

THE INTERLOCUTOR

Newsletter of the Humanities and Teacher Education (HUTE) Division
Seaver College, Pepperdine University
Fall 2020



PIVOT

Dr. Stella Erbes

Divisional Dean of Humanities and Teacher Education

Pivot. It's my word for 2020. COVID-19 has made us all pivot. Our normal routines have been abruptly interrupted, and we have had to reimagine and transform how we used to do things like teach class, attend conferences, gather socially, eat out, and go shopping. We have become students in the world's Covid classroom, learning how to not only survive but thrive in a difficult time.

I have been sincerely impressed by how quickly and competently our entire academic community pivoted in response to this global pandemic. In less than a week, our classes transitioned successfully to remote instruction. And though there have been many challenges and we continue to learn new lessons daily about online pedagogy, it is happening. We have done it. We have pivoted.

As I look to Scripture for wisdom during this unprecedented time, I am reminded of how legacies are established when people step up under challenging circumstances: Queen Esther modeled great courage in the face of opposition and Nehemiah pressed on to complete God's work even though he was criticized. In our nation's history, we remember outstanding figures whose examples of strength and leadership have left unforgettable legacies: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the late Congressman John Lewis, and Rosa Parks - civil rights leaders who didn't surrender to their unfortunate conditions and pivoted to advance the nation through their peaceful yet powerful acts.

Though the 2020-2021 school year has posed many challenges, we, too, can pivot. We can use these moments to reimagine the teaching and learning process. Students, faculty, administration, and staff - we have the ability to be bigger than this moment. We have the ability to leave our legacy right here, right now.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." ~ 2 Timothy 4:7

NEW HUTE FACULTY

The HUTE Division welcomed three new full-time faculty members this fall. Learn more about Professor Brannan, Dr. Gilhuis, and Dr. Gould in their interviews below.

PROFESSOR BEAU BRANNAN

Visiting Professor of Humanities



1. What brought you to Pepperdine?

An opportunity opened up to teach Humanities in this most unusual time, and with the support and encouragement of Stella Erbes, I threw my hat into the ring and the rest is two-month-old history!

2. So far, what has surprised you about Pepperdine students?

Even in the midst of a frustrating delivery model, students seem engaged, appreciative, and resilient.

3. What are some long-term goals or things you'd like to accomplish at Pepperdine?

Right now, I am still learning to ride the proverbial bike, but I have always been a proponent of teaching entrepreneurship because of the translatable skills it develops. I also believe it plays really well with Humanities. Some of the more thoughtful and influential entrepreneurs and thought leaders borrow from the world of Humanities to communicate and lead. In short, I would love to see and help develop an entrepreneurship class or even a minor so students can have a more robust experience at Pepperdine.

4. Aside from teaching/research, what are some of your hobbies, interests, and passions?

I enjoy startups and personal finance, whether learning more about those worlds or trying my hand at them. That seems to occupy a good amount of my time.

NEW HUTE FACULTY

DR. NICOLE GILHUIS

Assistant Professor of History



1. What brought you to Pepperdine?

The combination of faith and academics really drew me to Pepperdine. I see Pepperdine's program as one that values the whole person in its students and I wanted to contribute to the intellectual and spiritual growth of the students I teach.

2. So far, what has surprised you about Pepperdine students?

Teaching online is not what I pictured when I started at Pepperdine so I worried students would be less engaged, but my experience has been the opposite. Students are engaged and active participants in their learning. Pepperdine students are bright, funny, and compassionate, which has made teaching them an honest joy. Even though we are online I am getting a taste of their personalities through the Zoom classes and its chat dialogues, as well as office hours.

3. What are some long-term goals or things you'd like to accomplish at Pepperdine?

I have a desire to try some different classes at Pepperdine, such as history through food and historical role-playing. I also love bringing my own research into the class and letting them explore. My longer-term goals would be to build up the African and Native American history offerings and engage students to produce some dynamic class projects like digital historic maps as well as multi-disciplinary projects. I also would love to work on ways to bridge our history classes with local histories and historic spaces. My research looks at colonial ghosts, meaning communities, and historic characters who reside outside the traditional colony and I plan to continue to explore that historical category in 17th- and 18th-century Louisiana through the lives of Native American, Black, and white women.

4. Aside from teaching/research, what are some of your hobbies, interests, and passions?

I love to cook and make new food. I ferment kombucha and sauerkraut and make sourdough bread so there is always something on my kitchen counter being made. I am also a hiker and love to play at the beach with my two sons and husband. My personal favorite pastime is exploring a good book study of one of the books of the Bible, especially the Old Testament prophets!

NEW HUTE FACULTY

DR. RACHEL GOULD

Seaver Faculty Fellow



1. What brought you to Pepperdine?

I came to Pepperdine because I wanted to be at an institution that values research but which also values its students and encourages professors to be individuals who recognize the divine beauty in both excelling at work and at loving people.

2. So far, what has surprised you about Pepperdine students?

They are incredibly honest. At my previous institution, I had students attempt to obfuscate, but my students here willingly admit when they don't know something or when they have messed up, and it's a joy to work with this sort of humility.

3. What are some long-term goals or things you'd like to accomplish at Pepperdine?

On an academic level, I hope to encourage a broader shift in the literary canon that includes more of the Ottoman-British encounter. I did not read any of these texts in undergrad and I am now convinced these texts are critical to our understanding of both the development of fiction and of our ideas about secularism. On a spiritual level, I hope to practice grace and compassion with myself and my students. While this might be a daily practice, I think long term it will help the students come to know the Father better, and that is my ultimate wish.

4. Aside from teaching/research, what are some of your hobbies, interests, and passions?

I grew up ice skating and I love every opportunity I have to get back on a rink. But on a more regular basis, I enjoy hiking and oil painting. I also love engaging others in conversations about the Lord, so I am frequently leading a small group or teaching a Bible class.

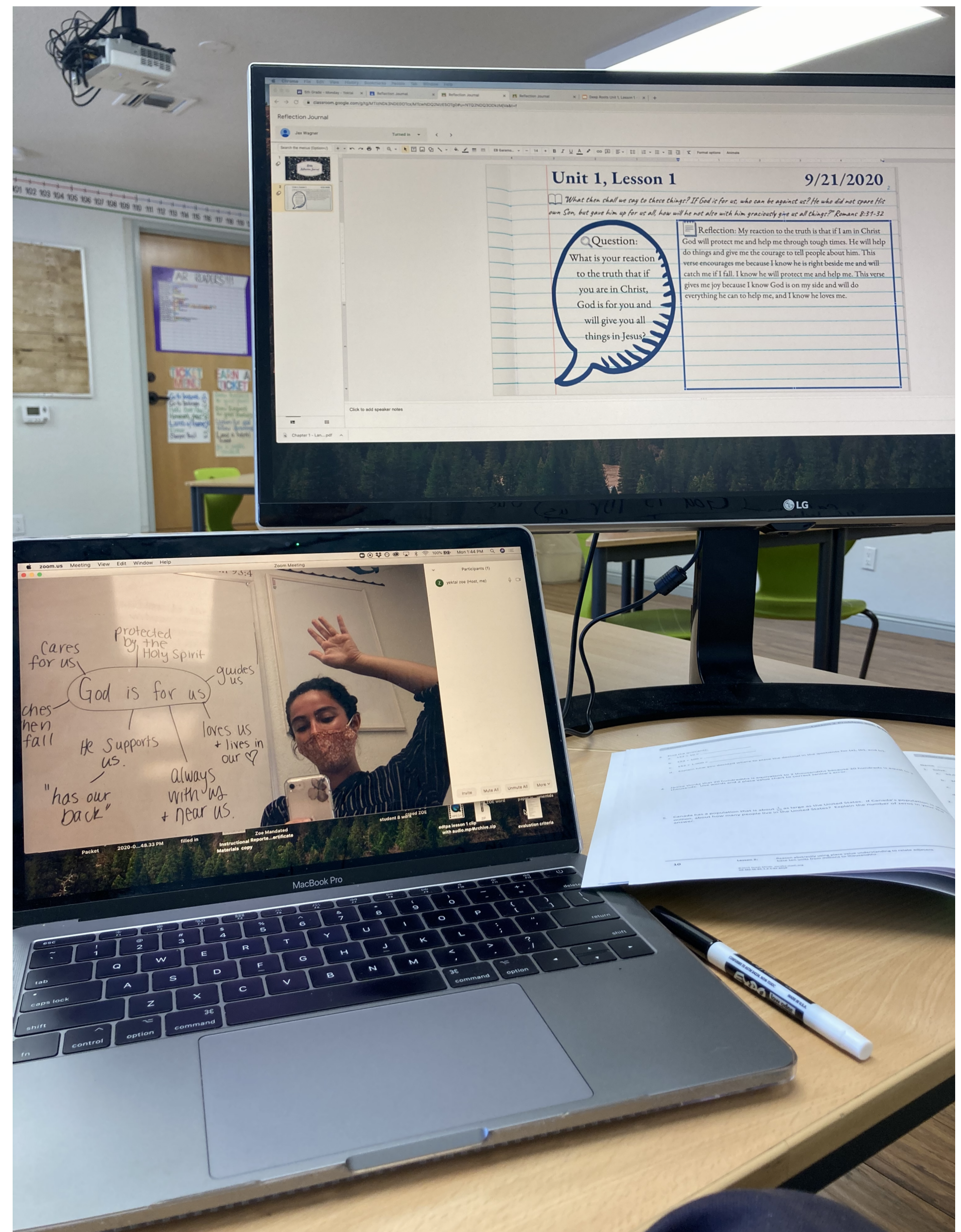
ALUMNI TEACH ONLINE

It's hard enough being a first-year teacher, but imagine becoming a first-year teacher during a global pandemic! Four Seaver Teacher Education graduates share insights from their first weeks as classroom teachers during distance learning.

Zoe Yektai ('19)

Calvary Christian School, Grade 5

I am teaching from the classroom at Calvary Christian School, while my 5th-grade students all learn from home. This format of schooling has been uncharted territory for all: the veteran teacher and the first-year teacher alike. Experienced teachers have made off-handed comments: "I feel like I'm a first-year teacher all over again...I'm more lost now than I ever was then!" I bow my head and smile; I'm not sure how THIS ended up being my first year. But it did. I'm navigating uncharted territory with no colleague to grab my hand and show me the way - no one seems to know the way. So, I've clung to the values that got me here and I've let them lead me. Love leads me. Kindness leads me. Understanding and grace lead me. "Is this response loving? Is this method of teaching understanding? Am I extending the buckets of grace this school year requires"? If there is one thing this unique year has taught me about being a teacher it's this: however familiar the circumstances, it's best to let your values lead the way. They seem to know where to go, and, at the end of the day, if love's not leading, I'm not going.



Hannah Coughlin ('20).

Our Lady of Malibu, Grade 1

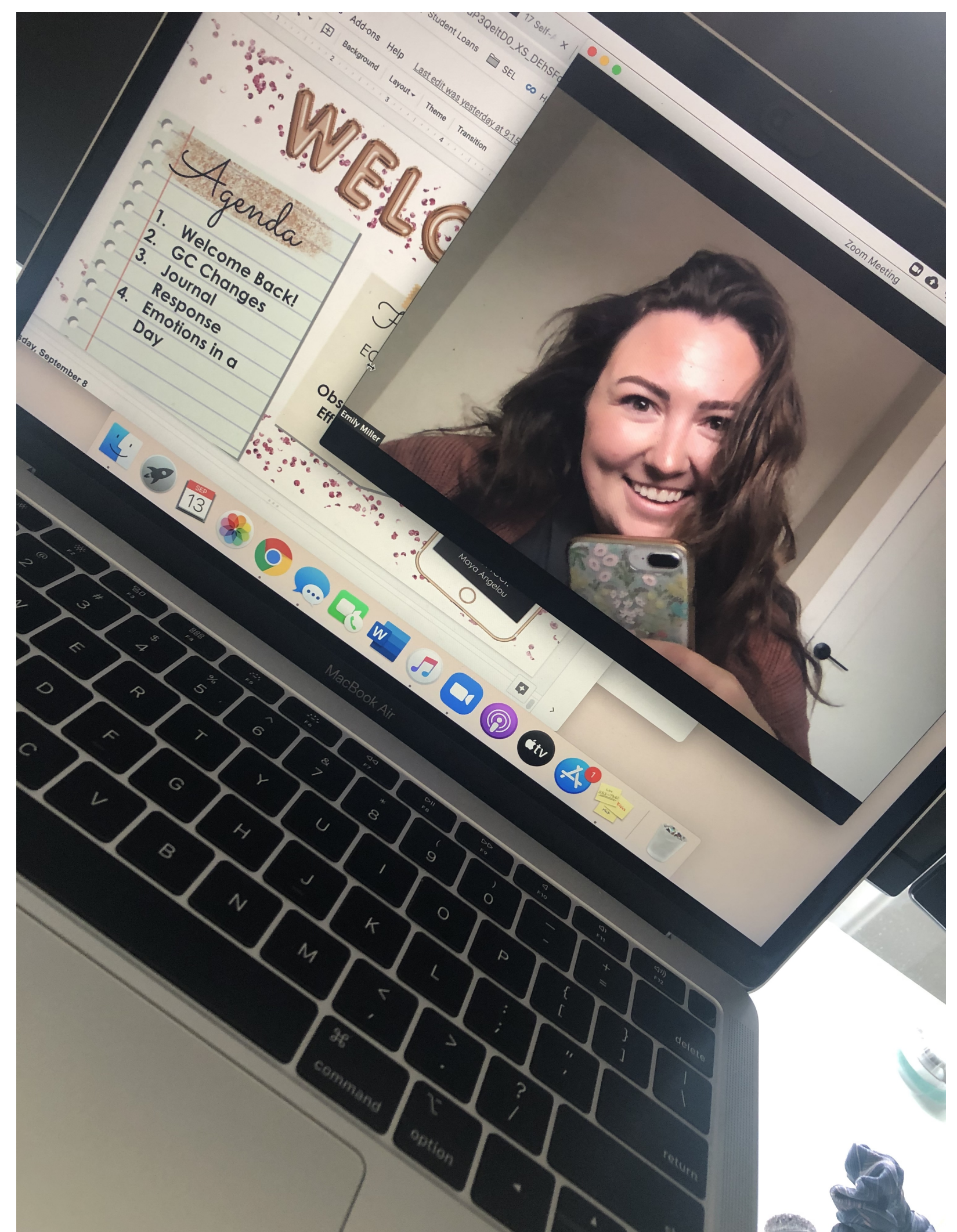
Our Lady of Malibu school has taken a unique approach to schooling during this pandemic by hosting an Academic Day Camp in which students work with their grade levels on campus under the supervision of counselors, while teachers stream live lessons to their classrooms. As a first-grade teacher, I am working to find the balance between my young students' academic, emotional, and social needs as our country encounters these unprecedented times together. To have to step back and not be one-on-one, hands on with my students has been a challenge as a very animated and enthusiastic educator. However, despite the day-to-day hiccups and frustrations navigating an online teaching platform, I have uncovered the true beauty of children's resilience and natural curiosity. Now more than ever, I recognize the unique and God-given calling of an educator.

ALUMNI TEACH ONLINE

Emily Miller

Canyon High School, Grades 9-12

This year I am teaching Social Emotional Learning (remotely) at the same high school that I attended just a few years ago! It has been a dream come true, but also one of the biggest challenges I have ever faced. Not only am I a first-year teacher, I am also teaching a subject at a school that has never been done before! Every day I face new struggles, but I have learned through this process to celebrate even the smallest of wins. Though there are many defeating moments when I miss effortless social interaction, I am encouraged by the resiliency of my students to continue showing up for their education even when many cards are stacked against them.



Holly Reynolds ('20)

Oaks Christian School, Grade 5

Starting my first year as a teacher by teaching remotely was definitely not how I had imagined it to be. However, I have felt well supported and prepared as I have begun my first year teaching fifth grade at Oaks Christian. Although we are remote for now, we are still able to hold on-campus "day camps" a few times a month for the students, which has been instrumental in building student and teacher relationships. So far I have learned that despite our remote environment we can still create a classroom community by sharing our experiences with vulnerability, making time for discussing those "big life" questions, and supporting one another in prayer and friendship. This will be a year that we never forget and yet I am so grateful to walk alongside my students as we navigate this year as a united group.



FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. John Struloeff Named Malibu Poet Laureate

The HUTE Division congratulates Dr. Struloeff on this accomplishment. In this short interview, Dr. Struloeff shares about his new role as Malibu Poet Laureate.

1. What does it mean to be the Malibu Poet Laureate? What do your responsibilities include?

In general terms, to be a poet laureate is to be an ambassador for poetry in the community. In this case, with the City of Malibu, I'll be hosting a series of poetry events, including featured poetry readings, open mics, and community poetry writing workshops. We're also working to develop some additional opportunities.

2. How were you selected for this role?

To be chosen for this position, the Malibu Poet Laureate Committee reviews a number of potential candidates and decides on a nominee. This decision is then forwarded to the Malibu Arts Commission for review, and if it decides to move forward with the nominee, the decision is forwarded to the Malibu City Council, which makes the final decision. The three main factors they are concerned with are 1) the strength of the poet's published work, 2) the degree of prior engagement with the Malibu poetry and arts community, and 3) the potential for the candidate to be an ambassador for poetry in the community.

3. What are you most excited about or most looking forward to about being the Malibu Poet Laureate?

I am most excited about the series of upcoming events I'll be hosting. The sharing of poetry and art is such an important part of a community's well being, and this is especially true right now as many are dealing with a sense of isolation during this pandemic.

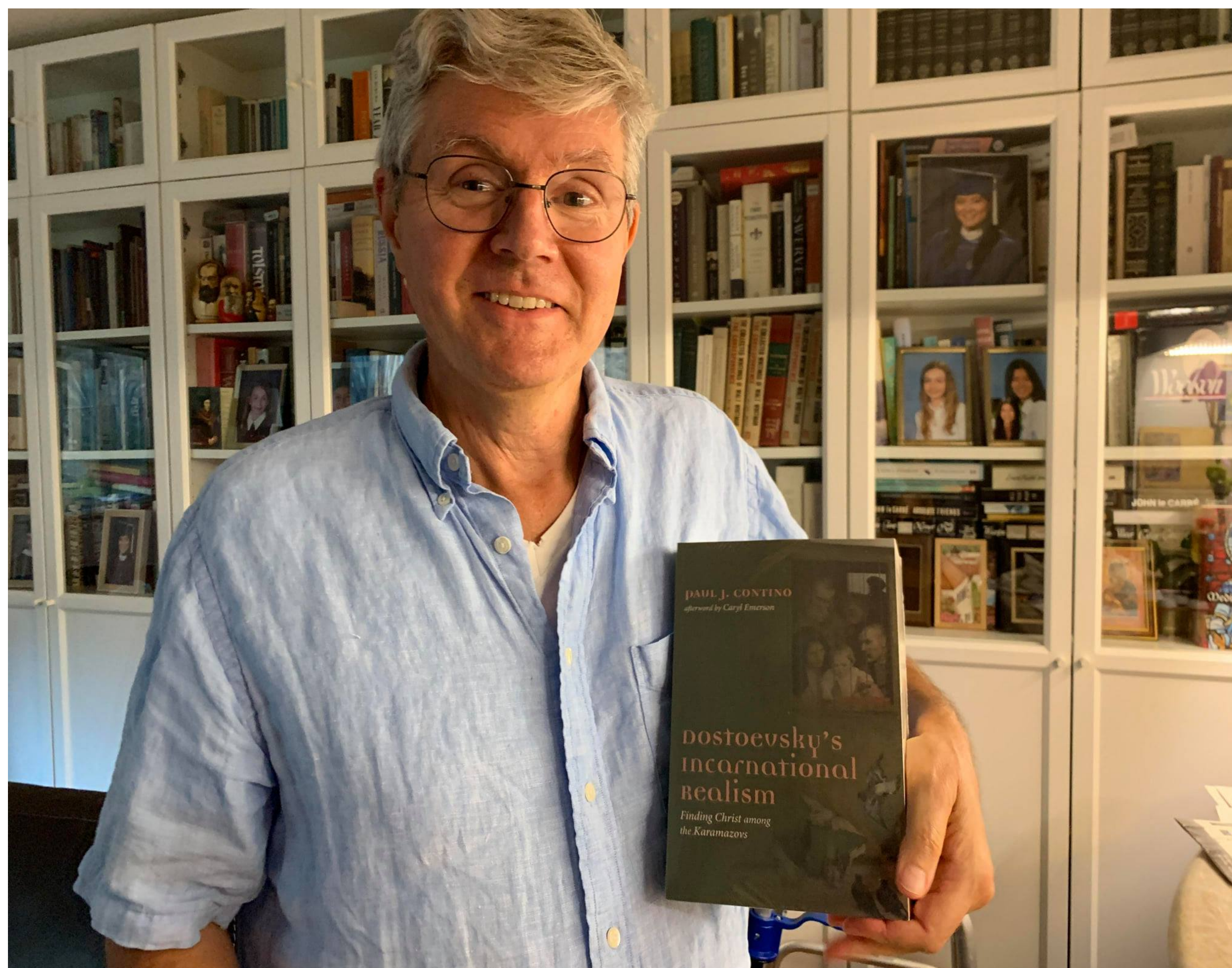


Click on the images below to read the press releases about Dr. Struloeff's new role.

TheMalibuTimes
NEWSPAPER • MAGAZINE • ONLINE

Seaver College Newsroom

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



Dr. Paul Contino Publishes New Book

Congratulations to Dr. Paul Contino on the publication of his new book titled *Dostoevsky's Incarnational Realism: Finding Christ among the Karamazovs*.

Dr. Contino is pictured at left holding a copy of his book shortly after it arrived from the publisher.

Click on the images below to read the press release from the Seaver Newsroom and to order your copy today from the publisher's website.

Seaver College Newsroom

WIPF and STOCK PUBLISHERS

Dr. Tuan Hoang Wins Essay Contest

The HUTE Division congratulates Dr. Tuan Hoang on winning a prestigious essay contest. Fordham's Curran Center for Catholic Studies selected Dr. Hoang as the winner of its inaugural New Scholars essay contest. His paper was titled *Ultramontaniam, Nationalism, and the Fall of Saigon: Historicizing the Vietnamese American Catholic Experience*.

Dr. Hoang shared: "The call for submissions was out since last September but I didn't learn about it until January, when I saw a post on social media--Facebook to be precise. Seeing that a qualification was that the PhD must have been earned by 2013 or later, I thought to myself, 'Well, this is the only time that I can apply for this prize because I received my doctorate in 2013,' or two months before I began teaching at Pepperdine. True, I believed that I had a strong submission. But I think, 'this is my last chance' also provided an incentive to apply for it."

Click on the images below to learn more about Dr. Hoang's awards on the Seaver College Newsroom and the Fordham News.

Seaver College Newsroom

Fordham News



One morning in early August, Tuan Hoang took to an empty beach and prepped for the first weeks of his Great Books classes.

FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

The HUTE Division congratulates the following faculty members on their recent scholarship.



Books:

Paul J. Contino: *Dostoevsky's Incarnational Realism: Finding Christ among the Karamazovs*. Cascade Press/Wipf and Stock Publishers

Philip Freeman: *How to Think About God*, Princeton University Press

Ed Larson: *Franklin & Washington: The Founding Partnership*, Harper Collins

Book Chapters, Journal Articles, and Poems

Paul J. Contino: "Teaching the Theological Dimension of Dante's Divine Comedy." *Approaches to Teaching Dante's Comedy*. Eds. Christopher Kleinhenz and Kristina Olson. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2020.

Katie Frye: "A 'silver bullet ready to drop into her brain': The Crisis of White Motherhood in Flannery O'Connor's 'Greenleaf,' 'The Enduring Chill,' and 'Everything That Rises Must Converge.'" *Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 70/72, no. 2, Spring 2017/18, pp. 147-162.

Tuan Hoang: "Political, Military, and Cultural Memoirs in Vietnamese on the Republic of Vietnam," in Tuong Vu and Sean Fear, eds., *The Republic of Vietnam, 1955–1975: Vietnamese Perspectives on Nation-Building* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), 179-188.

Julie Smith: "The Devil and Miss Corelli: Re-Gendering the Diabolical and the Redemptive in *The Sorrows of Satan*." *Reinventing Marie Corelli for the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Brenda Ayres and Sarah Maier, Anthem Press, 2019. 101-118.

John Struloeff: Poems: *Clackamas Literary Review*, "Interning" (poem), Summer 2020; *Dash Literary Journal*, "First Lesson" (poem), Summer 2020; *Dash Literary Journal*, "Sea Turtle" (poem), Summer 2020; *Qu Literary Magazine*, "Grief" (poem), Summer 2020; *Plainsongs*, "The Forgotten War" (poem), Summer 2020; *The Green Light*, "Letter to FDR (1939)" (poem), June 2020; *Robert Frost Foundation*, "Home" (poem), March 2020.

Carrie Wall: Relationship over reproach: Fostering resilience by embracing a trauma-informed approach to elementary education. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 2020.

Carrie Wall: Social-emotional learning and relationship building: Fostering resilience by embracing a trauma-informed approach to education. *CCNews*, 30(4), 29-32, 2019.

Elizabeth Yomantas: Social justice experiential education in rural Fiji. In C. Clausen & S. Logan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on integrating social justice education in teacher preparation programs* (pp. 125-143). IGI Global, 2020.

Elizabeth Yomantas: Decolonizing knowledge and fostering critical allyship. In L. Parson and C. Ozaki (Eds.), *Teaching and learning for social justice and equity in higher education* (pp. 303-328). Springer, 2020.



FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

Presentations



Carrie Birmingham: "Becoming a Teacher in Challenging Times," Lives of Teachers SIG at the California Council on Teacher Education.

Paul J. Contino: "Dante and the Pilgrim's Journey." Invited Lecture. Lake Forest College; "The Gospel of Luke and Incarnational Realism in The Brothers Karamazov"; "Grace, Freedom, and Suffering in Dante's Comedy." Catholic Imagination Conference; Interview of Tobias Wolff. Catholic Imagination Conference.

Michael Ditmore: "Planned Expiration, Amendment, Judicial Review, and ... Redaction?: Textual Considerations of the United States Constitution's Printedness (and Not)" Global Conference on Constitution-Making and Constitutional Change.



Stella Erbes: "Dialogical Encounter: Curating High-Impact Teaching Strategies of First-Year Seminars." Facilitated Dialogue at the 39th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience.

Philip Freeman: "The Life of St. Brigid by Cogitosus," Harvard Celtic Colloquium, Harvard University.

Katie Frye: "Pulp Fiction: Reading Magazine Culture in Eudora Welty," American Literature Association Conference; "Reading Partus Sequitur Ventrem in Selected Short Fiction by Flannery O'Connor," Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association Conference; "Milking Parlors and White Supremacy in Selected Short Fiction by Flannery O'Connor," American Literature Association Symposium.



Tuan Hoang: "Vietnamese Marianism in the Twentieth Century," UC Berkeley-UCLA Southeast Asian Studies Conference; "Pray the Rosary and Do Apostolic Work: the Catholic Associational Culture in the Republic of Vietnam," at the workshop "Studying Republican Vietnam: Issues, Challenges, and Prospects."

Julie Smith: "Pointing the Way and Going Rogue: Hands and Feet in Bleak House" Dickens Day 2019: Dickens & Bodies.

Carrie Wall: "Social-Emotional Learning and Relationship-Building: Fostering Resilience by Embracing a Trauma-Informed Approach to Education," California Council on Teacher Education.

Elizabeth Yomantas: "Opening New Possibilities for Social Change through Creative Vignette Writing," Artful Inquiry Research Group Conference; "Opening Possibilities through Arts Based Engagement," Curriculum and Pedagogy Group Conference.



Drs. Birmingham and Wall presented in person at the California Council on Teacher Education in San Diego, CA before the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE SMITH EPIDEMIC

The Smith Epidemic Consumes the English Department

By: Madeleine Parent ('20)

After accidentally stumbling into Dr. Julie Smith's Victorian Literature class instead of Dr. Jennifer Smith's Shakespeare class, freshman Louisa Louis reported feeling "lost, confused, and shook." This is not the first time this kind of disturbing mistake has taken place, and it will not be the last time.

The English department currently houses three (yes, three!) Dr. Smiths, not to mention the fourth Dr. Smith over in the Journalism department. Julie, Jennifer, Lisa, and Elizabeth are slowly taking over the Humanities division, far outnumbering faculty with other last names.

According to Newsweek, 0.8% of the total American population in 2010 had the last name "Smith." Proportionately, it would make sense for one "Smith"--maybe two--among the Humanities faculty, not four. This discrepancy has led many students to wonder what nefarious deals are being made behind closed doors in Pepperdine's Human Resources department.

Furthermore, what is the end goal of the Smith Agenda? First, they make up the majority of the English department. Then, they take over the entire Humanities division. Eventually the entire Pepperdine administration will be ruled by the Smiths. From there, good luck to anyone trying to get a teaching job at Pepperdine or become a student without the last name "Smith." Sure, there will be the occasional adjunct with a last name like "Adams" or "Byzowski," but it is likely that the Smith reign will be fully cemented by the year 2030.

With blatant and rampant "Smith" favoritism like this, it is no wonder Lori Laughlin had to pay to get her "Laughlin" daughter into college. Soon, all of us "non-Smiths" will all be in the same boat. From one "non-Smith" to another, it is a miracle the Smiths haven't overtaken this school newspaper yet. I suppose it is only a matter of time.



Dr. Jennifer Smith



Dr. Julie Smith



Dr. Lisa Smith

HUTE HAPPENINGS

Distance learning does not deter the HUTE Division! This section includes a few highlights of clubs, programs, and remote instruction stories that demonstrate how HUTE has remained a vibrant learning community - even during these challenging times in our community, nation, and world.

The Ciné Club

Seaver student and club co-president Danielle Howard ('21) shares about her involvement with the Ciné Club. She writes, "I joined the Ciné Club last year when it was called Ignite. Over the summer, we decided to turn it into a three-prong system that includes attending the film festival; scholarship and research; and the film society. We are attending film festivals virtually this year due to COVID-19. I am super excited because we will be participating with Sundance again and depending on whether we are in person or not, we will be traveling to the Santa Barbara Film Festival in the spring."



English Major Virtual Event

Faculty member Dr. Lisa Smith shared about the English major event. She explained, "The English Program co-sponsored an event in October with the Pepperdine Career Center on how to develop a network of professional contacts. Half a dozen English faculty, Marla Pontrelli and Nancy Shatzer from the Career Center, and English alumna Gerilyn Manago joined about a dozen English majors and minors via Zoom to discuss how to build a professional network. Gerilyn shared from her ten years of professional experience, encouraging students to begin early making and maintaining important connections; Marla explained the opportunities available through the Career Center for expanding professional networks; and Katie Frye and Lisa Smith offered updates on the English program and facilitated faculty-student breakout rooms to socialize and connect. Three students won virtual coffee breaks with faculty members Michael Ditmore, Maire Mullins, and Jennifer Smith. It was a fun and informative evening!"

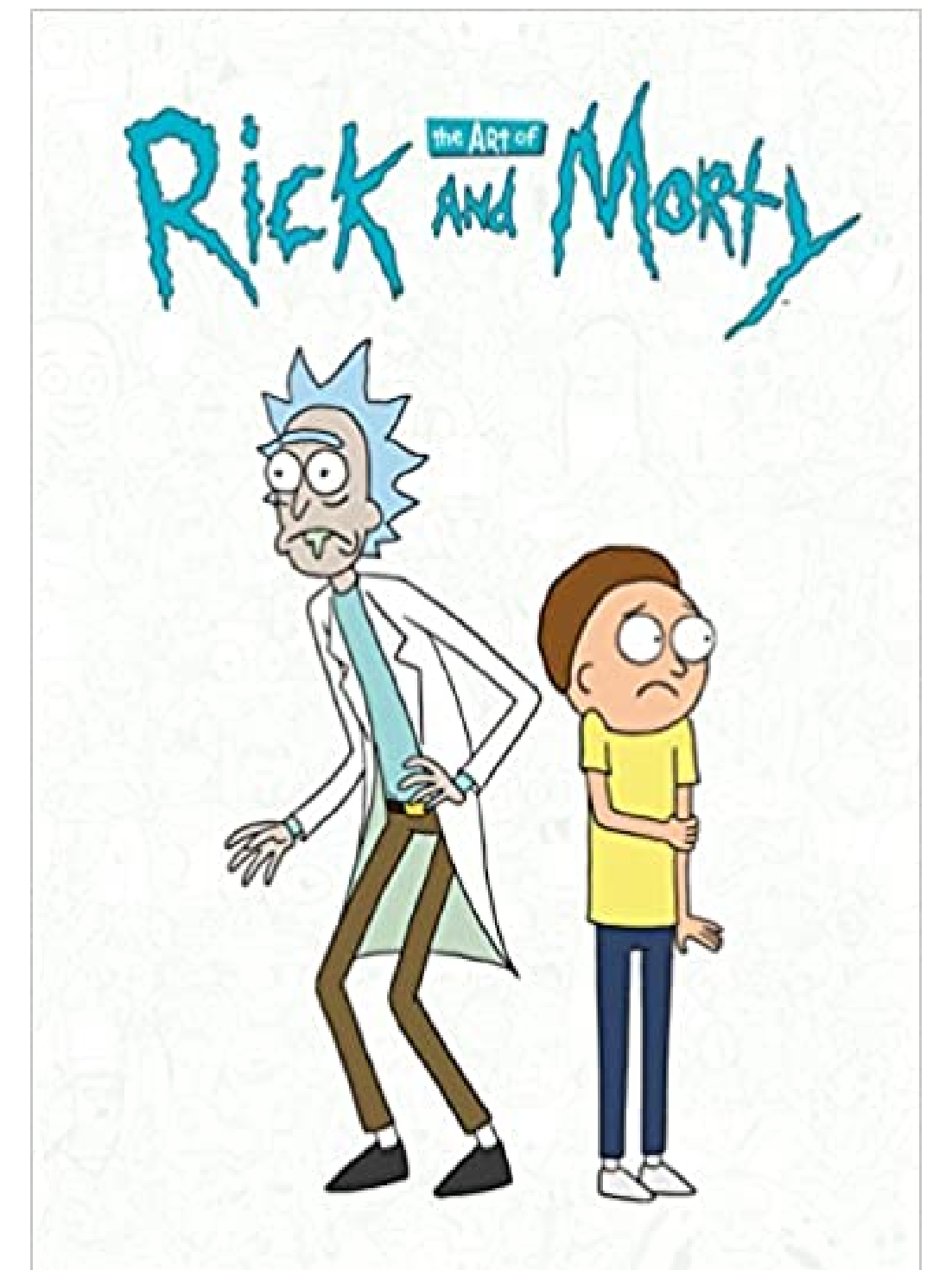


HUTE HAPPENINGS

MFA Program Event & Alumni News

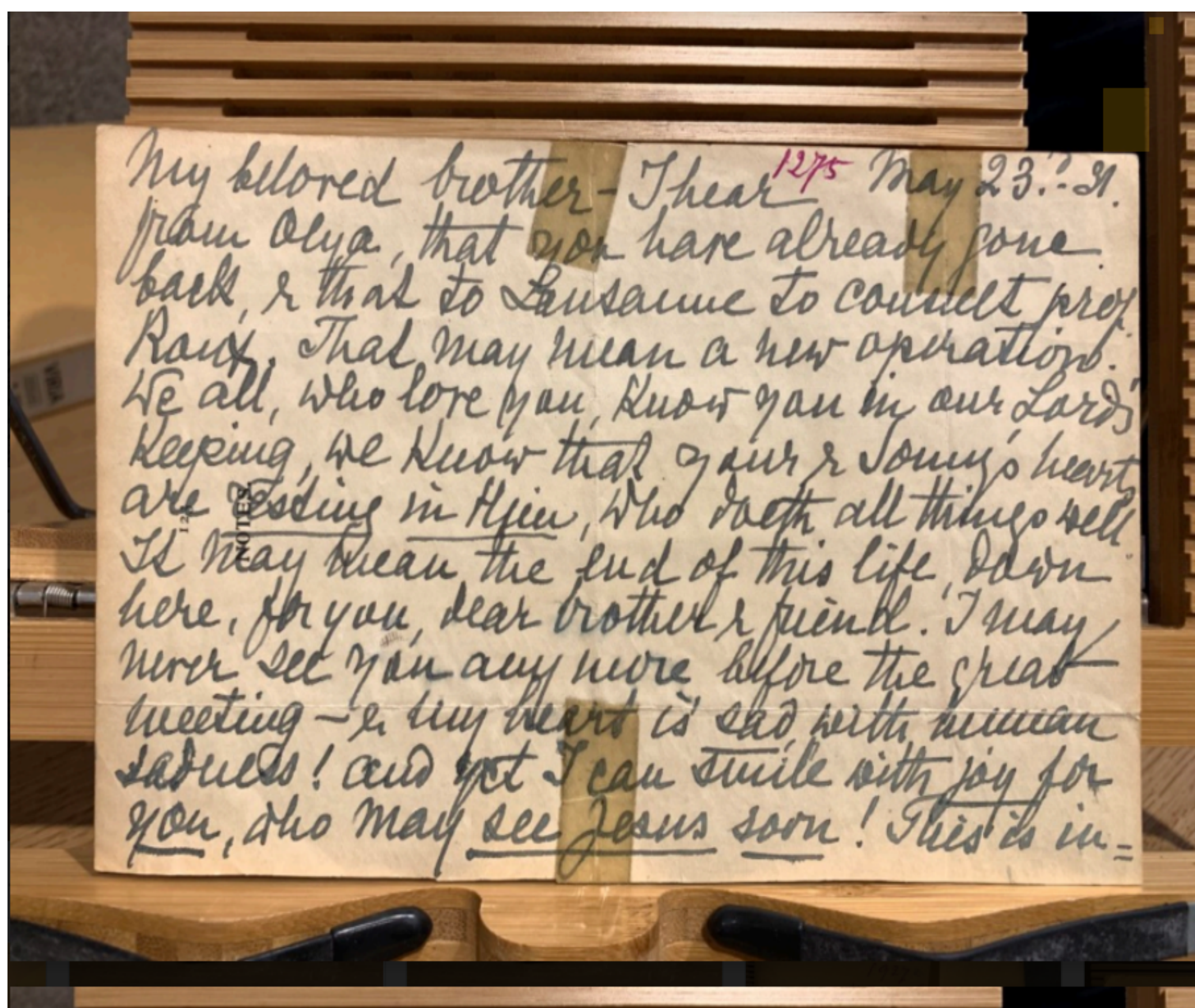
Faculty member Dr. Leslie Kreiner reported that the MFA program had a vibrant semester, including its annual panel chat with a Holly Pro. Greg Bonann, Dick Blasucci, and Chris Cluess were featured on the panel.

MFA alumnus Michael Waldron won an Emmy Award for his work on Rick and Morty. He also has a pilot, Heels, in production with Starz, and is the showrunner for Disney+ Loki series.



History SURP Project

Seaver student Lauren Whittington ('22) shared about her work over the summer with Dr. Sharyl Corrado. "This summer I worked with Dr. Corrado and Rachel Stenz to transcribe and research the letters of Jenny De Mayer, a Russian noblewoman-turned-missionary with an anything-but-ordinary life. Her letters are well preserved and come in a wild mix of English, German, French, and Russian! I learned a lot about the research process and just how beneficial teamwork is in academia. I also had a lot of fun with transcribing, and realized it's rather thrilling to figure out what that scribble on old paper means!"



HUTE HAPPENINGS

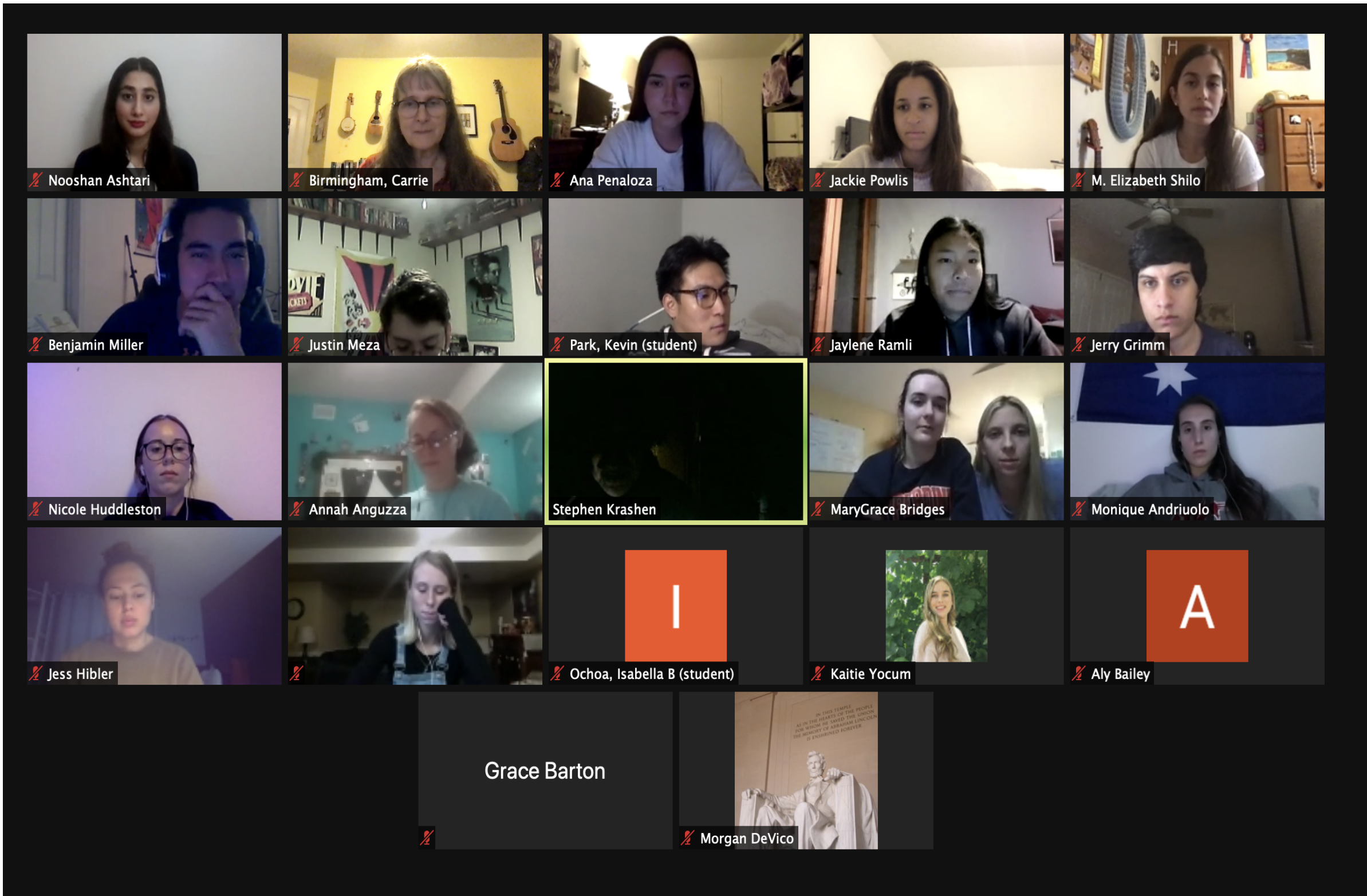
Education Course Guest Speaker

Dr. Carrie Birmingham shared a story about how her guest speaker found a way to make it to class despite a power outage in Malibu. Carrie explained: "Dr. Stephen Krashen, USC professor emeritus and internationally respected expert in English language development and literacy, spoke to my class, Teaching English Learners (EDUC 465) the evening of October 26. This was our recent Monday of Santa Ana winds.

In the afternoon, he sent me this message: *All power off all day unable to use internet even with hotspot unless all power is back soon cant speak in your class tonight.*

An hour later, he sent this: *I will speak tonite. No worries.*

He drove from his house in Point Dume to his daughter's house in Santa Monica, where he sat outside in the dark and spoke to our class. He didn't go inside because of COVID. Dr. Krashen is a role model for me in many ways of what an academic should be."



The dark square in the center is Dr. Krashen. He gave his talk by lantern in a lawn chair outside in the side yard at his daughter's house daughter's home in Santa Monica.



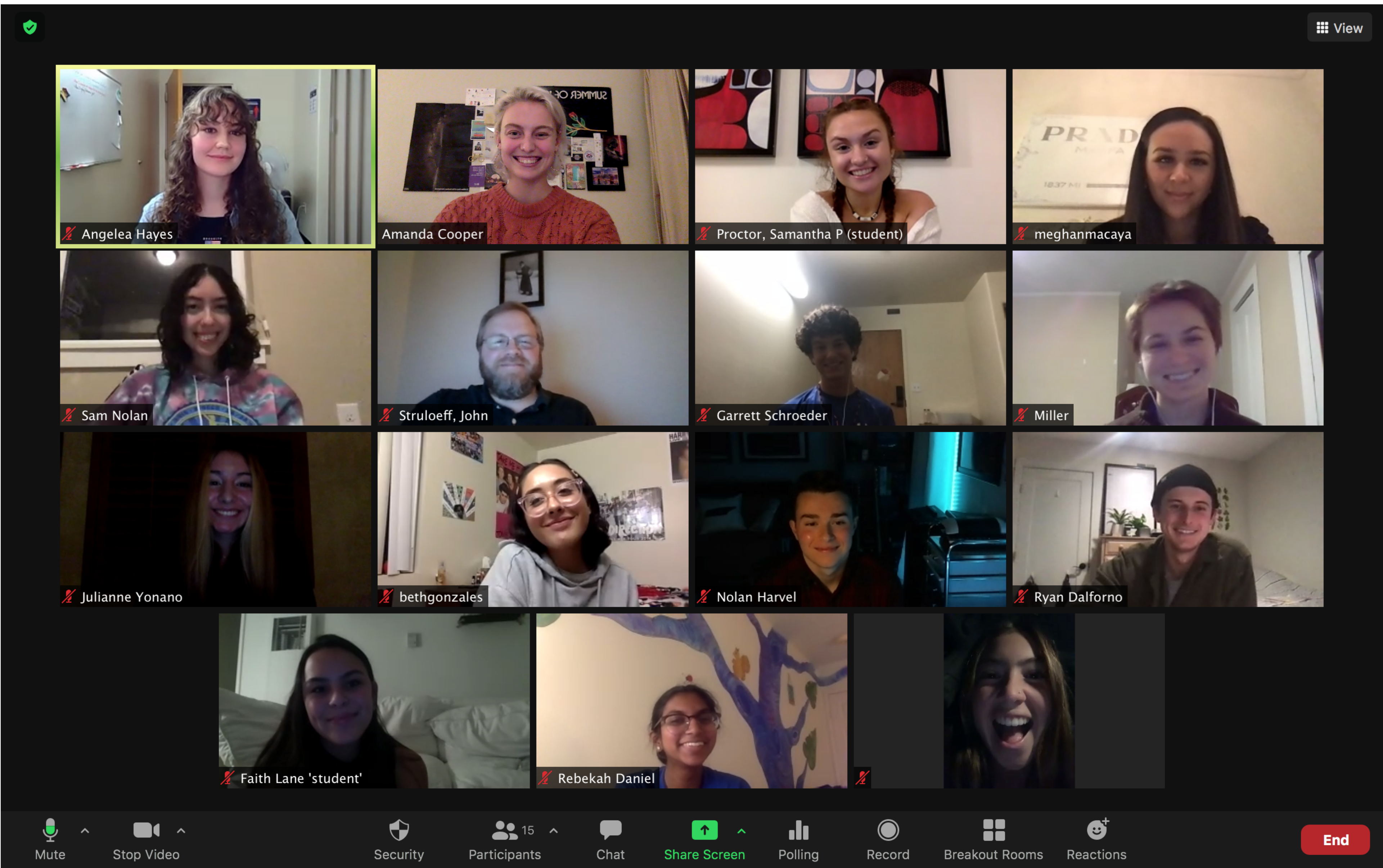
Pig Makes Debut in HIS 304

Dr. Darlene Rivas

In her HIST 204 course, Dr. Rivas often uses simulations as a part of the curriculum. She submitted this photo and explained that it came from her "Chicago: 1968 simulation," which involves students role playing as they learn about the conflicts over policies and protest measures at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The photo is of Evan Browning from my HIST 204 class this semester, playing the role of Yippie Abbie Hoffmann. He nominated Pigasus for the presidency, and because we were on Zoom, he managed to nominate a REAL pig! We usually use a stuffed one!"

HUTE HAPPENINGS

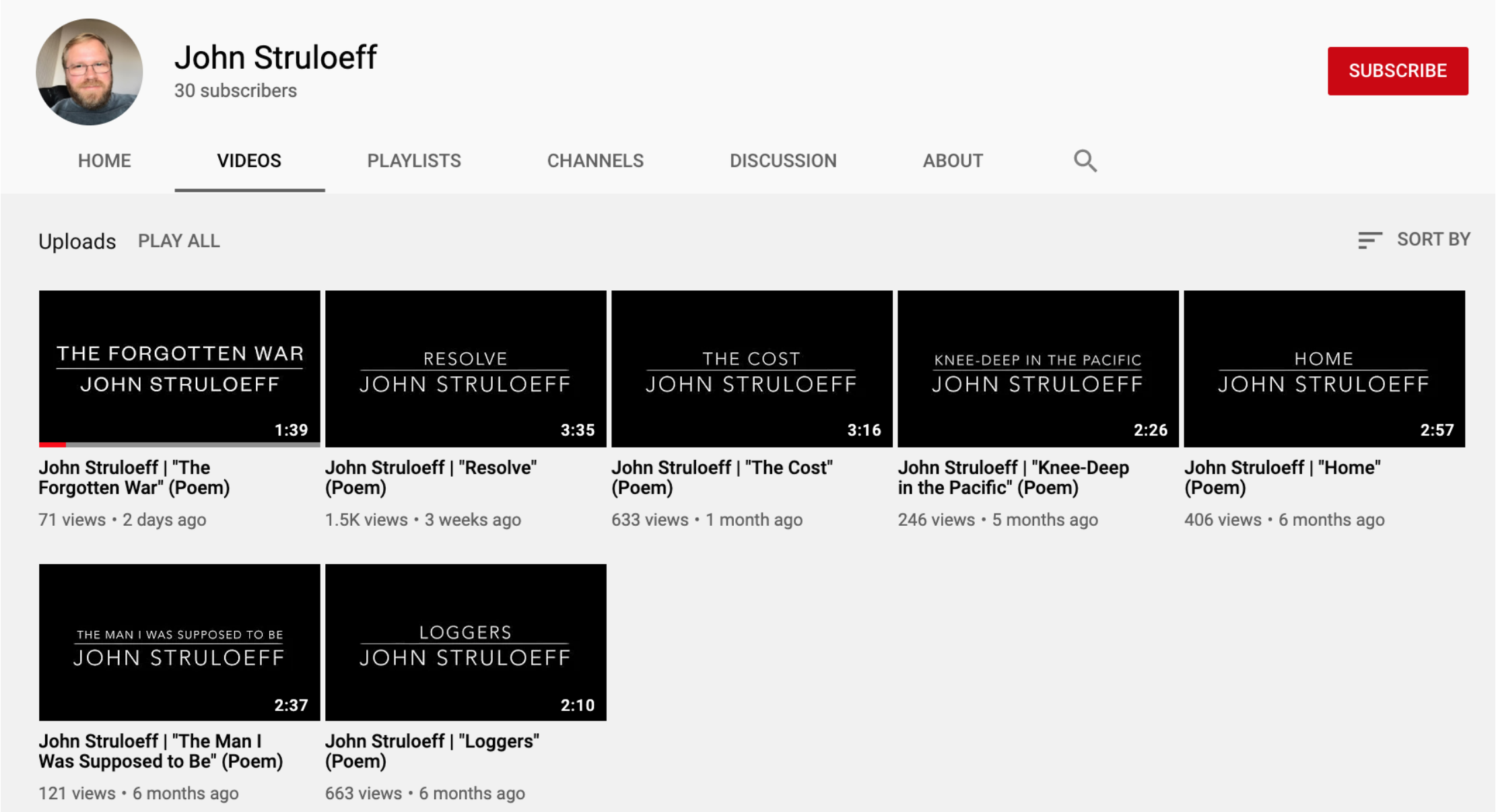
Expressionists Magazine Coffeehouse



Amanda Cooper ('21) shared, "The *Expressionists* Magazine hosted a fall coffeehouse and open mic night in early November via Zoom. During the event, students read a few classic pieces about the beauty of autumn, such as "Nothing Gold Can Stay" by Robert Frost, "Sonnet 73" by William Shakespeare, and "Theme in Yellow" by Carl Sandburg. In addition, students and professors read original poems, essays, and short stories that spanned a variety of topics and themes. The *Expressionists* staff would like to thank those who volunteered to share their work, and everyone who participated in our evening of fall fun!"

Faculty Engage in Public Scholarship

Dr. Carrie Birmingham launched a podcast titled "Harry Potter Goes to School: Learning in and out of Hogwarts." Dr. John Strueloff launched a website featuring his poetry. Click on the images below to check out their work!



ARISTOTLE IN AMERICA

Professor Julie Oni read her poem "Aristotle in America," at the fall 2020 faculty retreat.

The plot effectively instigates fear and pity:

The beginning
features gossip amidst
increasingly absent store shelves
and toilet-paper pillaging.
Conspiracy theories
clutter our feeds,
bursting with
unqualified expertise like
“You only get it if you sneeze” and
“It strictly touches the elderly.”
The rising action requires
six-foot-distanced duct tape marking
dilapidated CVS carpeting,
twenty-second-soap-sudded hand-scrubs,
and social distancing in
once-dusty, now freshly-Dialed dens.
By the middle,
we’ve accustomed ourselves to
masked martyrdom
to “flatten the curve.”
We GrubHub pepperoni pizzas and
cancel Caribbean cruises,
Zooming for birthdays and stageplays
as a new ordinary world emerges
amidst increasingly occupied store shelves
and toilet paper plentitude.

*The climax comes in the form of a nine-minute
knee-to-the-neck.*

In the end,
the falling action sees
signs with handwritten hashtags and
shouts for justice
(some masked, some not),
as a flattening curve un-flattens
and Black bodies burgeon.
Unqualified expertise includes
“He had a history” or
“All Lives Matter,” as
the festering sores of society
pillage the life’s work
of uninvolved shop-owners to
“support Black lives”
amidst pent-up pandemic cries.
Store shelves shatter
as toilet paper sloshes
beneath newly-gotten
limited-editions-of-some-sort,
a casualty of climbing loot.

**The characterization demonstrates
the once-lauded diversity of a modern culture:**

Each is his or her own protagonist,
with some accusing the rich,
others the “deviant,”
and others the immigrant,
since individualized existence
allows antagonistic audacity.
Some foiling juxtaposes
The wealthy and the poor
The big city dweller and the rural farmer
The religious zealot and the atheistic anarchist
The delusional Democrat and the ridiculous Republican
The Black and the White.
Starring roles include
The Tiger King
The entire NBA
Spring breakers
Kanye 2020
The stage-less graduates

And the unjustly executed:

**George Floyd.
Ahmaud Arbery.
Breonna Taylor.**

And all others.
And there are many others.

The themes explore:

The age gap
Social inequality
Racial injustice
Police brutality
White privilege
Xenophobia,
and American exceptionalism

The essential diction is simple yet multifaceted:

I can’t breathe.
I can’t breathe.
I can’t breathe.
**I.
CAN’T.
BREATHE.**

The melody:

Unsure of their future, a chorus of youth clings
to an old classic, Woody Guthrie's
"This Land is Your Land," singing--

"This land was made for you and me--"?
as an inquiry.

And yet, the spectacle still offers hope:

Amidst the chaos, we can collaborate to stage
a more prominent performance of humanity:
A young man helping an elderly woman with her groceries
Citizens sewing masks by the thousands
Mothers making life
Families loving like they’ve never loved before
Essential workers allowing our existence
Art
Education
Charity
Listening
Owning-up
Replacing racist signage
Condemning prejudiced performance
Uniting of citizens to stop the injustice
that engulfed an already-polarizing pandemic
and save all of our lives

*Within the spectacle of chaos, human kindness can shine and
inspire,
with A Potter’s Hand.*

A catharsis can still emerge.
Let us pray for power and guidance from above,
for such miracles are the greatest performance to behold.
Let this act’s curtain call be a force so divine
that only our Creator can design it.

THE CHILDREN OF HUTE DISTANCE LEARNING

While HUTE faculty teach remotely, their children learn remotely!



Story Elizabeth Bunn
Mar Vista Elementary

Story's mom, Dr. Heather Thomson-Bunn, offered that one challenge of learning from home is that Story wants a snack every five minutes. But a success is that she is learning how much she can do independently!



August Frye
Mount Elementary

Dr. Katie Frye shared this picture of her son August multitasking during his 8 AM Zoom while building a Minecraft set using Legos. In true student form, he had his camera and mic off so the teacher couldn't see what he was doing.



Meadow Levine
Willow Elementary School

Meadow's mother, Professor Somer Levine, shared that one challenge of distance learning has been meeting the varying social needs of her five- and two-year-old children. They learn through play at this age and it is critical to their development. One success has been that Meadow has received a Chrome book from her school district and is learning some tech skills. She has learned how to adjust the volume and unmute herself independently at just five years old.

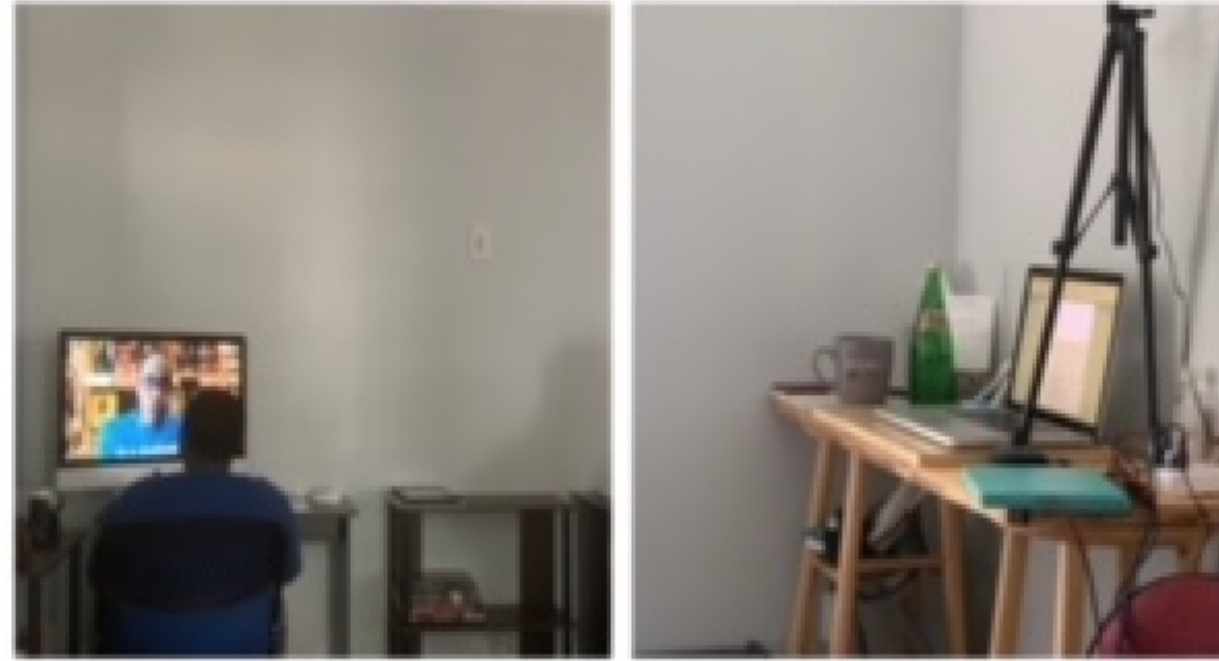
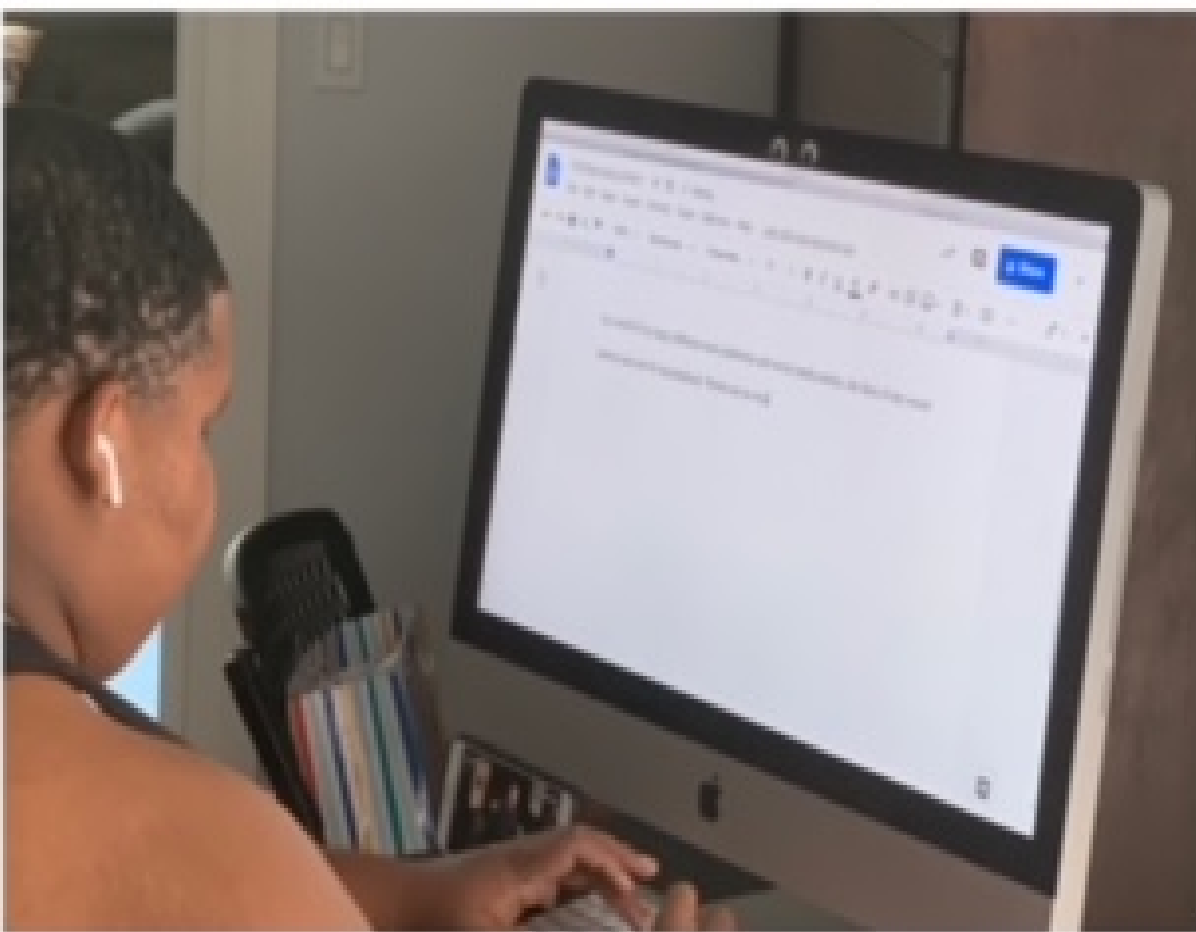
THE CHILDREN OF HUTE DISTANCE LEARNING



Micaiah Moore
Alexander Hamilton High School

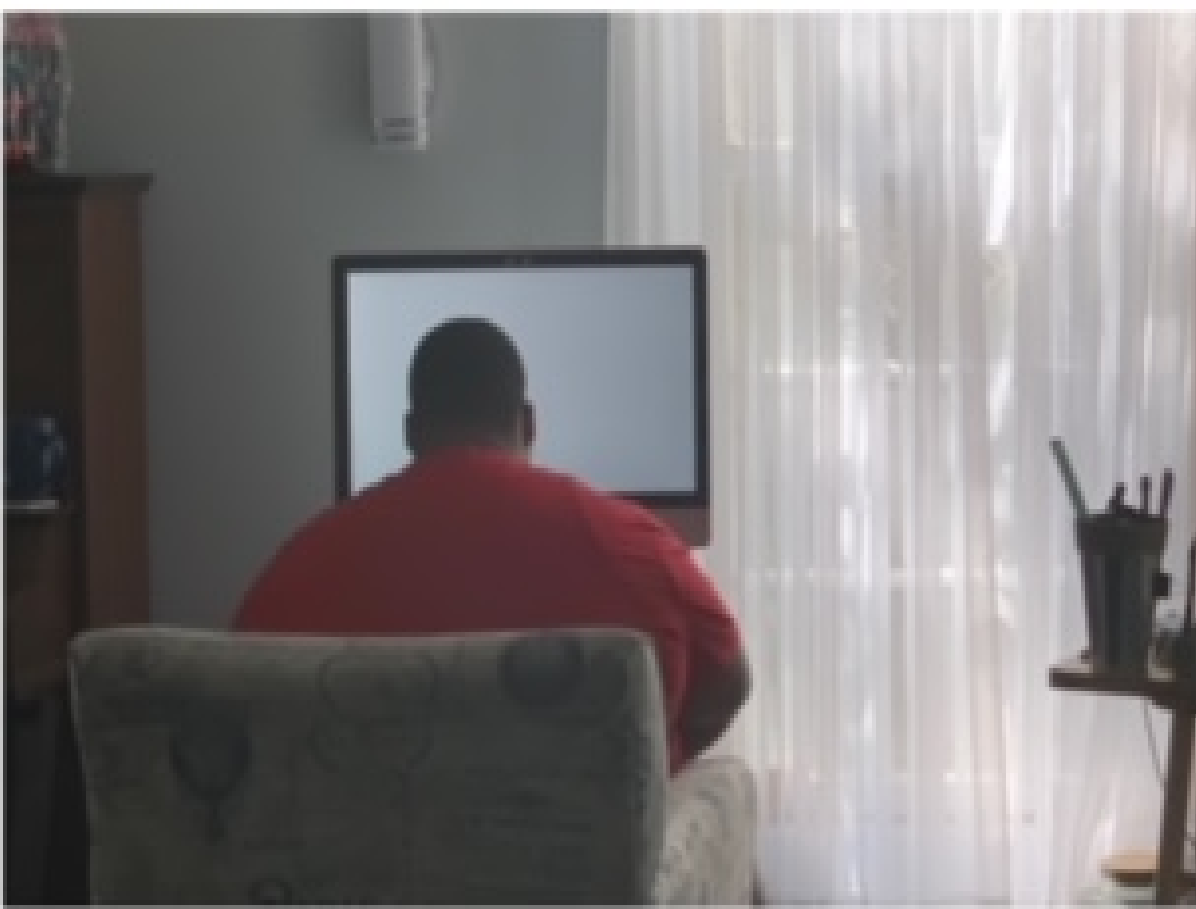
Nehemiah Moore
Paul Revere Charter Middle School

Isaiah Moore
Santa Monica College



Mrs. Genny Moore offered what distance learning has been like. "Our biggest challenge has been to keep everyone motivated to stay focused in this environment. We remind them that this is a temporary situation but their grades and habits will follow them back to their schools when they do return.

Success is marked in small ways, like all the kids being responsible for getting themselves up, fed, and ready to be in classes by themselves each day. Another success is on Tuesdays when all members of the family are online and the internet cooperates. SCORE!! The final blessing is that we are ALIVE, LIVING, LAUGHING and LOVING!"



The Moore Educational Institute of Middle/High/College Learning is an adventure in education. We are housed in beautiful South Los Angeles, CA. The Institute is managed by Tyson and Genny Moore, who are also juggling roles as the Senior Minister of the Crenshaw Church of Christ and Office Manager of the Humanities & Teacher Education Division.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Thank you to all who contributed to the fall 2020 edition of the The Interlocutor. Please send any and all stories for the spring 2021 edition to the editor, Elizabeth Yomantas (elizabeth.yomantas@pepperdine.edu).

