DePaul, Richter had the idea of using it to tell the stories of UCI’s brightest and most promising students. He ran the idea by Holland who then became his co-pilot on the project.

Both mentoring each other (Richter says Holland “overestimates” projects; Holland says Richter “underestimates” projects) and receiving mentorship from Literary Journalism faculty and...
staff, including Dr. Patricia Pierson, associate director of the Literary Journalism Program, Holland and Richter created a website housing nine intricate stories capturing the trials and achievements of undergraduate students at UCI.

Holland recalls going to Barry Siegel, director of the Literary Journalism Program and Pulitzer-Prize-winning author, immediately for advice. “So I said, ‘Alright, I need to talk to Barry.’ I said, ‘Barry, we need to have weekly meetings.’ And those weekly meetings, honestly, were huge. Not in the fact that we actually progressed in actual work, but we progressed as a team, we progressed as an open, safe space that we could kind of tell each other what we needed. And I had to tell Max, ‘I’m not doing this halfway. If we’re doing this, we’re doing it well. And I don’t know what you’re thinking, but I’m thinking this is going to be a lot of work.’ And Barry will tell you there was a certain narrative arc watching us work together throughout this process,” said Holland.

Concurrent with the development of this project was an incident on campus that gained national media attention: six undergraduate members of UCI’s student-government Legislative Council passed a bill that banned hanging a flag from any nation in the common lobby area of the student government offices. The legislation was vetoed by the Executive Cabinet of the student government within days and the decision was not endorsed or supported in any way by the campus leadership, the University of California, or the broader student body. Despite its lack of university-wide support, the national media had a field day with the incident.

It was a real-world example of the interplay between journalism, misinformation, “click bait” and ethics. Both Holland and Richter used it as a learning experience.

Holland was taking Siegel’s “Ethical Journalism” course when the flag incident occurred, which prompted her to have—in her own words—“a small breakdown.” She explains how she sought Siegel’s advice on the matter and how his guidance taught her an important lesson on when you can—and can’t—protect your subjects. “[I learned] we live in a time where the media has to take the public’s propensity toward ignorance into account when they’re composing a piece. It’s like, why does it have to be the way it is? But I think that’s something every journalist needs to understand.”

The reward

Anteaters Who Will Change the World took off. Holland and Richter received a grant from the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) and a grant from the UCI Libraries.

“It morphed into a very important thing. And it also kind of turned into a way to inspire people on campus that this sort of storytelling is an option. Think outside the box. When you’re thinking about doing something, don’t just go out there and do something that’s already been done. You know, you can figure out a whole new way and really carve out your own niche to tell people’s stories in a way that they are not used to. And the results can be impressive like this,” said Richter.

The road back

With Richter since graduating and Holland now a senior, I wonder if these two will continue to push each other and provide balance to the other in the sibling way that I witnessed.

Holland is now the President of AnteaterTV and director of KUCI News. In addition, she works for Disneyland, Legoland, and Sea World as a dancer.

Richter is now a publicist in Sacramento, Calif.
A longtime fan of Pixar, I wondered, after viewing a number of films in succession ("Toy Story," "A Bug's Life," "Toy Story 2," "Monsters, Inc.,” and "Finding Nemo," and then soon after that “Cars,” “Ratatouille,” “WALL-E,” and “Up”), whether apparent strands of environmental thought keyed to themes of obsolescence, dereliction, sustainability, and waste were, in any plausible sense, markers of Pixar’s environmentalism or, in greater likelihood, symptoms of a financial crisis imminent to the Hollywood Institution.

At this same time, I became curious about a number of coincidental “greenings” across the Pixar brand family and throughout Silicon Valley more broadly: Apple’s 2014 launch of an ambitious environmental responsibility campaign and subsequent unveiling of its new eco-friendly Cupertino campus, and Amazon, Google, and Facebook’s announcements that they, too, were upping their environmental commitments by undertaking signature “green” architectural projects of their own.

In each of these contexts (film, campaign, design), I was struck by the common rhetorical impulse to move beyond simple strategies of greenwashing and to offer, instead, a vision of “sustainability” that worked to displace concern for material circumstance by seizing upon the presiding value of a given corporation’s immaterial brand assets (properties like Apple’s ethos of “innovation” and Pixar’s reputation for corporate “responsibility”). Silicon Valley’s “green” architectural projects were, I discovered, best suited to elaborate this logic: as manifestestations of resolutely material anxieties (evoking, as they do, the post-apocalyptic space stations, underground bunkers, and biodomes that signify the end of times), these structures also allegorized tensions between abstraction and concreteness, inclusion and exclusion, in ways that tracked the illusory configuration of value in the new economies.

More specifically, these unusual buildings which were variously visible from above but not at ground level (Apple), or from below but not above (Facebook), were composed of transparent materials (Amazon) or reflective ones (Google), cultivated aesthetics of partial-hiddenness and camouflage that alluded to the economic theme of brand equity, a hybrid value form composed of both material and immaterial assets and generated within both industrial and informational modes of capitalism. The result, in brief, wasn’t environmentalism but rather a complicated disavowal of “environment”: the modeling of brand equity as a species of value that exists at once beyond material reality yet retains the power to withstand -- and even recuperate -- material losses.

An article that encompasses these readings, “Immaterial Thoughts: Brand Value, Environmental Sustainability, and WALL-E,” is forthcoming in Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts.

Maria Bose (BA Stanford; MA UC Irvine) is a doctoral candidate in the English department at UCI. Her dissertation, “New Media Minorities: Literatures of Race and Immigration in the Digital Age,” explores how unusual narrative forms that emerge in recent literary accounts of racial experience correspond to and critique the changing formats for racial identity construction, communal being, and political engagement proffered by digital culture.
Why did you decide to minor in Jewish studies?

I identify as a Jew and was very interested in learning more about my ancestors. Although I grew up going to private Jewish schools, I felt there was still so much left to learn about the religion and culture of my people. Also, as I am going into teaching, I felt that having a background in Jewish studies would give me the upper hand if I chose to seek a job at a private Jewish school.

Did you find that your major and minor connected in any way?

Unfortunately there were not many connections between my major and minor. However, this made my time at UCI much more diverse and interesting. I would go from one class learning about child development to the next class learning about the atrocities that occurred during the Holocaust. They were both subjects I am very interested in. By having two very different lines of study, I was able to have a very well-rounded undergraduate education.

What are your post-graduation plans and why?

Following graduation, I will be attending UCI’s School of Education to complete their Masters of Art in Teaching and credential program. I chose to pursue teaching because I have had many years of experience working with children and have thoroughly enjoyed all my experiences. Also, I had many teachers, camp counselors, and mentors growing up that left a great impact on me and inspired me to play that role for future generations.

What has been your most rewarding experience as a student at UCI?

My most rewarding experience at UCI has been being an intern at Brywood Elementary in Irvine as part of my major’s field study program. Through this internship I was able to put to action all the things that I had learned in my classes, as well as, gaining valuable experience for my future career. Also, I was able to connect to multiple students because of our shared Jewish background.

What is your top piece of advice to incoming freshmen?

Learning to be mindful of your time is one of the most important things to learn as early as possible. Also, study what you love instead of studying what will make you money. When you are taking classes that you are not passionate about, you are more likely to fall behind. Finally, take every opportunity that’s presented to you. Join clubs, go to events, and don’t ever take any moment for granted!
Why did you choose to major in art history?

To be honest, at first it was a bit of a whim! I had taken AP Art History in high school and loved it. But when I was applying to college, I had wanted to major in photojournalism. The UC System didn’t offer that – and when I was applying I felt that Art History was the major that I felt was the closest fit. For financial reasons, I decided to go to UCI. But I didn’t ever consider changing my major. Even from day one – at SPOP, the Student Parent Orientation Program, when freshmen have to register for classes – the department had been so warm and welcoming, and I was sure that I couldn’t be any other major. There was just so much to learn, and I loved that Art History was such an interdisciplinary study. There’s a lot to learn from unpacking images, and studying the ideas and beliefs that went into them, and why people valued/continue to value them. I didn’t consider double majoring in Sociology until my 3rd year at UCI, when I had figured that I had enough time to complete another major. Sociology seemed to be an appropriate fit, because it seemed to go hand in hand with what I was learning and discussing in Art History. But to be honest, there are so many other things that fit with Art History as well! I just love how vast and broad it was. Every class gave me an opportunity to pursue something different – not only in terms of eras/areas, but also by allowing me to use class papers as a way to explore my own interests and curiosities, and how others have addressed or responded to these issues in visual media.

You’ve been extremely involved with the Art History Department. You’ve assisted with marketing and outreach for the department, and in organizing the 3rd Annual Art History Undergraduate Association’s art exhibition, “Altered Perceptions.” What are some of the most valuable lessons you’ve learned in these roles?

Probably the most valuable lesson I’ve learned is to just try out for things, even if I’m sure I’m not the best fit, and to put in my best efforts. “Do your best!” – it’s very simple, but it’s something that needs to be learned and even relearned. With all of the things I’ve done for the department – to be honest, I was entirely doubtful that I would be successful at any of it! But that doubt had to be put aside; after all, work needed to be done, and doubt was just wasting time. And I don’t have to do any of this alone! I have a wide network of friends and mentors; I’d say that learning to better communicate with them – about everything, from frustrations to failures to triumphs and success – is a valuable lesson I’m learning, and still learning. And there are lots of other things, too: that I needed to be more organized, that I definitely should be saving Photoshop files every 20-30 minutes (there are few things more frustrating than Photoshop crashing and losing a file!), and that opportunities that seem scary at first aren’t so at all. To quote a friend,” when you’re given an opportunity, you’ve just got to own it.”

In addition to interning with the Art History department, you have also interned with the Bowers Museum, Huntington Library and the UCI Vietnamese American Oral History Project (VAOHP). What has your experience been interning at these organizations?
Each internship was very different – The Bowers was public relations & marketing, and The Huntington was a curatorial internship. For VAOHP, I’ve been working with them on their “Vietnamese Focus” exhibition, which they are doing with OC Parks and the Orange County & Southeast Asian Archive Center. That one is very important to me, because it’s a way for me to explore my own family and community history. But I’ve been lucky enough that every opportunity I’ve had was a great one. I’ve definitely learned to be more adaptable to whatever the situation calls for, and much, much better at time management than I ever was before! Like I said previously, I had a lot of doubt at first about whether or not I was really the best for these positions; but I just had to put as much effort as I could into them! I’ve also been really lucky that my internships so far have been flexible – I had a lot of opportunities to go beyond my primary responsibilities and do a lot of other things I hadn’t anticipated at all! There was a lot of information and experiences to soak in, and they all helped me learn a lot more about myself – how I could be more efficient at work, what I liked to do and what I didn’t like. I’m very grateful that I’ve been able to try so many different things! It’s extremely invaluable because I can bring whatever I’ve learned on a previous project to any new one I’m working on.

What are your post-graduation plans?

Right now, I’m still interning with VAOHP, and will be with them through February 2016. I am also working with the Festival of Discovery and the Art History department on an October project, and will probably be out at the department through the summer. I don’t plan on grad school for another 2-3 years; I want more time before I make a big commitment! Hopefully I will work at a museum here in Southern California at some point in the future – fingers crossed.

What advice do you have for incoming freshmen in the School of Humanities?

I’m not sure I have any they haven’t heard before! But mostly:

- Being afraid of new things is completely normal. I was so incredibly shy as a freshman (and up until senior year, actually); I had a very hard time talking to professors, getting involved on campus, and making friends. Trying to do things is the hardest part – once you get over that hurdle, you’ll realize how small it was, and see that you just have to put one foot in front of the other.

- Not doing well academically, or feeling as though everyone is smarter than you, or generally just feeling as though you’ve failed – it’s not the end of the world. It hurts, and is awful, but it’s a part of growing up. Not everyone can be perfect, and they can’t be perfect all the time. It’s perfectly alright to have flaws, and it’s perfectly fine to not be good at things. Your worth is not measured by your GPA; your failures in no way devalue you. It’s probably weird to hear, but when you’re a freshman – really, even for me now at 22 – we’re young. We still have a lot to learn, and time to grow. Be critical of yourself, and your mistakes, but at the same time, don’t be too hard on yourself for them. You can’t learn if you don’t make mistakes.

- Something that would have saved me some heartache: don’t be afraid to talk about your passions, but also don’t be afraid to talk about your fears, or issues. Just don’t be afraid to talk! You have so many resources on campus – not just your friends and family, but your professors, mentors, your clubs/organizations, the Counseling Center, LGBT Resource Center, etc. If you ever feel alone or lost, others have gone through it too, and you have a ready network to help you.

- Keep an open mind. You’ll have to do a lot of re-learning, and even unlearning. That’s completely normal.

What drives you?

What drives me is a little hard to put into words. My family, friends, and mentors, definitely – they have a lot of faith in me, and I try to live up to that. I wouldn’t say I really have a plan: I just know that there are so many things out there I have yet to do, and there’s so much I have yet to experience. It’s scary and exciting, but that’s the whole point of learning new things. I’ll probably figure it out someday, but for now I’ll just enjoy the process of making my way there.
You are completing your dissertation on the history of food and cannibalism in early America. What inspired this topic?

We often attribute meaning to food beyond nutritional necessity – veganism might indicate political liberalism while red meat and potatoes might indicate conservatism; a cosmopolitan cocktail might denote femininity while a whiskey might denote masculinity. These modern-day food connotations made me curious about the cultural meaning of food in early America, when multiple groups came into contact with others’ very different foodways. Writers concentrated on the food practices of other cultures because of the significance carried by this daily activity.

How did an interest in food come to include cannibalism?

When I began my research, it was a challenge to define “food.”

Early modern discussions of plants and animals might have been discussions of food, or they might have been simply reports of America’s flora and fauna, or possible information regarding economic interests, or all of the above. And once I started reading primary sources, I realized that food was everywhere. Even when I limited my research to eating, rather than food generally, my topic was enormous. So when I came across the many stories of cannibalism, I thought that this was a definable topic that was fascinating – both to the early modern people who repeatedly wrote about it and to my interests in what is defined as appropriate food in a new world environment.

In your dissertation, you tackle “the ways in which a discourse of appetite informed English ideas about colonizing America”— can you give us some examples of this language?

In early modern exploration narratives, Europeans repeatedly described Native Americans’ manner of eating and drinking, and these anecdotes usually served to dispute Indian sovereignty by reinforcing a “savage/civilized” dichotomy in which Indians were unfit to govern the land, unlike “civilized” Europeans. One sixteenth-century author compared Indians’ style of eating to that of a “tiger or lion against a tame animal.” Another proclaimed that Indians ate their meat in a “rude and barbarous fashion.” The notion that Native Americans practiced cannibalism saturated early European depictions of America, even though there is little evidence that these nations practiced cannibalism at all. These portrayals of Native Americans’ eating habits served to define Indians as primitive “others” and justify Europeans’ desire to conquer the New World.
Is there something about cannibalism specifically that makes it such a marked transgression compared to other food-related taboos?

I think cannibalism is markedly taboo because it sits at the crossroads of several objectionable behaviors. Cannibalism often implies murder, though some instances of cannibalism may occur out of survival, on deceased bodies. It also suggests the complete domination of one human over another; so even if the cannibal is not a killer, his or her (though all my examples are male cannibals) consumption of a human speaks to deep fears about the power one might exercise over another person. Lastly, cannibalism evokes thoughts of animalism or barbarity; civilized humans are not supposed to eat other humans.

I have heard that, in your spare time, you are a master of baking cupcakes. What is your secret?

Well, it certainly isn’t anything to do with cannibalism! It helps if you know some of the science behind baking – what ingredients are stabilizers or tenderizers; in what order should you mix your ingredients (it makes a difference!); how do different fats, flours, leaveners, and sweeteners affect the outcome of your treat. That way, you’ll know how to modify recipes to get your desired outcome. And practice; I always make sure to have taste testers, which are pretty easy to find, and ask for their honest feedback. The more you bake, the easier it gets. I would also highly recommend investing in a quality vanilla extract and not over-baking – two common downfalls of beginners.

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**Fast Facts on the Department of History**

1. The Founding Dean of the School of Humanities, Samuel C. McCulloch, was also a professor of history, served as the first historian for the university, and wrote the book, *Instant University*.

2. Emeritus Professor Jon Wiener won a successful 25-year lawsuit, which resulted in the release of the FBI’s files on John Lennon.

3. History faculty have written articles for a number of media outlets, including *Time magazine, Newsweek, The Nation, Al Jazeera, Huffington Post, World Trade, the Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*.

4. Launched in 1999 by Professor Robert Moeller with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the UCI History Project has served thousands of K-12 history teachers throughout Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties through symposiums and workshops on US, World history, and disciplinary literacy. Over 700 educators participated in programs at UCI and the surrounding regions in the last year alone.

5. Vicki Ruiz, Distinguished Professor of history and Chicano/Latino studies, was the first faculty member from UCI to receive the National Humanities Medal from President Obama.
Philanthropy

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Photo credit: Dhruvil Desai
A humanities education enables us to have a fuller and more complex understanding of the world around us; it gives us the skills to read and interpret our environment, while also providing the creativity to imagine a new world.

At the UCI School of Humanities, we have imagined a world where humanities students can transform into passionate global citizens. Today, that world has come to life in its most vibrant colors.

With the vision and support from individuals, organizations, and alumni—people like you—we’ve been able to make an indelible impact within the university and far beyond it. With the addition of five new endowed chairs in regional and religious studies this year alone—a first for any school at UCI—our curriculum will expose students to the contributions of influential thinkers, writers and artists from cultures around the world while enabling our faculty to cross-collaborate and broaden their research areas. With the creation of new centers, including the UCI Shakespeare Center, we provide our students and the community the opportunity to explore the past and envision the future, to tap into their own creativity and to experience the connection between disciplines within and outside of the humanities. With endowed faculty support, we are able to encourage outstanding research and teaching in perpetuity no matter the changing tides of university priorities or funding.

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That is the UCI School of Humanities difference.

We remain committed to expanding the archives from which we draw inspiration and gain understanding of our surroundings and we will continue exploring our history and its impact on our bright future.

We hope you, too, will consider the difference that you can make by lending your support.

We are thankful for the generosity of our community; it has provided the valuable resources that allow us to elevate our scholarship and expand our impact. I look forward to sharing the many ways you too can create a legacy within the School of Humanities. To learn more about our work, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Sincerely,

Nicole

A message from Executive Director of Advancement, Nicole Balsamo

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Frank Jao, a retired businessman, is the principal developer of Westminster’s “Little Saigon” community, the largest concentration of Vietnamese Americans outside of Vietnam. His foundation, the Jao Foundation, has the mission to promote academic scholarship and cultural awareness and understanding.

Mr. Jao has been involved in the real estate industry since 1975 and has been active internationally, particularly in China and Southeast Asia, since 1981. As a real estate developer, he has earned many awards of civic and professional distinction.

He was a presidential appointee to the Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) in 2002-2009 and Chairman of VEF in 2005-2006. The VEF provides educational exchanges between the United States and Vietnam. Currently, Mr. Jao serves on the the University of California, Irvine Foundation Board of Trustees, International Advisory Board at Chapman University, and Trust for University Innovation in Vietnam (Fulbright University Vietnam) Board of Trustees.

“While there is much recorded about the Vietnam War and Vietnamese migration, I felt there was a vital component missing - the range of voices and stories of those who experienced it firsthand. These rich details need to be recorded in order to accurately capture these moments in history,” said Jao of his inspirational gift to the Vietnamese American Oral History Project.

**Vietnamese American oral history gains momentum with support from Frank Jao**

Frank Jao’s impact can be felt across the UCI campus and well beyond it. When walking through Aldrich Park, you’ll encounter a sculpture garden featuring ancient Chinese figures generously donated by the Jao Foundation. When you’re listening to, or learning about, a refugee to the United States from Vietnam, it’s likely the story was captured by the Vietnamese American Oral History Project, which the Jao Foundation funded in 2011.

**The Vietnamese American Oral History Project**

Led by Linda Trinh Vo, director, and Tram Le, associate director, VAOHP actively assembles, preserves, and disseminates the life stories of Vietnamese Americans in Southern California. The project contributes to expanding archives on Vietnamese Americans with the primary goal of capturing first generation stories for students, researchers, and the community. The VAOHP is housed in the Department of Asian American Studies in the School of Humanities and collaborates with the UCI Orange County and Southeast Asian Archive Center.

Currently, OC Parks and VAOHP are showing an exhibition titled, “Vietnamese Focus: Generations of Stories.” The interactive art and history exhibition captures the compelling and complex Vietnamese experience before, during and after the Vietnam War. Utilizing photos, documents, oral histories, artifacts and artwork, the eight-month exhibition commemorates the 40th anniversary of the fall of Saigon and the influx of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants into the U.S. and, specifically, Orange County.

The exhibition is open now through February, 2016 at the Old Orange County Courthouse and then will be housed at the Viewpoint Gallery at the UCI Student Center. Click the image below to learn more:
The name “Shakespeare” is synonymous with English literature, world literature, and the art of theater. It’s been 40 decades, but William Shakespeare is still as relevant today as he was then. His plays continue to be performed, adapted for the big screen, interpreted and even contested. Since its inception, UCI has been a remarkable place for the study and performance of Shakespeare.

Founding dean of fine arts Clayton Garrison directed “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” with the campus’s first class of drama students in 1965.

Forty-seven years later, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts introduced the New Swan Shakespeare Festival, which stages two plays each summer in an intimate outdoor venue modeled on an Elizabethan theater-in-the-round.

Now, with the incredible backing and support of a few generous individuals, the UCI Shakespeare Center—an interschool initiative between the Claire Trevor School of the Arts and the School of Humanities—has come to life, with the goal to become the premier institution in California for the integrated production, study, and enjoyment of Shakespeare.

The center is led by Julia Lupton, a UCI professor of English and a trustee of the Shakespeare Association of America, and Eli Simon, UCI Chancellor’s Professor of drama and artistic director of the New Swan Shakespeare Festival.

The School of Humanities extends its sincerest gratitude to Associate Dean for Research, Julia Lupton, her husband Dr. Ken Reinhard, and the Reinhard family, for their inspiring $25,000 lead gift to make the dream of the UCI Shakespeare Center become a reality. This generous endowment, in turn, inspired another.

Motivated by the Reinhard family’s inaugural gift and his deep involvement with all-things Shakespeare at UCI, Kirk E. Davis, Jr. made a tremendous donation of $50,000 to permanently underwrite the Shakespeare Center’s annual public lecture. In his honor, this event will be named “The Kirk Davis Shakespeare Annual Public Lecture,” the first of which is slated for February 2016.

These inspired gifts will provide immediate and critical funding for some of the center’s leading priorities, which include master classes, public lectures, seminars, workshops, and retreats.

The School of Humanities is immensely grateful for the generosity and vision of these early supporters and hopes that others who wish to expand Shakespeare scholarship at UCI will learn more, engage and revel!

Watch Julia Lupton speak on Macbeth’s signature Act 2 soliloquy by clicking the image below: 

To make a gift to the UCI Shakespeare Center, please click here.
Honoring the legacy of Humanities Associates: a sustainable investment in our future

“Humanities Associates is alive and well,” said Gloria Schick Gellman.

In the late 1980s, Gellman caught the eye of the late founding Chancellor Jack Peltason, as someone who could engage and motivate community members thought her passion for the liberal arts and humanities. In a few short years, the School of Humanities’ most successful annual giving society, Humanities Associates, became a group of engaged Humanities supporters who awarded numerous scholarships, fellowships, and awards to Humanities students. In 1993, Humanities Associates raised $100,000 to support various awards given annually to Humanities faculty and students for outstanding achievement in teaching and research.

“I received a teaching award from Humanities Associates very early in my time at UCI. It was very moving to be recognized for my teaching, and to have that recognition come from the community,” said Julia Lupton, associate dean for research and director of Humanities Commons. “I met people at the awards event who became friends, mentors and supporters of my projects, including Humanities Out There.”

As UCI and the School of Humanities evolved, Humanities Associates developed gradually into different annual giving societies. Under the leadership of Dean Van Den Abbeele, Humanities Associates has been reinvigorated.

Today, Humanities Associates builds on the foundation that was set two decades ago and elevates the school’s sustainable commitments to a new level. Current Humanities Associates members receive robust benefits, including invitations to many exclusive events, faculty publications, and opportunities to engage meaningfully with our world-class faculty.

The School of Humanities was pleased to recently welcome back Gloria Schick Gellman, and her husband Dr. Irwin Gellman, at an exclusive book signing and lecture event hosted by the school, where Gloria eloquently spoke about the importance of the humanities in today’s world and called on the community to make a sustainable investment in the school’s future. These remarks not only invoked many warm memories for some of our founding Humanities Associates members in attendance, but also inspired many to inquire as to how they could make an impact through Humanities Associates.

Humanities Associates offers four different giving levels, starting at $500 annually and also offers discounted rates for young alumni who have graduated in the past ten years. To learn more about how to support the School of Humanities through Humanities Associates, please contact: Marijana Lekousis, major gifts officer, at (949) 824-1342 or marijana@uci.edu.
Featured Events

UCI 50th Anniversary
Festival of DISCOVERY

Festival of Discovery
Oct. 3rd

Transforming Migrations: Beyond the 1965 Immigration Act
Oct. 8 & 9, 2015

Writing about Dystopian Settings: A Conversation with Journalist and Spy Novelist Adam Brookes
Nov. 19, 2015

Ending in Music: Romeo and Juliet and the Renaissance Jig Tradition
Jan. 28, 2016

For a full line-up of events and up-to-date event information, please click here.
Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis

By Andrew R. Highsmith
Assistant Professor, history
Publication date: July 6, 2015

Autopsy in Athens: Recent Archaeological Research in Athens and Attica

Edited by Margaret Miles
Professor, art history and classics
Publication date: July 24, 2015

Are We All Postracial Yet?

By David Theo Goldberg
Professor, comparative literature; Director, UC Humanities Research Institute
Publication date: August 3, 2015

Translingual Narration: Colonial and Postcolonial Taiwanese Fiction and Film

By Bert M. Scruggs
Associate Professor, East Asian languages & literature
Publication date: August 15, 2015
Iranian Culture: Representation and identity

By Nasrin Rahmieh
Howard Baskerville Professor of Humanities, comparative literature
Publication date: September 16, 2015

Last Scene Underground: An Ethnographic Novel of Iran

By Roxanne Varzi
Associate professor, film & media studies
Associate Professor, anthropology
Publication date: October 21, 2015

From Shipmates to Soldiers: Emerging Black Identities in the Río de la Plata

By Alex Borucki
Assistant Professor, history
Publication date: November 2015

Finding Charity’s Folk: Enslaved and Free Black women in Maryland

By Jessica Millward
Associate Professor, history
Publication date: December 15, 2015