
THE INTERLOCUTOR

Newsletter of the Division of Humanities and Teacher Education
Seaver College, Pepperdine University
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From the Divisional Dean

Greetings! Our division, **HuTE**, for short, is largely “housed” in the Cultural Arts Center, but it is much less a *place* than a *spirit* of humane inquiry – *passions* for beauty and justice and discipline and creation – a *collection* of shared skills and outlooks – and *rare* ones at that! It is also a kind of a collaborative and intersecting residence of scholars, activists, and believers committed to great traditions of informed, critical and creative thinking.

As you see in the stories that follow, **HuTE** students and faculty are endlessly curious, inventive, and adventurous. They want to know not just how to make the world work. They want to know how the world came to be that way – and whether it could be something altogether different.

At our annual **HuTE** graduation reception (photo) – a truly heartwarming time of celebration and a little bit of goodbye – I often remind **HuTE** students what makes them special and how people will regard them in their next phase of life: when people find out that they can read books – *and want to* – and can investigate history – *and want to* – and create stories and poems – *and want to* – can keep a classroom directed and spellbound – *and want to* – can explain and admire cinema as artwork – *and want to* – can analyze and fabricate rhetoric – *and want to* – their abilities and, what’s more, their passions will be make them invaluable.



Frankly, at these receptions, I’m more than a little bit awed and even intimidated by the accomplishments and, even more, the potential of our students – and the wonderful relationships they’ve forged with each other and with each of us. But most of all, I’m deeply humbled and encouraged. I hope that the stories and updates will give you a glimpse into what **HuTE** faculty and staff witness every day.

Blessings,

Michael Ditmore

Learning about Global Interactions at Fort Ross

Professor Sharyl Corrado is probably best known to students at Seaver College for teaching one of the "Elkins lecture courses": in this case, the last of the Humanities sequence. But she also teaches smaller classes on European and global history. Below, she and three students share their experiences in one of those courses.

Professor Corrado: On Oct. 16-17, 2015, my class HIST 405 on modern imperialism and colonialism took the opportunity to visit Fort Ross State Historic Park, near Jenner, California. The Russian colony of Fort Ross operated from 1812 to 1842 as a base for hunting and agriculture for the Russian-American Company, supplying its Alaska colonies. From 25 to 100 Russians and from 50 to 125 Native Alaskans lived at the settlement at any given time, and day laborers were hired from among the nearby Kashaya people.

The trip was of special significance to the class because of an essay they had read, "Fort Ross Meditation," in which noted anthropologist James Clifford explores Russian colonization as a process of interactions with various groups: the Native Pomo and Kashaya peoples; traders from South America, Asia, and Hawaii; Native Alaskans; Mexicans; and settlers from the USA. In essays written after the trip, students commented on their experiences. Here are excerpts from three students:

Stephanie Green, Liberal Arts major: Most impactful for me was the store within the fort. Seeing the furs and foodstuffs that would have been a major part of life at the fort gave context with which to see the Russians who would have occupied the fort. The furs provided a glimpse into their economy and why they would live so far from home. It was also interesting to see Chinese influence in the fort, mostly in the form of Chinese porcelain. It was a good reminder that the fort was built to help fuel the Russian's trade with the rest of the East. It was interesting to see California as part of Asian history. The weather was also helpful to understand life at the fort and why it was built there. Fog would have provided concealment from enemy ships along the coast. However, it could also become hazardous to get goods from the site to ships and then off to Alaska. Overall, life at the fort became more understandable once it was seen in person.

Joon Kwak, History major: One of the most memorable elements in the fort was the Russian warehouse. I went to the old Russian American Company warehouse first and saw various trade goods including china plates, teapots, and pelts of bears, foxes, and sea otters. While I previously had learned that the Fort Ross was a trading center, I could truly understand that only after I saw this warehouse. The goods stored in the warehouse reflected how the Russians of the Fort Ross had an extensive trade with many nations, including China which is located across the Pacific Ocean. Seeing china plates with the Chinese language on them in the Russian fort was a somewhat strange experience to me.



The collection of animal pelts was another thing that impressed me. I previously had read James Clifford's book, which told me that Chinese traders in Canton paid a \$150 each for pelts of sea otter, which was almost equivalent to the profit made by a Pennsylvania farmer for a year's work. In the warehouse, I was able to touch those furs provided by the guide. These furs were not only soft and warm, but also elegant and exquisite. It was my first time touching pelts and furs of sea otters and yet I couldn't help but to agree that these are indeed great luxury resource.

Analiese Smith, History minor: After having the opportunity to visit Fort Ross, I can say without hesitation that this experience has had a great amount of influence on my understanding of its history. Seeing this past firsthand, or what remains and has been recreated, was an irreplaceable experience for several reasons. First, I now have a frame of reference for the Russian presence in North America that I did not have before. Because the Russian presence was rather limited in North America in comparison to other cultures' influence, such as Spain, this was harder for me to reconcile because of my unfamiliarity with this meshing of cultures. After visiting, I recognize that North America, or at least California, is the result of both Asian and European influences, which is different from the Euro-centric view I am most familiar with.

History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future. Robert Penn Warren

HUTE Students Travel Abroad



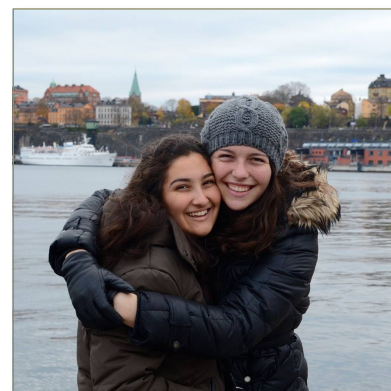
Davina Morales, English Education, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Being in Buenos Aires really captured what it meant to be culturally uncomfortable. The city I loved for more than three months allowed me to focus on my inner-self and I had a lot of time to read and write outside of academic responsibilities. I also got to do volunteer work with an elementary school nearby, helping local Argentine students practice their conversational and grammatical English. I was able to take a break from education courses and step into the real-life shoes of an English teacher. This only made me even more excited to get back to

Malibu and continue working toward my credential.

Jessica Wall, English Education, Heidelberg, Germany

Being abroad was the first time I felt like an outsider. There was so much to adjust to: a different country, a different language, a different culture. Fighting the learning curve lent me a similar perspective to that of an English learner in the American classroom. I was granted insight into the mind of immigrants who are trying to catch up with the rest of their peers in standard courses. While being grumbled about by German train conductors, coffee baristas, or museum curators—anyone with whom I failed to communicate—I glimpsed the fear of misunderstanding that English learners experience daily. As an Education major, I can think back and act upon this experience as I prepare to teach lessons and forge relationships with future students.



Isaac Randel, Creative Writing, London, England

As a Creative Writing major, London was a thrilling place to live for two semesters. Being in such close proximity to the homes and stomping grounds of Shakespeare, Dickens, Woolf, and T. S. Eliot was incredible. The city is connected to history in a way that few American cities are. Living in London provided me with a broader perspective on the history and power of English literature, and gave me context for my own ambition of creating works of great literature. I had the opportunity to work with English "Sixth Form" (high school) students on a literary

magazine that their school published...It was an incredible opportunity to bond with people of a foreign country over a mutual passion in literature.

Summer Teaching in the Bronx

By Jenny Song

Jenny is a senior and an education and liberal arts major. She shares the following reflection on a teaching experience during the summer of 2016.

Underprivileged. Working class. Immigrant. Minority. Who do these words define? This past summer, I team-taught writing and art to a total of 60 eighth-grade students in the Bronx as a Teaching Fellow at Breakthrough New York, an educational non-profit dedicated to supporting underprivileged and high-achieving students with intensive academic programs. By teaching and building relationships with students burdened by the stereotypes behind those words every day, I learned the urgency of creating a classroom where every student feels valued in the hope of repairing the system of power in America.

I initially applied to Breakthrough because I wanted more experience in teaching. I was passionate about working with the underprivileged, but my primary goal for the summer focused on my growth as a teacher. As a writing teacher, however, I had an opportunity to get a glimpse of my students' cultures and backgrounds, and that opened my eyes to the importance of face-to-face connection in teaching. One particularly memorable writing assignment was on the topic of "my neighborhood," for which most of the student wrote about different areas of the Bronx. They told stories of gunshots at night, and of a whole block of neighbors that visited them when they were sick. There were pressures to join gangs, but there were also life-long friends that cultivated passion to play soccer. They had uncles that were in jail, and grandmothers that taught them Spanish. Their experiences are very different from the relatively sheltered neighborhood where I grew up.



Jenny (right) and three of her fellow teachers at Breakthrough

Being a good teacher meant so much more than just reciting lesson plans; I realized that the students learned best when we discussed and celebrated our similarities and differences. I was the best teacher not when my lesson plan is most prepared, but when I listened to their stories and showed that I wanted to know them. This trust that I built with my students was reflected in the honesty of their writing. It was refreshing and humbling to hear their uncanny reflections on their lives as individuals rather than through the lens of labels about the underprivileged.

I also saw the influences of a broken system on my students while I was leading an event day on diversity. During one of the events, students wrote brief poems about their place in the world, and I was unsettled to find that most of my students carried the burden of stereotypes based on their race and economic statuses. Even at twelve or thirteen years old, my students were painfully aware that they were not valued. Their racial identities have been treated as scapegoats for political agendas; their cultures continue to be deemed second-class; and their struggles are labeled as consequences of laziness or a lack of effort. Many of my students were frustrated by expectations put on them as a black male or a Latina or a Muslim. As I learned more about them, I realized that the entrenched stereotypes were too heavy for any student to bear alone.

I learned that the empowerment of my students requires a systematic change in the way that society, including the education system, views the underprivileged. Through my experience in Breakthrough, I found my passion to be an effective and supportive teacher, yes, but also be an advocate for educational equity especially for those silenced in our society.

The Power of Positive Words

By Teresa Roberson

HUTE held its annual honors banquet on April 11, 2016. The speaker was Teresa Roberson, former head of school at Calvary Christian School in Pacific Palisades, where a number of Pepperdine graduates have taught over the decades. Below are excerpts from her talk.

Having spent over forty years in education, I am more and more convinced that what we say, how we say it, the WORDS we use, the TONE of voice we use: all affect our effectiveness in life. When I speak, I use a lot of quotes because WORDS ARE POWERFUL. You will win or lose at a job interview based on your WORDS! You will make or lose friends based on your WORDS.

Words can light fires in the minds of men. Words can bring tears to the hardest hearts. YOUR words will impact the way you personally deal with the ups and downs in life. A picture can tell a thousand words, but a few words can change a story.



The banquet speaker and three students with a liberal arts & education major

A few years ago, I met Dr. Shawn Achor and he shared what he calls “The Science of a Positive Ripple Effect.” Dr. Achor is a professor at Harvard University and he told the story of a time when he was seven, playing with his five-year-old sister on the top bunk bed. They were playing “war” with his GI Joes and her My Little Pony when all of a sudden she fell off the bed and landed on her hands and knees on the floor. His sister was about to begin to cry when he quickly said, “Wow, you are amazing! No human can land like that. You must be a unicorn!”

His sister was so excited to be a unicorn that she ignored the pain, hopped up, and began playing

again. She reminded him that her pony would win because she was a magical unicorn. Dr. Achor says that was the first time he realized the significance of positive words!

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Because words are powerful, write down your vision for the future, your dream, your passion. Read it everyday.

Because words are powerful, practice gratitude and articulate them out loud.

Because words are powerful, journal each day, even if for only five minutes.

Because words are powerful, send two emails each day to two persons, noting something you appreciate about them.

Because words are powerful, let yourself be happy and laugh. Words are connected to laughter. Proverbs 17:22: A cheerful heart is good medicine.

Because words are powerful, be a model of enthusiasm, joy, love, integrity, generosity, humility and compassion. Let your friends and family, co-workers and boss know how happy you are to see them. Say their names out loud.

Because words are powerful, live in the light of eternity by using your words wisely. Philippians 4:8: Whatever is true, right, pure, lovely, admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about those things. I’d add that you should talk about those things too.

THE INTERLOCUTOR would love to hear from HUTE alumni. Send news and updates to Tuan Hoang (faculty editor, tuan.hoang@pepperdine.edu) or Katrina Winnett (student editor, katrina.winnett@pepperdine.edu).

Faculty News And Updates

TRAVELS. Summer 2016 saw busy travels for a number of HUTE faculty. In London, **Connie Fulmer** was an honored guest to lay a wreath for George Eliot in the famed Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey. **James Thomas** also attended the event. As part of her sabbatical, **Carrie Birmingham** spent over one week at The Kilns in Oxford reading and talking about C.S. Lewis and education. Also in Oxford was **Jennifer Smith**, who spent one month as a Huntington Library/Corpus Christi College Research Fellow researching on Reginald Peacock. Prof. Smith then spent a week of writing retreat at St. John's University in Minnesota. She was not the only HUTE professor at St. John's this summer. At different times, **Paul Contino** attended a mentoring conference of Lilly graduate students; and **Jane Kelley Rodeheffer** spent four weeks to improve her skill in pottery making. Prof. Rodeheffer also spent one week in China to better her Chinese calligraphy, and plans to incorporate both skills into her course on Asian Great Books.

LEARNED SOCIETIES. More recently, **Prof. Rodeheffer** was named the president of the Association of Core Texts and Courses. **Loretta Hunnicutt** became the new associate editor of the journal *Fides et Historia*, which is now housed at Pepperdine. The journal is run under the auspices of The Conference on Faith and History (CFH), and Prof. Hunnicutt was also the principal organizer of the biannual meeting of CFH on campus back in Fall 2014.

TEACHING. The division sent off **Darlene Rivas** to the Lausanne program for this academic year. It welcomed back **Julie Smith** from the London program. During her year abroad, Prof. Smith gave a talk about her favorite novel *Bleak House* on Dickens Day at Birkbeck, University of London. On campus, **Heather Thomson-Bunn**, **Katy Frye**, **David Holmes**, **Maire Mullins**, and **John Peterson** participated in the year-long seminar Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED), which trains faculty and staff on diversity in and out of the classroom. **Prof. Frye** and **Julie Oni** won HUTE's Brett J. Love Teaching Award for 2014 and 2016, respectively. **Jeff Schultz** and **Prof. Contino** were awarded the university-wide Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence.

PUBLICATIONS. Since 2015, seven professors have published new books. From the history program are **Ed Larson**, *George Washington, Nationalist*; **Tanya Hart**, *Health in the City: Race, Poverty, and the Negotiation of Women's Health in New York City, 1915-1930*; **Todd Wahlstrom**, *The Southern Exodus to Mexico: Migration across the Borderlands after the American Civil War*; and, fresh off the press, **David Baird**'s long-awaited *Quest for Distinction: Pepperdine University in the 20th Century*. From the English program are **Jacqueline Dillion**, *Thomas Hardy: Folklore and Resistance*; and *The Selected Letters of Hannah Whitman Heyde*, a digital work edited and introduced by **Prof. Mullins** and freely accessible to the public. From the Creative Writing program is **Prof. Schultz**'s collection of poetry *What Ridiculous Things We Could Ask of Each Other*. HUTE faculty has also published over twenty research articles on education, film studies, history, and literature in the last two years.

OTHERS. Beyond the confines of Seaver College, **Lisa Smith** is serving as President of the Conejo Valley League of Boys Team Charity, a national philanthropy organization. She works with almost 200 boys and their families that engage in local philanthropic work. Also in the Thousand Oaks area, **Prof. Birmingham** teaches English to adult beginners as part of Conejo Valley Unified School District outreach to parents. Over the summer, **Prof. Hart** participated in a month-long mission trip to the Bible English Study and Training Center in Cambodia. They are only three examples of civic and volunteer participation among the faculty in their local communities.