

BYU Humanities Center

2022-2023 Newsletter



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Statement from the Director

Rex Nielson

This year we celebrate ten years since the founding of the BYU Humanities Center, a major institutional initiative originally sponsored by Dean John Rosenberg. Under the creative and inspired direction of Matthew Wickman, the center's founding director, the Humanities Center has grown while developing a wide variety of activities that have advanced the influence of the College of Humanities. Through its ten years of evolving programs, its mission has remained consistent: to promote innovative scholarship and teaching in areas pertaining to the language, literature, thought, culture, and history of the human conversation.

One of the things that make the Humanities Center at BYU so remarkable is that less than three percent of institutions of higher education have one. The very fact that BYU sponsors the center highlights the university's deep commitment to the value of humanities education in preparing students to address some of the most pressing issues in society today. The center also highlights the leading roles BYU Humanities faculty are playing in contributing to humanities scholarship, teaching, and public service.

The BYU Humanities Center currently sponsors a broad array of creative activities that fosters scholarship, interdisciplinary connections, and student development. For example, we host a weekly research colloquium where College faculty present new scholarship and works in progress. Distinguished guests and faculty from other institutions regularly come to our campus to work with faculty and students and share new research. We also support a yearly symposium of student-driven research projects in addition to other workshops and meetings to discuss current issues facing the humanities. We're especially proud to sponsor projects like the Cambodian Oral History Project, directed by Professors Dana Bourgerie (Chinese) and Brian Croxall (Office of Digital Humanities), which represents some of the best ways that Humanities scholarship can contribute to preserving memory, connecting generations, and enriching Cambodian culture.

Additionally, we sponsor ten different research groups that bring together faculty working on different topics, including medieval and Renaissance

studies, the digital humanities, education and leadership, translation theory, and many more. And we partner with a number of other entities around campus to promote collaborative, interdisciplinary projects.

While supporting teaching and scholarship at the university, the Humanities Center also actively looks for ways to contribute to local and national (and even international) conversations. This past summer, for example, we sponsored six lectures and workshops at BYU Education Week, where hundreds of attendees were enriched in a variety of topics from finding Christ in the devotional writings of a remarkable Italian Renaissance woman writer to how a Humanities education led one of our colleagues to the gospel from Myanmar to India to Utah. We also regularly connect faculty with opportunities to speak at local public libraries, publish articles on faith, scholarship, and the liberal arts in our Humanities Center Blog, and produce our wide-reaching podcast, Faith and Imagination. These publications, along with other humanities-related resources, are free and can be accessed at our website: <https://humanitiescenter.byu.edu>.

Now ten years into its existence, the BYU Humanities Center occupies a central role in the College of Humanities; we look forward to the opportunities ahead in helping faculty and students enrich our university community and beyond.



Humanities Center Fellows



Earl Brown

Earl Kjar Brown works as a professor in the Department of Linguistics. He received a PhD in Hispanic Linguistics at the University of New Mexico in 2008, and his doctoral thesis was published in the LINCOM Studies in Romance Linguistics series in 2009. His research agenda centers on the quantification of language variation, especially in Spanish and English. In most of this research, he employs the acoustic software Praat and uses the corpus linguistics techniques of text searching, data manipulation, and statistical analysis with the programming languages R, Python and Julia. Some of his research has appeared in the journals *Language Variation and Change*, *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *Journal of Linguistic Geography*, *Journal of Research Design and Statistics in Linguistics and Communication Science*, and *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*.

Brian Jackson

Brian Jackson—who, in 1993, served NBA All-Star John Stockton an Adventure Meal at the Arby's drive thru—is Professor of English and a writing teacher. His book *Teaching Mindful Writers*, published in 2020, lays out a new pedagogy for helping writing students build metacognitive abilities, and he didn't like *La La Land* the first time he saw it. A breakdancer in the mid-80s, his work has been published in a number of venues in rhetoric and writing studies. He teaches courses in GE writing, film studies, and advanced style, and he plays Ike on Super Smash, even though he's been told by his children that playing Ike is "cheap." Though he never made his high school basketball team, he serves as coordinator of the Writing Across the Curriculum program, and he does not want you to know that he hasn't read *Jane Eyre*.



Francesca Lawson

Dr. Francesca R. Sborgi Lawson is the Marshall Professor and a Faculty Fellow at the Humanities Center and Professor in the Department of Comparative Arts and Letters at Brigham Young University. She received a B.M. degree in harp performance from Brigham Young University, an M.A. degree in ethnomusicology from the University of California at Los Angeles, and a Ph.D. degree in ethnomusicology from the University of Washington in Seattle. She conducted research on the inter-relationships of language and music in the narrative arts of Tianjin, China as a Fulbright-Hays and National Academy of Sciences Research Fellow. Author of two books, *The Narrative Arts of Tianjin: Between Music and Language* (Ashgate, 2011) and *The Women of Quyi: Liminal Voices and Androgynous Bodies*, (Routledge, 2017), she also received the Jaap Kunst award for the most significant article published in the field of ethnomusicology in 2014.



Brian Price

Brian Price is Professor of Spanish American Literature and Culture. Before joining the faculty at BYU, he completed doctoral work at the University of Texas at Austin and taught at Wake Forest University. His areas of scholarly interest include 20th and 21st-century Mexican literary, film, and cultural studies; Latin America's historical novel; comparative literature; and rock and roll. He is the author of *Cult of Defeat in Mexico's Historical Fiction: Failure, Trauma, and Loss* (2012), editor of *Asalto a la historia: reimaginando la ficción histórica hispanoamericana* (2014), and coeditor of *TransLatinJoyce: Global Transmissions in Ibero-American Literature* (2014) and *The Lost Cinema of Mexico: From Lucha Libre to Cine Familiar and Other Churros* (2022). He is currently completing two book projects on the way that rock music transformed Mexican literature and cinema. Over the last couple of years, Brian has spent a fair amount of his spare time practicing Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and is trying to figure out a way to turn this extracurricular interest into another book.

Humanities Center Fellows



Laura Catharine Smith

Laura Catharine Smith (Associate Professor, Germanic Linguistics) joined the faculty in 2004 after earning a Joint PhD in Theoretical and Germanic Linguistics at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. She previously earned a BA(Hons) and BEd (Intermediate and Secondary teaching of French and History/Social Sciences) at Queen's University at Kingston (Canada) and an MA in Historical Linguistics (Calgary). Her research spans L2 pronunciation and perception, increasing L2 proficiency, and theoretical and historical morpho-phonology, especially how syllables, feet and stress placement shape language change and acquisition. Laura serves as co-editor for the sister series, (Open) Studies in Germanic Linguistics (LSP and Benjamins respectively) and is on the Executive Board for the Society for Germanic Linguistics. She has also served as Utah chapter president for the AATG and recently served on the FAC. During downtime, Laura hangs out with her horse, Eddie Vann Halenn, and her cat, Molly, whose tail occasionally Zoom bombs meetings.

Paul Westover

Paul Westover joined the English Department in 2008 after completing a Ph.D. at Indiana University. He specializes in British Romanticism, literary geography, and the history of literary tourism. Paul is the author of *Necromanticism: Traveling to Meet the Dead, 1750–1860* (Palgrave, 2012) and co-editor, with Ann Wierda Roland, of *Transatlantic Literature and Author Love in the Nineteenth Century* (Palgrave, 2016). Over the last several years, Paul has collaborated with colleagues and students on two major electronic critical editions: William Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* (published by Romantic Circles in 2012, revised in 2020) and Dorothy Wordsworth's *Lake District* (forthcoming). Paul teaches, among other things, courses in post-1800 Anglophone literature, and currently he supervises our BYU interns at the Wordsworth Trust. An avid but increasingly flabby hiker, he hopes to bag all major summits on the Wasatch Front before his body or his willpower gives out.



Special Projects & One-Year Appointments

Ryan Christensen

Ryan Christensen is an associate professor in the philosophy department. He earned an MA and a PhD in philosophy from Stanford University. He has taught many different courses, including courses on logic, metaphysics, ancient philosophy, and the philosophy of religion. He has published papers in metaphysics and logic, and he is currently working on a book, provisionally titled *Loneliness and Love*, that explores the metaphysical distances between each of us and our world, and love as our attempt to overcome those distances.



Kristin Matthews

Kristin L. Matthews is Professor of English. She received her Ph.D. in American literature from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She teaches courses in American literature, American Studies, Africana Studies, and Global Women's Studies. She has published in *Book History*, *American Studies*, *Arizona Quarterly*, *Modern Drama*, and *Callaloo* (among other journals and book collections), and her monograph *Reading America: Citizenship, Democracy, and Cold War Literature* (2016) was published by the University of Massachusetts Press as part of their series *Studies in Print Culture and History of the Book*.

Eliza R. Snow Undergraduate Fellows

Jessica Clark

Portuguese & Communication Disorders Double Major

Jessica Clark was raised in a military family, so she grew up in several different states on the east coast including Connecticut, North Carolina, and Georgia. She also spent nine years living in Germany, giving her the opportunity to visit many European countries and experience various cultures. Her nomadic childhood has instilled in her a love for traveling and adventure. She enjoys activities that take her outside of the house like running and hiking. She also loves leaving the house metaphorically through immersing herself in the world of history and books. After serving a mission in Cape Verde, Jessica fell in love with the Portuguese language and currently tutors missionaries learning Portuguese at the Missionary Training Center. She is a senior at BYU and plans to start a master's program in Speech Pathology next year. Jessica hopes that her continuing education will provide her with opportunities to help children with language disorders, especially those who were raised in a bilingual home. Her biggest dream is to become involved with humanitarian efforts that aim to improve the quality of life of children in third world countries through supplying resources and improving their quality of education.



Shannel Morin

French Education Major

Shannel Morin graduated from BYU this April with a major in French Teaching and a minor in Dual Language Immersion. She was born and raised in Québec, Canada. She grew up skating the Rideau Canal and enjoying its finest dessert; the beavertail. She was thrilled to leave the cold winter behind for a season in order to serve a mission in slightly warmer Washington DC. Shannel enjoyed developing her teaching skills at BYU through teaching French 201 and tutoring in the French writing and speaking labs. BYU has offered Shannel many opportunities, including interning and working for two years at a start-up, language-learning company in Salt Lake where she managed a team of French speakers on the translation of movie transcripts. Her newest goal is learning Spanish as a third language, as her husband comes from Mexico. The two enjoy sharing their languages with each other and plan to speak all three in their family. Shannel's next adventure includes teaching third-grade French Immersion in West Jordan, Utah, which she is very excited for.



Kim Hansen

English Major

Kim Hansen is a senior at BYU majoring in English and minoring in both editing and international development. She grew up in Colorado and then moved to Washington state her freshman year of high school. In high school, she cultivated her love of literature and discovered her interest in global development as she worked on the youth board for the African Promise Foundation. She studied for one semester at BYU before leaving to serve a Spanish-speaking mission among the cornfields of the Midwest. Working with immigrants from all over the world as a missionary heightened Kim's interest in international development, particularly in education, women's rights, and women's health. Upon returning home, she realized these passions blended well with her literary interests, as she's always understood literature to be a great humanizer. At BYU, she's enjoyed cheering loud and proud at football games, presenting on Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* at

the 2022 English Symposium, and mentoring other writers while working as a writing consultant at the Research and Writing Center. When she isn't busy enjoying a good piece of classic literature, Kim loves to experiment with different hobbies (most recently longboarding), play piano, explore new places at home and abroad, and drink dirty soda. In the future, she hopes to teach English in Latin America, publish a novel, and further explore her literary interests at graduate school.

Kaitlin Thiriot

Spanish Translation Major

Kaitlyn Thiriot grew up in a military family and had the pleasure of living in many places, mostly on the east coast, such as North Carolina, New York, and Maryland. She is the oldest of four siblings and loves to spend time with her family. She loves to read and write, and she has been playing violin since a very young age. She also loves to travel; her skills as a violinist have allowed her to represent the United States at various international folk festivals with the group Clog America in places such as Finland, Denmark, Russia, and Turkey. She also served a mission in Quito, Ecuador, and found a strong love for the people and culture she encountered there. Upon returning to BYU, she found a mixture of two of her passions, writing and language, in Spanish translation. She is honored to have the responsibility to break down the language barrier and allow different cultures to connect through translating and interpreting. She was recently married, and is looking forward to beginning a family with her husband.



Humanities Center Intern



Isaac Richards English (MA)

Isaac James Richards served as the BYU Humanities Center Intern for the 2022-2023 academic year. Isaac is interested in all things rhetoric and writing. His peer-reviewed scholarship has appeared in *The Journal of American Culture*, *The Journal for the History of Rhetoric*, *Explorations in Media Ecology*, *The Explicator*, and *Rhetoric Review*. His creative writing, both poetry and prose, has appeared or is forthcoming in *Irreantum*, *BYU Studies Quarterly*, and *Y-Magazine*. He can be found at his website: <https://www.isaacrichards.com/>.



The Humanities Center Blog

"Revisiting the Academic Silo" by Rex Nielson

"The Spiritual Life of the Mind" by Isaac Richards

"An Intergenerational Legacy of the Humanities and Discipleship"
by Bobbe May

"Patterns" by Kaitlyn Thiriot

"A (Missed) Shoutout for Rhetoric: Memory Places in a Cal
Newport Self-Help Book," by Isaac Richards

"Musings on Methodology: Or, On Types of Inquiry" by Isaac
Richards

"Joy and Human Dignity" by Jason A. Kerr

"History and the Humanities in Portugal" by Jessica Clark

"Things: As They Seem and As They Are" by Shannel Morin

"Golden Odes and Ruby-Red Letters: Why Classical Arabic Liter-
ature Matters Today" by Kevin Blankinship

"The Art and Science of Philosophy" by Ryan Christensen

"Gratitude for Guilt, for Grace" by Kim Hansen

"On Confidence" by Paul Westover

"Of Christmas, Climate Change, and Communication" by Isaac
Richards

"On Academic Returns" by Rex Nielson

"Grasping at Totality and Defying Genre: Toward Spectral Thinking
in Humanities Scholarship" by Isaac Richards

"Unstringing the Bow" by Brian Price

"ChatGPT and the Near Future of College Writing" by Brian
Jackson

"Review of Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day
Saints" by Isaac Richards

"The Grace of Discomfort" by Kristin L. Matthews

"Connections Unseen but Deeply Felt" by Kim Hansen

"Reflections on the Humanities and Student Teaching" by Shannel
Morin

"The Existential Crisis as Ensemble: Text, Context, and the Role of
Choice in the Making of Meaning" by Isaac Richards

"Why I'm Not Too Worried About Generative-IA Making Our
Students Less Skilled" by Earl Kjar Brown

"Home, Memories, and the Humanities" by Jessica Clark

"Paintings of Rocks" by Kaitlyn Thiriot

"The Candle: Notes on Holy Envy for Holy Week" by Isaac Rich-
ards

"Building Communities of Belonging" by Laura Catherine Smith

"Humanists as Activists: Rewriting the Narratives that Lurk Be-
neath Technological Tools" by Francesca R. Sborgi Lawson

"Woven Together" by Megan
McOmber Wight

"A Together Place: An Alternative
Utopia" by Lydia Hall

"The Girl with the Golden Hair
and the Guy with the Glasses" by
Emily Tucker

"Wayfare is Stretching the Heav-
ens" by Isaac Richards



The Faith and Imagination Podcast: Season Three Episodes

"The Hunger for Home," with guest Matthew Croasmun, Yale University

"The Scandal of Holiness," with guest Jessica Hooten Wilson, Pepperdine University

"Environmental Lamentation and Hope in American Cultural History," with guest John Gatta, Sewanee: The University of the South

"The Mysticism of Ordinary Life," with guest Andrew Prevot, Boston College

"Life to the Whole Being: The Spiritual Memoir of a Literature Professor," with Matthew Wickman and George Handley, BYU

The Religious Turn of One of America's Finest Poets, Denise Levertov, with Cristina Gámez-Fernández, University of Córdoba

"Spiritual, Healing Perception in Nature," with guest Douglas Christie, Loyola Marymount University

"Christian Poetry in America since 1940," with guests Micah Mattix (Regent University) and Sally Thomas (poetry editor for The New York Sun)



"Some Favorite Books We Read in 2022," with guest George Handley, Brigham Young University

"Contemplative Realism, or, Spiritual Life in Fiction" with guest Joshua Hren," Wiseblood Books and University of St. Thomas, Houston

"Learning to Love Art through the Eyes of Faith" with Russ Ramsey," Pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashville

"The Gift, Challenge, and Vocation of Living and Teaching Spiritually," with Barbara Quinn, RSCJ, Boston College

"Experiencing Christ in Life and Poetry," with poet Sally Read

"Philosophy and Faith in the Public Sphere," with guest Jennifer Frey, University of South Carolina

"The Spirituality of ... Anger?" with guest Douglas Hardy, Nazarene Theological Seminary

"Opponents, Not Enemies; Trust, Not Agreement," with guest Leonard McMahon, Pacific School of Religion

"Theology, the Arts, and New Creation," with Daniel Train, Duke Divinity School

"Contemplative–Transformative–Reading," with Stephanie Paulsell, Harvard Divinity School

"Journeys of the Spirit: On Pilgrimage," with Zachary Davis, Faith Matters Foundation and Wayfare Magazine

"Mysticism: An Awareness of the Presence of God," with Chad Thralls, Seton Hall University







Education Week Courses

Finding Christ in the Humanities



Tahira Carroll
The Gospel from Myanmar to India to Utah



Jennifer Haraguchi
Finding Christ through Mary in Late Renaissance Italy



Mara García
La importancia de la educación para la mujer
Santo de los Últimos Días y su familia

Lifelong Learning: 5 Best



George Handley
Five Books to Inspire Better Environmental
Stewardship and a Sense of Place



James Swensen
Worth a Thousand Words: Five Photographs
That Can Change the Way We See Our World



Jarica Watts
Textual Mothers: Virginia Woolf and the Maternal
Muse

Humanities Center Guests



Mary Moschella

In October 2022, Mary Clark Moschella, Roger J. Squire Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Yale Divinity School, came to campus at the invitation of the Theology and Humanities research group. Her visit focused on narrative pastoral care, leading a workshop for faculty that modeled this practice through reflection on faculty's relationship to their roles as teachers at a religious university. Moschella met with faculty for a lunch discussion of her work on joy and care in pastoral relationships before culminating her visit with a lecture on "The Joy of Teaching: An Embodied Pedagogy for Troubled Times." Many remarked that Mary's time with us was not only valuable for their own work but also personally life-giving.



Ignacio Sanchez Prado

The Humanities Center hosted Ignacio M. Sanchez Prado, who is Jarvis Thurston and Mona Van Duyn Professor in the Humanities at Washington University in St. Louis, for a conversation regarding his article in *The Los Angeles Review of Books* titled: "Remedial Humanities." He described how the destabilization of literary canons has led students to enter the university without having read a predictable number or type of texts. While the expanding diversity of the humanities is beneficial, it necessarily requires a "remedial" approach to humanities classes; professors cannot assume that students will have read or learned anyone particular thing. Sanchez offered thoughts about multimedia assignments that can help address this deficiency.



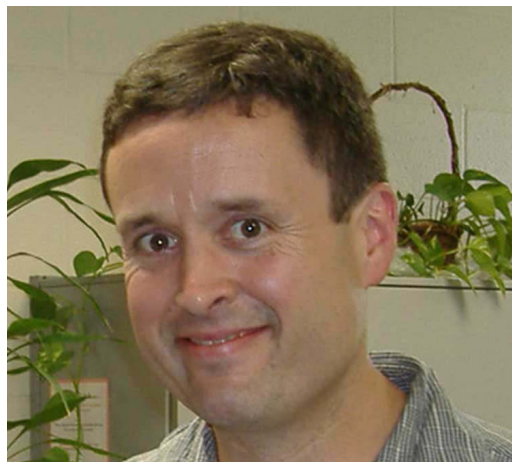
Esther Allen

Can a translation be better than the original? This was the question addressed by Esther Allen, a professor at Baruch College, in her colloquia last March. Allen is a writer and translator who has been awarded two National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowships and a Guggenheim. Her translation of *Zama*, by Antonio Di Benedetto, won the 2017 National Translation Award. For Allen, "restorative translations" are when a work draws on a particular culture but is written in a language other than that culture, but then is translated into the language that best matches the novel's content. Thus, Allen ultimately argued that some translations can be more meaningful than original works—particularly restorative translations.



Sadhana Naithani

At the end of March, the Humanities Center hosted Sadhana Naithani, professor at the Centre of German Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, India, and president of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research. In Christopher Blythe's "Ways of Reading" introductory English course, she shared her 15-minute ethnographic documentary, *Das Nachleben des Rattenfängers / The Ratcatcher's Afterlife*, and answered questions about the "Pied Piper" legend. She met with small groups of students, BYU sustainability managers, and the Romantic and Victorian Study Group to discuss her current research on colonialist representations of wildlife, including tigers and elephants, in India.



Patrick Dove

In April, the BYU Humanities Center invited Patrick Dove, professor of Spanish at Indiana University and author of *Literature and 'Interregnum': Globalization, War and the Crisis of Sovereignty in Latin America* (SUNY UP, 2016), to campus to work with Erik Larson, associate professor in the Spanish and Portuguese department. They spent a day workshopping Dr. Larson's manuscript, which examines Latin American detective fiction through the lens of Heideggerian ontology. During his visit, Dr. Dove delivered a lecture on Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, titled "Mi aciago destino: The desert as figuration of language and thought in Borges's 'El Inmortal'."



Jodi Graham

The Humanities Center was excited to host a conversation with Jodi Graham, Executive Director of Utah Humanities. She informed participants of both the role of state humanities councils, and the Utah Humanities mission to "strengthen Utah communities by cultivating connections, deepening understanding, and exploring our complex human experience." She shared examples of how their programming, which focuses on literature, access to education, local initiatives and community heritage, has strengthened and empowered Utah communities. She then led a brainstorming session with faculty to inspire future collaborations. Visit utah-humanities.org to get an idea of how you might engage with the work they are doing.

The Evolution of the Humanities

The humanities flourish when they extend into societal, environmental, and community spheres.

Adapt or die. The biological maxim applies to more than just living beings—just as finches on the Galápagos Islands changed physiologically to fill different environmental niches, the institutions that make up our society similarly need to adapt. One such group of institutions is the humanities themselves. The humanities today face pressures to find their place in our ever-evolving academic and societal landscape.

Professor Robert D. Newman, director of the National Humanities Center and former dean of the College of Humanities at the University of Utah, is particularly invested in seeing the humanities flourish. In a BYU Humanities Center colloquium hosted on September 12, 2022, Newman laid out his vision of an increased alliance between the humanities and environmental movements—in Newman's words, "a bridging of the academic and public divide, so that any space between the practice of the humanities and advocacy for social and environmental justice is vastly diminished."

Newman emphasized a number of ways the humanities must change. Primarily, humanities scholarship must reevaluate its focus on the individual—particularly in light of recent movements which emphasize race, gender, and identity as individualizing forces. "Can a concentration on individual identity, no matter how significantly tied to issues of social justice, serve the need to embrace the collective?" he skeptically asked.

The humanities, Newman explained, are at their most transfor-

mative when they help us realize how we fit into a community. They have the potential to "conjoin social and ecological justice, as well as [be] a dynamic intersection between personal and societal transformation." To realize this, however, the humanities will need to adapt in certain ways.

One practical change will be a shift away from the cloistered, isolated model of academic humanities to a more community-centric





model of humanities. This “would do wonders for our own self-esteem, as well as the esteem in which we are held,” Newman said.

Further, the humanities must join forces with the sciences in the fight against what he called “the most crucial problem of our time”—climate change. This shift requires a realignment of humanities pedagogy to encourage students to focus on what Newman called “legacy projects,” which he described as “projects wherein students are compelled to consider how their actions have impact beyond themselves, and what consequences their lives have on future lives, both human and not.”

Take, for example, the notion of environmental sustainability. Students of philosophy could make arguments all day about the ethical obligations of sustainability in the abstract. But they could

also work with scientists to apply their argumentation in practical, real-world scenarios: they could perform their own environmental research, start movements in their communities, and write articles for public readership. These latter projects exemplify Newman’s envisioned legacy projects—their implications and impact extend well beyond the scope of traditional academic humanities.

Newman painted a picture of an increasingly interdisciplinary humanities landscape: a brave new world that promises to entirely restructure the humanities that

we once knew. “Emerging disciplines like environmental studies, cognitive studies, narrative medicine, computational linguistics, and information theory, for example, will become the university departments of the future, all of which would have a humanities component in conversation with other fields,” he said.

As the humanities continue to adapt, more than their role in universities will be at stake. Humanities students and scholars will increasingly find themselves with a wider range of weighty responsibilities. “Saving democracy, saving civil society, saving the planet, is all intimately intertwined with securing the future of the humanities,” Newman concluded.

Article by Simon Laraway

The Humanities of the Future

You can do more with a humanities degree than waiting tables at a local café. What does that reality actually look like?

Are students' humanities classes really preparing them for the real world? According to Paula Krebs, director of the Modern Language Association (MLA), college humanities courses teach students invaluable critical thinking skills, but they aren't going far enough to teach practical applications that help in careers after graduation. At her general lecture for the Humanities Center on February 2, Krebs presented "The Humanities at Work," providing her insights into how BYU humanities faculty can better prepare students for an ever-evolving 21st-century world.

A staunch defender of the humanities, Krebs reassured attendees that humanities majors are practical and successful in the real world—and brought the statistics to prove it. According to past studies, English and language majors are more likely to find a full-time job than the social and physical sciences. However, she also emphasized that there needs to be a stronger focus on practicality.

Krebs cited resources showing that humanities graduates are pursuing careers outside "typical" humanities jobs like academia, museums, or historical societies and moving toward more business- and engineering-centered careers. Humanities majors, Krebs argued, have what the STEM and business majors don't have: the ability to think critically, synthesize information, conduct arguments, understand ambiguity, create multimedia presentations, find credible sources, and research. Technical skills are often able to be learned on the job, but thinking deeply is less easily taught.

She recounted an experience she had as a dean at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts, where she and some colleagues took a trip to Cisco Systems, a cybersecurity organization. After talking to an HR employee about the qualifications for system engineers at Cisco, she learned that the ideal candidates for the job weren't those with engineering degrees but those who identify problems and approach solutions in different ways. The rest of the skills, the HR employee assured her, could be learned on the job.



To Krebs' surprise, the employee also said that many of his employees weren't engineering majors—they were English majors.

This experience helped Krebs to be more aware of how she and other faculty could help humanities students develop useful skills, values, and attributes for the workforce. "If we don't fully invest in undergraduate humanities education, we're going to have a culture that does not value what the humanities teach," Krebs said. The humanities are crucial to understanding human nature but need to be adapted for a modern public and workforce.

The humanities are a valuable asset to today's emerging fields and should be encouraged. "Our job is not to give them the doom and gloom scenario.... There are lots of messages about why you need to be a STEM major or a business major to every [humanities] student," Krebs said. "They get that message all the time. We need to tell them that there is a wealth of possibility out there for them." So how do faculty better prepare students for the real world using the humanities?

Here are a few of Krebs' tips for faculty to help students:

Normalize student uncertainty.

Encourage them to explore, both before and after graduation. Talk to humanities agencies, community groups, and area employers.

Encourage students to ask questions when they meet new people.

Luckily, College of Humanities faculty recognize this need and have recently pushed for changes to make humanities majors prepared for life after graduation. Professors offer more resources than ever for students to participate in experiential learning, including mentored research, study abroad opportunities, and



internships. Additionally, majors within the College (like English and linguistics) have created multiple tracks to help students train for their professional ambitions.

"We love our students, and we want them to thrive. We want to show them the full extent and value of what they're learning in our classes," Krebs said. "We can put together what they're learning in our classes with what they're learning in other contexts to help them make cases for themselves." Even though the traditional approach to teaching and learning may be evolving, humanities majors pioneer the jobs of the future.

Article by Lauren Walker

The Intersection of Flannery, Murdoch, Faith, and Morality

The BYU Humanities Center hosted Jennifer Frey as the Fall Faith and Imagination guest lecturer. She also shared her insights during a workshop with students and as a guest on the Faith and Imagination podcast.

Humanity's views on morality span a broad spectrum. Where do you find yourself landing on it? How do your morals affect your view of the world? At the fall 2022 Faith and Imagination Lecture, University of South Carolina philosophy professor Jennifer Frey argued that, despite Flannery O'Connor's and Iris Murdoch's differing ideas on morality, imagination, and truth, these two authors viewed their writing and literature in a similar way.

Her lecture, "Iris Murdoch and Flannery O'Connor: The Necessity of Vision in Life and Literature," highlighted the intersection of morality, imagination, and truth in the lives and works of the two authors. Frey began by outlining the authors' personal lives in order to highlight how their religious values—or lack thereof—shaped their moral visions.

Murdoch was a classically educated, communist, atheist woman who advocated for sexual exploration. Her personal life was reflected in her novels, which focus on morality, virtue, and sexual relationships. Frey argued that Murdoch viewed imagination not as something fantastical but as a freedom and an ability to perceive and express the truth. "She asks us to notice how much truth a Shakespeare play contains or a great novel," Frey said. "When we

find literature sentimental, pretentious, self-indulgent, or trivial, Murdoch insists that we're saying it distorts reality." She explained that unlike fantasy literature, imaginative literature based on real life allows the readers to perceive and express the truth in the everyday world, even if it is difficult.

On the other extreme was O'Connor, a first-generation American and devout Catholic who cherished her daily readings of Thomas Aquinas and incorporated his ideas of Christianity into her works. She valued chastity and sexual purity, never marrying and instead living with her mother. Her difficult and humble upbringing in Savannah, Georgia, shaped themes of grace and morality in her literature. O'Connor believed that one must confront religion through literature because it inspires thought and reveals truth.

From an outside perspective, Murdoch's and O'Connor's personal lives and philosophical beliefs couldn't seem more different. However, Frey offered a different interpretation, explaining that they both saw literature as a cognitive, truth-seeking, and truth-revealing enterprise. "Both [women] put a kind of moral vision at the center of their understanding," she said. A moral vision, Frey asserted, that both authors agreed could not be separated from their artistic vision.

Frey's lecture reminds us to be conscious consumers of art, deliberately searching for the creator's moral vision. Both Murdoch and O'Connor encourage readers to embrace truth through literature or other creative means, even if it is difficult. "Literature tells us and teaches us things," Frey said. "In portraying characters, the author displays, most clearly, his discernment, his truthfulness, his justice, or his lack of these qualities."

Article by Lauren Walker





Faithful Poetry and a Poetics of Faith

The BYU Humanities Center, the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, and the BYU College of Humanities jointly co-sponsored this year's Nan Osmond Grass Lecture and Winter Faith and Imagination Lecture, which was delivered by Sarah Bachelard.

Sarah Bachelard is an Anglican priest and theologian based in Canberra, Australia. She is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Australian Catholic University, with special interests in philosophy, ethics and spirituality. She is the founder and leader of Benedictus Contemplative Church, an ecumenical worshipping community with a practice of silent meditation at its heart, and is a member of The World Community for Christian Meditation. In 2006 she served as Director of the John Main Centre for Meditation and Interfaith Dialogue at Georgetown University. Sarah Bachelard is the author of *Experiencing God in a Time of Crisis and Resurrection and Moral Imagination*.

In her address, titled "Poetics of Faith," Bachelard queried: "How do we know that God isn't an invented, consoling fantasy?" She answered by offering a deep reading of three profound poems. She used the first, "Five Senses" by Judith Wright, to illuminate the way that there are more than five senses, some of which help us perceive and experience the reality of God. Bachelard also explained the way that some poems "Speak of God, but not as an object among others." One of these is "Just Now" by W. S. Merwin,

a poem where faith in God becomes, "Something simpler than I could ever believe / simpler than I could have begun to find words for."

Indeed, for Bachelard, God is not an object of perception. Rather, a poetics of faith articulates an awareness of a reality beyond the perception of the real world, that can't be reduced to it. For her, these and other poems help open up a space to believe that God is. Bachelard wonders: "What is God if not imagination? But that would prove it in the reverse. So imagination can help us with God, and there's a dialectic there."

Finally, drawing upon the poem "Annunciation" by Marie Howe, Bachelard discusses the way that the scriptures require poetic sensibility. Just as "The weaver is recognized through the pattern perceived," so too "God is the meaning acquired through the events recounted." Bachelard quoted Mary Oliver's assertion that: "Only if there are ever angels in your head, will you ever possibly see one." Put another way: "We are in the world as poetry is in the poem." This is Bachelard's delightfully simple and profound insight: the thing is the condition of its possibility. So too with God.

Article by Isaac James Richards



Esther Hi'ilani Candari: Barren

The Humanities Center is pleased to be displaying Esther Hi'ilani Candari's MFA thesis titled: "BARREN: A Case Study Using Art in Religious Instruction to Foster Empathy by Providing Deeper Insight and Encouraging Contemporary Dialogue."

This thesis draws upon a review of current literature related to the empathy-building potential of fine art and experiences of infertile women, especially those within Judeo-Christian communities, to build a case study for utilizing fine art to create stronger more empathetic communities. For this case study, Candari utilized an online survey of infertile Judeo-Christian women to further clarify the specific needs of this minority group. Then she drew upon a broad array of current and historical literature and artwork to discern what cultural and theological trends may have framed infertility as a stigma.

Using this information she then produced a series of three paintings aimed to spark constructive conversation and increase understanding and empathy within these selected communities. These paintings, which depict the Biblical stories of three infertile women — Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah—were executed in a realist tradition with special effort made to communicate emotional and historical nuance, breaking from the stereotypical miracle and natal-centric narratives of western art history and Judeo-Christian theological tradition.

The paintings are available to the public Monday - Friday 12-1 PM and 4-5 PM through November 2023. Stop by the Humanities Center (4101 JFSB) to see them!



About the Artist

Esther Hi'ilani Candari is primarily a figurative artist who explores concepts such as multiracial identity, gender and the female gaze in the context of religion, and the connections between ecology, culture, and sense of place. Much of her work draws upon her experiences growing up in Hawai'i in an Asian American mixed race household. She has a BFA from BYU-H, an MFA from Liberty University, and has studied at the New York Academy of Art. In addition to her studio work she teaches art courses for Southern Virginia University, manages programming for Writ & Vision Gallery, serves as the art editor for Wayfare magazine, and serves on the Board of Directors for the Dialogue Foundation. Currently, she lives in Utah County with her husband, two rescued dogs, and an ever-growing collection of houseplants.

You can find her work at hiilanifinearts.com or @hiilanifinearts on instagram.



Dawan Coombs is an associate professor of English at Brigham Young University where she works in the English teaching program. Her research explores the role of identity in the struggles of adolescent readers and seeks to identify practices that support these students. She is a former high school English and reading teacher and currently serves as the BYU Secondary Education Coordinator.

Engaging the Aesthetic in Adolescent Literacy Learning

This book project advocates for the use of experiential learning strategies such as artifactual inquiries, stations, simulations, and drama to create multi-sensory experiences with texts that generate interest, integrate students' unique cultures into the learning, and help them connect the literacies they value with school literacy practices. These strategies provide teachers with methods to facilitate these types of learning experiences and engage readers.



Both theory and research suggest that optimal meaning making happens when teachers incorporate the unique elements of students' lives into the learning to foster authentic, relevant, and engaging reading experiences. The theories of Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin as well as those of educational philosophers Louise Rosenblatt and Paulo Freire provide a framework for considering the role of experiential learning in the teaching of literature. Each of these theorists explored the way the individuals' experiences, beliefs, feelings, and understandings influence the way they read and make sense of texts. Research in fields ranging from neuroscience to psychology to education report that interest in and retention of reading content occurs when teachers incorporate the experiences, feelings, and cultures of students into their instruction. When processed deeply, readers feel profound emotions, consider the perspectives of others, and engage with experiences not their own.



Jacob D. Rawlins is an associate professor in the Linguistics Department, where he has taught in the Editing and Publishing program since 2015. He received a BA in History and an MPA, both from BYU. He earned his PhD in rhetoric and professional communication from Iowa State University in 2013. He researches the history of publishing, editing, and applied rhetoric.

Welsh Publishing in the Nineteenth Century

One of the bright spots in the otherwise turbulent mid-nineteenth century Wales was the rise of small publishers. So much was printed in Wales in the nineteenth century, in fact, that it is considered the Golden Age of Welsh publishing. The effects of this Golden Age traveled far beyond the borders of Wales.

The influence of nineteenth-century Welsh publishing is also felt within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Welsh printers for the Church, including Captain Dan Jones and John Sylvanus Davis, wrote and printed thousands of pages explaining and defending the doctrines of the new religion. Davis produced Welsh translations of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, along with a full hymnal of both Welsh and English hymns.

In this project, I will conduct an in-depth study of the golden age of publishing in nineteenth-century Wales. This project will have two prongs: (1) an examination of the importance and influence of nineteenth-century Welsh religious publishing, and (2) a biography of John S. Davis, the primary printer and Welsh translator for the Church of Jesus Christ in Wales.

Sara Phenix is Associate Professor of French at Brigham Young University. She earned her PhD at the University of Pennsylvania. Her work has appeared in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, *Dix-Neuf*, and *Romance Notes*. Her current book project focuses on fashion, fertility, and fiction in nineteenth-century France.

Bodice Politic: How the Corset Shaped Fashion, Fertility & Fiction in Nineteenth-Century France

The discourses of fashion, reproductive politics, and literary production intersected in consequential—and even existential—ways in nineteenth-century France. After the humiliating defeat of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), France saw a catastrophic drop in its already declining birthrate. The public discourse about depopulation disproportionately targeted the corset because, dress reformers suggested, it compromised the structural integrity of both the maternal and the fetal body. This supposed sartorial threat to national security, however, was also a significant source of revenue for France's fashion industry. This book examines literary texts, popular press, and fashion ephemera to examine the ideological and economic tensions that converged on the corset. I examine the corset as a thematic mainstay and theoretical construct used by authors like Émile Zola, Octave Mirabeau, Edmond de Goncourt, and Guy de Maupassant to explore questions of fertility, creation (both biological and artistic), and form (physical silhouette and literary genres). This book builds on existing scholarship about the social importance of fashion by elucidating the critical role that women's clothing played in debates about fertility and aesthetic production in nineteenth-century France.





Colloquia



September 8: Jessica Tebo & TJ McLemore
"What Every Student and Faculty Member
Should Know about DH"



September 22: Makayla Steiner
"I was not a soulless animal": Identity and Per-
sonhood in Toni Morrison's A Mercy"



September 29: Dan Paul
"Renewing Italian Netflix TV Series: Questions of
Race, Genre, and Politics"



January 26: Laura Catharine Smith
"Promoting Information Literacy and Critical
Thinking in the Modern Humanities Classroom"



February 9: Kevin Blankinship
"Brokers of the Trust Economy, or Why and How
Professors Should Write for the Popular Press"



February 16: Steve Richardson
"Machine Translation: Hype vs. Reality"



October 13: Earl Brown
 "How Language Usage Likely Affects Language Structure"



November 17: Corry Cropper, Daryl Lee,
 Heather Belnap
 Roundtable on Collaborative Research



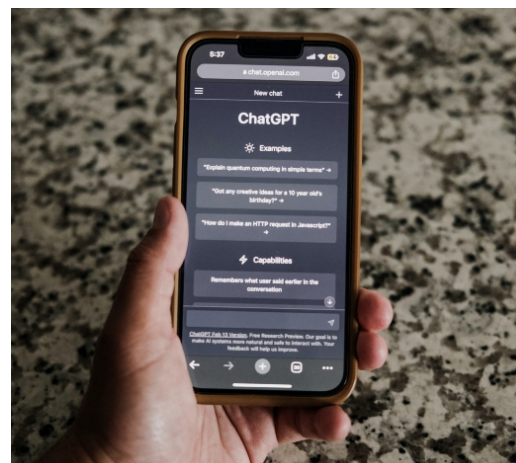
January 19: Ryan Christensen
 "Loneliness and Love"



March 2: Francesca Lawson
 "Gendered AI: Why Can't Siri Sing"



March 9: Kristin Matthews
 "There is power in the word": YA Literature and
 the Contemporary Freedom Struggle"



April 10: College of Humanities ChatGPT
 Task Force
 Roundtable on ChatGPT

Undergraduate Research Symposium

Every year, undergraduate students can apply for faculty-mentored research grants from the College of Humanities, called the Humanities Undergraduate Mentoring Grant (HUM Grant). The Humanities Center recognizes the very best of these recipients in our annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, where students from our college have a chance to present their research findings. The projects this year included a wide range of topics and broadly represented the disciplines within the college.





From left to right:

Braden Slater (co-presenter with Quinn Blackley), "The Secondary School Writing Center University Partnership"

Madilyn Abbe, "'Safe in the Eye of the Storm': A 20th Century Adaptation of Safe Slave Spaces in Colton Whitehead's *The Intuitionist*"

Quinn Blackley

Rachel McDonald, "Goalkeeping or Gatekeeping? A Lexical Analysis of Sexism in Italy's Female National Football League"

Jackson Hawkins, "Monads and Bodies: The World As Leibniz Sees It"

Sean Cameron, "Phonological Effects in Mandarin Chinese Names"

Holden d'Evegnée, "'Legend Still Holds Secret the Key': Animism and Dialogic Witnessing in Veronique Tadjo's *Queen Pokou* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*"

Student Essay Contest Winner

Woven Together

This essay, by Megan McOmber Wight, won first place in the 2023 BYU Humanities Center Student Essay Contest.

"I am grateful for my eyes because I can read books."

"I am grateful for my mouth because I can taste blueberries."

"I am grateful for my legs because I can jump."

In the morning, early, before I leave for BYU campus to start my day of classes and writing and thinking, I spend time with my daughter, Gwen. We jump and read books and eat blueberries. She is only a year old, but I try to repeat to her all the reasons she can be grateful for her body. We laugh. I am so grateful for her belly and for my belly because we can laugh.

As I walk up to campus, I try to tell myself, "I am grateful for my legs because I can walk up these endless stairs." I repeat, "I am grateful for my brain because it can keep learning." "I am grateful for my eyes because they can see these mountains, and read these books, and decode this map to find my class in the JKB." I am trying to teach my daughter—and teach myself—how to be grateful for our bodies.

Belonging is so often caught up in our bodies. Our figures of blood and breath stand as signals and signs symbolizing how we fit in, how we match up, or how we stand out. Each day, as we leave our homes, we offer our bodies to the world. And other people, with their own bodies, choose to embrace, empower, invite, or reject us.

My body has the power to accept your body. To embrace your body, to welcome your body. Believers proclaim that we are one in the body of Christ. We symbolically partake of His flesh each Sunday. And we await the promise of a perfected body. But all of this is complicated in the ways we other each other. The ways we show each other that we don't match up.

Elder James E. Talmage once said, "We have been taught . . . to look upon these bodies of ours as gifts from God. We Latter-day Saints do not regard the body as something to be condemned, something to be abhorred . . . We regard [the body] as the sign of our royal birthright. . . We believe that these bodies . . . may be made, in very truth, the temple of the Holy Ghost."

Signs of our royal birthright.



Gifts from God.

Temples.

I have walked past the temple on 9th East and Center Street. I have walked past the buildings on campus—temples of learning. Even the seminar rooms on the 4th floor of the JFSB have felt like a temple as my classmate handed my daughter her keychain to play with during a lecture. There is something holy in how she crouched down low to show my baby an Avatar sticker, and how she didn't get annoyed when Gwen kept trying to push her laptop off the bench. There is something sacred in the way my classmate didn't think that was a big deal. But it was a big deal to me.

The Museum of Art was a temple as Dr. Elliot Wise talked about Northern Renaissance art and depictions of the Savior. Showing us the detail in a pearl, and a window, and the curve of a mother's body. I remember he cried. The classroom in the Smith Fieldhouse has felt like a kind of temple as my classmates and I belly laugh at how hard it is to do a push up and how our teacher keeps cheering to: "feel the burn!"

A professor's office in the JFSB feels like a temple. We discuss research while my daughter colors in the corner. My professor offers her crackers, and crayons, and laughs when my daughter screams for another snack. The mother's room in the Talmage building felt like a temple as I nursed my month-old daughter in its quiet corners. Each of these spaces has contained consecration and connection—something eternal.

These places were temples because of the life that was bubbling inside. These places were temples in the way that others created a space for me that felt natural and safe and eternal. And I wonder how I can embrace people like those buildings embraced me. How can I embrace others like professors and classmates and even strangers have accepted me? I am learning to be grateful for my body. And I am learning to curve my ears and shape my hands to hold the stories and bodies of others. We are learning to love each other's bodies. But even more we are learning to love all the life bubbling inside of each other. To come to know each other for more than our bodies and all that we have lived and experienced because of our bodies. And then maybe we can embrace each other's lives and though we are many, become one in the body of Christ.

Megan is currently an MFA student at BYU. She has recently been published in Mount Hope Magazine and Under the Gum Tree. She is also the 2023 winner of the Mayhew Competition and David O. McKay Essay Contest. She can most often be found running, baking cookies with her husband, or reading the same book for the eighth time to her 18-month-old daughter.

Works Cited

James E. Talmage. CR, October 1913, p. 117. Also quoted in "Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments" by Jeffrey R. Holland, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/jeffrey-r-holland/souls-symbols-sacraments/>.

Current Research Groups

Boarding School Stories

Editing and Publishing

Foreign Language Housing

Greek and Latin Translation
Working Group

Humor

Medieval and Renaissance
Studies (MARS)

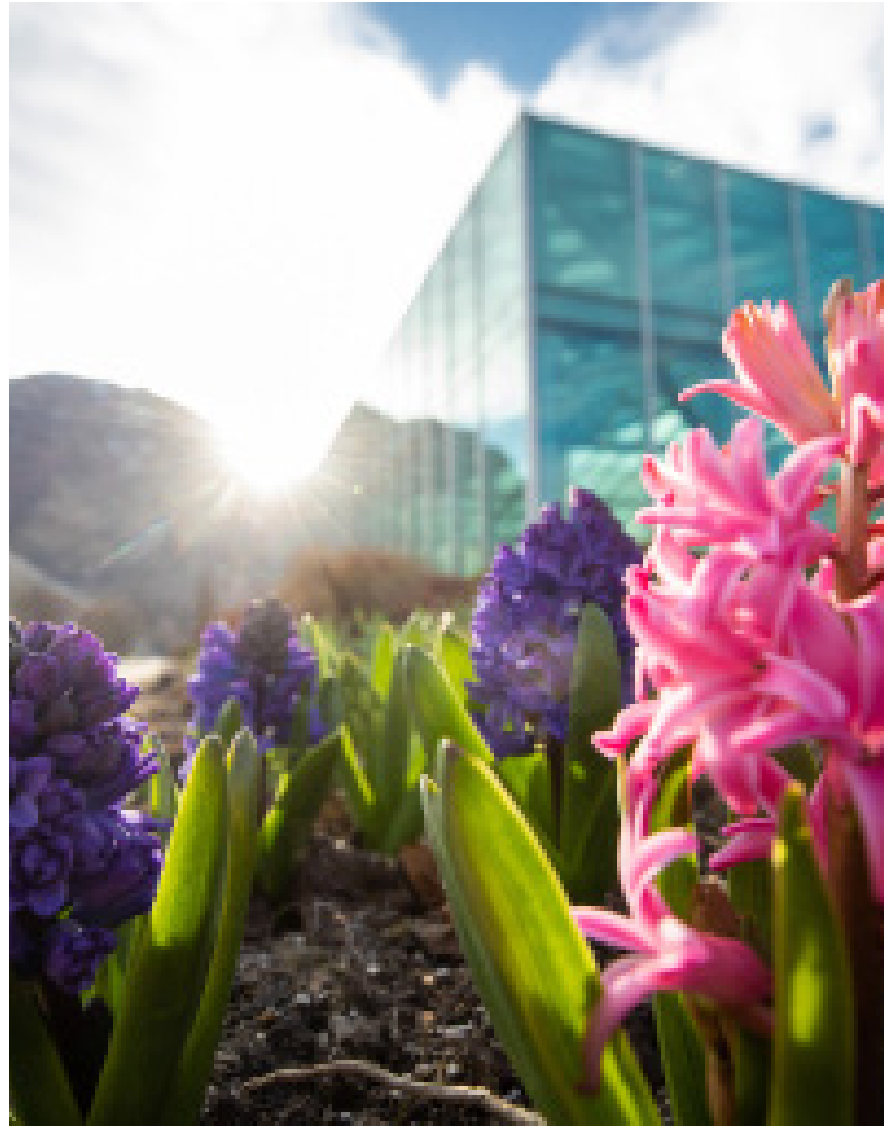
Religious Studies in Europe

Romantic and Victorian

Spirituality and Imagination
Theology and Humanities

Translation Studies

Women's Studies Teaching and
Research (WSTAR)





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Donations to the BYU Humanities Center are exclusively used to benefit students, and students are a vital part of our center: They attend our events, belong to our research groups, serve as research assistants, and present their own independent research. We mentor students and their work blesses us and others. So, thank you for supporting our Humanities Center. It helps us enhance the education of our wonderful students.

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The humans of the College of Humanities represent a remarkable collection of people who, at face value, seem fairly homogeneous but, under the surface, live wildly rich lives with complex identities. Some have spent years traveling and living in foreign countries, speaking several languages fluently and moving seamlessly between very different communities. Others have invested the time and energy to polish talents or have cultivated interests that connect them with experts around the globe. Yet others have become world experts in fields and cultures that require significant feats of inquiry and imagination. These diverse scholars are amazing, multidimensional resources of empathy and human understanding who unselfishly choose, semester after semester, to share their talents and insights with students from across the entire university. On top of this, their very presence on campus demonstrates their abiding commitment to support our sponsoring church, adding the identity of disciple to that of scholar and teacher.

—Scott Miller, Dean of the BYU College of Humanities