



# *Impact*

THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTER FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING & LEARNING



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College of General Studies

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## ABOUT US

ABOUT: *Impact: The Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning* is a peer-reviewed, bi-annual online journal that publishes scholarly and creative non-fiction essays about the theory, practice and assessment of interdisciplinary education. *Impact* is produced by the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning at the College of General Studies, Boston University ([www.bu.edu/cgs/citl](http://www.bu.edu/cgs/citl)).

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## EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Dear Readers,

In this issue of *Impact* many of our writers examine the creative process, whether that creativity is imbued in one's curriculum, music, painting, or writing. Kathleen Vandenberg explains how she created interdisciplinary Rhetoric courses, and Fred Hagstrom reflects on what it takes to create an off-campus study experience that is mindful of the history, art and nature of a host country. Tannous, Hawkins, Tyler and Connell Schaaf all recognize the connection between making art and creating a community, and Grasso's review reminds us that, especially in war-torn countries, creating a community of learners takes skill, commitment, and an optimism that is as clear-eyed as it is determined. Stevenson's review suggests why those who create within the genre of horror have something to tell all of us.

We at the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning hope this issue inspires you to create something new. We hope too that as you create a curricula, a painting, an aria or something else altogether, you enjoy the process as much as your readers, students and others learn from the fruits of your labor. If and when you do make something new, send us a line or image from it; snap a picture or send us your thoughts on the creative process.

We want to hear how it goes for you!

Best,

Megan Sullivan

Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning  
Associate Dean, College of General Studies

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE'S AUTHORS

**Fred Hagstrom** is the Rae Schupack Nathan professor of art at Carleton College. He has taught there since 1984 and has been leading students on international study trips since 1996. He teaches studio art, with a specialty in printmaking.

**Kaz Hawkins** was born and raised in Belfast, Northern Ireland. She is an ambassador for Eastside Arts, she uses her public profile to assist East Belfast Community Counseling, and she has won many awards and accolades for her singing. In 2015 alone she has been a nominee for the PURE M Magazine award for best female, a finalist for the Future of Blues, and a nominee for the European Blues Challenge.

**June Grasso** is Associate Professor in the Division of Social Sciences at Boston University's College of General Studies. She has a Ph.D. in modern Chinese history from Tufts University and writes on China and U.S.-China relations.

**Holly Connell Schaaf**, a lifelong New Englander with family roots in Scotland and Ireland, is currently a lecturer in the CAS Writing Program at BU. She completed a Ph.D. in Irish and British Literature at BU in 2013 and has written poems and stories for as long as she can remember.

**Gregory Stevenson** is a Professor of New Testament at Rochester College. His research and publishing interests include the book of Revelation and religion and popular culture. He lives with his family in Clarkston, Michigan.

**Christine Tannous** is a graduate journalism student at Boston University's College of Communication. She studied classical music, mathematics and biology as an undergraduate before moving across the pond and settling in Boston. Tannous is an avid storyteller with a taste for the eclectic and the peculiar.

**Meg Tyler** is a poet and a professor, a scholar of contemporary Irish, British and American poetry. Her chapbook of poems, *Poor Earth*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2014. She is also the author of a book on Seamus Heaney (Routledge, 2005). She directs the Poetry Reading Series at Boston University and is Chair of the Institute for the Study of Irish Culture.

**Kathleen Vandenberg** is a Senior Lecturer in Rhetoric at BU's College of General Studies. She has taught Rhetoric & Composition for fifteen years, and written on the rhetoric of advertising, the history of imitation pedagogies, spatial rhetorics, and style. She is currently completing a monograph on Joan Didion and developing a quantitative research study on the effectiveness of classical imitation pedagogies. She continues to work on developing the Boston-London program, and is currently wrapping up her second year of teaching in it.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please refer to CITL's website for our latest announcements: <http://www.bu.edu/cgs/citl/>

## IMPACT ESSAY COMPETITION

Every December, the editors of *Impact: The Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Teaching & Learning* invite submissions of scholarly and creative non-fiction essays between 1,000 and 5,000 words on any aspect of interdisciplinary teaching or research. The author of the winning essay will receive a \$250 award and publication in *Impact*.

Essays should be readable to a general, educated audience, and they should follow the documentation style most prevalent in the author's disciplinary field. Essays for this contest should be submitted by the first Monday in December to <http://CITL.submittable.com/submit>.

CITL reserves the right to not publish a winner in any given year. Faculty and staff from the College of General Studies are not eligible to submit to this contest.

# ESSAYS

## “Interdisciplinary Teaching in the South Pacific,” By Fred Hagstrom, Carleton College

My introduction to interdisciplinary teaching began with baseball. I watched games with a colleague from the Biology Department at Carleton College, where we both taught. Eventually, my colleague asked me if I would like to lead a program with him in the South Pacific. He taught a program in New Zealand and Australia where students spent most of the term traveling to various national parks. He proposed that we create two groups -- he would teach courses in Biology, and I would teach Studio Art -- and the two groups would travel together for most of the term. He had experience; I certainly did not, but in 1996 I found myself visiting sites I never anticipated seeing and trying to make the experience a meaningful one for students who were just as new to these surroundings as I was. The first trip did moderately well, but I could see many ways to improve upon it, not the least being that I had to learn more about the ecological, historical, and cultural issues that are so rich in this part of the world.

In the following years I led my own program, separate from the Biology Department. However, my program continued to focus on nature and the importance of an art course grounded in the study of nature. I have now taken 10 groups to the South Pacific, each with about 25 students who study in the Cook Islands, New Zealand and Australia for ten-week terms. Learning about this part of the world has become my most challenging and significant area of professional development. This off campus “classroom” has become my



Printmaking students in Melbourne

most intense experience teaching outside of my own discipline. Even though I now teach the course alone, I credit my colleague who started me on this track by showing me an example of teaching that goes beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries.

My program includes three courses: Drawing (from nature), Printmaking, and The Physical and Cultural Environment. The first asks students to draw from nature in sketchbooks that we bind by hand before the trip. I teach bookbinding as a part of this course. The printmaking course takes advantage of studios we can rent in Auckland and Melbourne. Because it is summer there when we visit, we can use dormitories and studios of universities that are not in session. We have a longstanding relationship with the Australian Print

Workshop in Melbourne. They offer our students the opportunity to work in their very well equipped studios, and to learn from the printmakers who are associated with their program.

The environmental course is what I would call my truly interdisciplinary course; ecology, history, and social issues are our primary subject matter. I knew that there were good studio art programs in Europe, so I felt



## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

that if I were to design my own program I wanted it to be unique. Too often students are disconnected from nature, so I knew melding art practice with the study of nature would be fruitful and appropriate for my liberal arts students. I also think that there is more room in our curriculum for the study of indigenous issues, and the histories of Maori, Pacific Islander and aboriginal Australians and their various experiences of colonialism pose potent questions for our study of the region. Students often tell me that learning about the histories of



Drawing at Abel Tasman National Park, New Zealand

this part of the world has prompted them to examine American history, as well as the current state of affairs for Native Americans, in a different light. I have used several texts for this course. *The Future Eaters* by Tim Flannery gives a great deal of information on the ecological issues of the region. *Pacific Worlds* by Matt Matsuda provides an overview of the history of the Pacific. Students learn many new things such as the fact that there was a Pacific slave trade, and that residents of the Pacific are still dealing with the legacy of nuclear testing on their islands. I have also used the seminal article by Lynn White, *The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis*. I have had a number of students on the trip who are environmental studies majors, and they have told me that this trip gives them helpful material for their major.

Maori novels are important to my program, particularly those novels by the writer Patricia Grace. In one instance, an English major on the trip returned to campus and for her senior project studied postcolonial literature, with an emphasis on Maori writers. Patricia Grace was generous enough to meet with this student when we were in New Zealand, and Grace remained in touch with the student as she worked on her senior project. I have also used *Come on Shore and We Will Kill and Eat You All* by Christina Thompson. This book combines memoir and history to give an insightful view of New Zealand and Maori concerns. Ms. Thompson is very knowledgeable about the South Pacific, and she has given me advice that has helped to shape my program. In Australia I use *Jackson's Track, Memoir of a Dreamtime Place* by Daryl Tonkin and Carolyn Landon. This book is about the trouble faced by an inter-racial couple in the 1950's. The first section explores how two brothers set up a lumber camp east of Melbourne in the late 30's. They hire aboriginal laborers, and the camp turns into a thriving aboriginal settlement until the early 60's. The most significant section of the book focuses on the inter-racial couple. Author Carolyn Landon has visited



Hiking, Carnarvon Gorge, Queensland, Australia

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

with my students several times, accompanied by her friend, the daughter of the couple from the book.

In the *Physical and Cultural Environment* course I use local experts to offset my weaker areas. I hire biologists and naturalists to accompany us in each national park and to help explain the particular aspects of that area. Students get to snorkel with a biologist on the Great Barrier Reef, learn about the flora and fauna of an inland park, or trek through a volcanic park in New Zealand. These local experts help me teach and offer assistance as I try to ensure the safety of a large group in a new and remote place. Students and I often stay in bunkhouses or tents, and I have to arrange food for the group; sometimes this is difficult, especially in areas where there is no refrigeration.

I try to impress upon the students that art and nature are closely intertwined and that not all art reflects urban values. They see contemporary artwork from the aboriginal acrylic painting movement, a blossoming form of painting that only began in the 1970's. I try to make the connection between contemporary art and historical or traditional art. They see historical pieces, functional crafts that date to the pre-colonial period, and contemporary art that is significant on the international scene. They see work by artists who explore environmental themes in contemporary styles. They see Maori and Pacific Islander art that draws upon tradition and comments on contemporary society. We discuss indigenous people's deep history and examine how they draw upon this history while they remain part of the modern world. It is provocative to think about how one can remain within a tradition and still be open to innovation.



Tapestry (tivavae) workshop in Rarotonga

My goal is to give students a deep understanding of that part of the world and to have fun in the process. We go to beautiful parks and sit by beaches, canyons, or streams and engage in extended drawing sessions. After semesters spent making art in campus studios and classrooms, particularly throughout a Minnesota winter, it is refreshing to take a long hike that ends at a large wall of ancient aboriginal rock art, or to listen to the surf as we draw. I make the point that nature is the source of much indigenous art, and that nature can be fundamental to design in a western context. Our campuses are often too busy to allow for long periods of contemplation, and the process of slowing down to observe carefully from nature can

be a powerful learning experience for our students. I hope students leave the program with an enhanced interest in the natural world, and a certainty that they can see nature as an avenue for artistic expression.

Off-campus study should be experiential, so I try to immerse the students in environments that are stark contrasts to their homes. I let them see that indigenous art is often intricate and takes extraordinary care and craft. This is true of contemporary work as well as historical examples. I urge students not to view the art as an ethnographic experience and instead to see it as vibrant and relevant in 2015. They understood this one



## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

day when we were on Cook Islands, where the local women who are fine artists display their fiber work (called tivavae) and teach the students how this work is done. The women's imagery depicts the beauty of the nature that surrounds them on their small island of Rarotonga. Celebrating their connection with nature is a crucial part of the artists' spiritual lives.

A highlight of the program is a three-day stay at a marae, a traditional meetinghouse for a Maori tribe. We have a long relationship with this community, and they open their homes and their hearts to us. The students get an introduction to Maori life and culture that can't be taught, that must be experienced. I take students to museums to see Maori art, and I assign readings and lectures that cover both historical and contemporary art. But at the marae the students learn about deeper cultural values as well as what it is like to be Maori in contemporary New Zealand. An important lesson comes when the elders of the marae describe the ancestral carvings that cover the meetinghouse, explaining the importance of genealogy (whakapaka) and how each of the carvings refers to specific histories of their tribe.



Alex Nathan teaching students about the carving on the Matatina Marae, Waipua, New Zealand

When we study the terrible history of aboriginal Australians, I am able to find texts, speakers, and films that help students understand this long, sad story. We use a text, *Aboriginal Australians* by Richard Broome, and a documentary series, *The First Australians* that give the students a good introduction to aboriginal culture and history. Richard Broome has also lectured to the students in Melbourne. In an off-campus experience it can be difficult to teach the students about material that includes such a sad and violent history. They are excited to be in such a different part of the world, but they should also know the full history of the region.



Snorkeling on Great Barrier Reef

The logistics of the program are complex, but we have been able to work everything out. We make reservations with the parks to secure bunkhouses that can accommodate our group. I hire caterers to provide food in these remote locations.

I take two recent graduates of a previous trip to help me manage the group. The students receive one full term of credit. My school is on a three-term schedule, and students

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

take three courses per term. I normally teach two courses, so the trip is an overload for me. I could hire local people to teach one of the courses, but our schedule includes so much travel that this is difficult. Tuition covers the total cost for students, including all art supplies and textbooks, but they do have to pay for their flights. I negotiate a group rate with the airlines to reduce their cost, but with this much travel, students still pay over \$2,000 for our international travel.

Faculty development can be an unrecognized benefit of teaching in an off campus setting. Because I have returned there over many years and have devoted considerable time and study to learning about the region and the culture, the South Pacific has become a major part of my research. When a department offers a trip taught by various professors over a number of years, these faculty miss out on the advantages of prolonged contact with a community abroad. I know that I am a different artist and teacher than I would have been without this experience. I am different not only because of the experience of being abroad, but also because I have to combine and integrate different disciplines; this has deepened what I think I can offer to my students.

I would never have anticipated that as a teacher I would tell students about the gestation cycle of a kangaroo, let alone travel alongside one or swim over a manta ray. I also never anticipated I would have a place that I can call a second home in a remote part of New Zealand and with my Maori friends. Each of these experiences has pushed me to learn more and to sharpen my teaching skills. I do not want to teach a superficial course in these areas, and as anyone who teaches outside of his area of expertise would tell you, we have to avoid dilettantism. But integrated learning can be a powerful experience for students, and in order for us to open these doors to them, we must be willing to move into new ground.

Alex Nathan teaching students about the carving on the Matatina Marae, Waipua, New Zealand

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## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### **“Lessons for Creating an Interdisciplinary Program: Rhetoric Course Design,”**

By Kathleen Vandenberg, Boston University

#### **Course Design**

Interdisciplinary Rhetoric: Boston University's January Boston-London Program

Courses: Rhetoric 103 & 104

Spring: RH 103 (Boston Jan. 15 - May 10)

The Ancient World through the Enlightenment

Topics covered: Emergence of Writing and Literate Cultures, Exposition and Synthesis, Classical Rhetoric, Essayistic Writing, Research Skills, Integrating Sources

Summer: RH 104 (London May 20 - June 27)

The Industrial Revolution to the Digital Revolution

Topics covered: Rhetorical Analysis, Argumentation, Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking in a Digital Age, Style

#### **Introduction:**

These two Rhetoric courses listed below are part of a new interdisciplinary January Boston-London program created by The College of General Studies at Boston University in 2014. The courses were designed to intersect meaningfully with the required Humanities 103 & 104 and Social Sciences 103 & 104 courses tailored for the program. The Course Description below, though it focuses on Rhetoric 103 & 104, is meant to offer an introduction to the entire program through the lens of these two courses.

However, those wishing to adopt the framework for the Rhetoric course alone should find that it offers a rich and comprehensive syllabus even independent of its interdisciplinary counterparts or experiential learning component. It takes as its subject matter the history, development, and theorizing of writing and rhetoric and thus contextualizes for students their writing today.

#### **Institutional Context:**

Designed to meet the general education requirements of nearly one third of Boston University undergraduates, The College of General Studies promotes interdisciplinary teaching and experiential learning, and values excellence in teaching, small group work, creative thinking, and clear, cogent writing. Curriculum in the January Boston-London Program is based on the belief that at the heart of the Liberal Arts and the Humanities, “is the capacity for interpretation, for making meaning and making sense out of the world around us.”

Replicating the experience of a small liberal arts college in the context of a major research university, the College provides a foundation for the intellectual and scholarly life of students. This dynamic academic community is uniquely composed of teams of 80-100 students who study under 3 professors. Additionally, students have access to fulltime professional advisors who guide them through their educational and career planning. When the College decided to create a January Boston-London Program to start in January 2014, it focused on developing a three-course curriculum that was highly interdisciplinary and involved experiential

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

learning and world travel. Faculty met for a year and one half before the program commenced in order to develop the curriculum.

Then Dean of the College, Linda Wells, along with the Division Chairpersons, decided to divide the courses into six units, each focusing on a “tipping point” in history. In coordination with the Dean, the faculty created an interdisciplinary team-taught curriculum consisting of the following courses: Rhetoric, Social Sciences, and Humanities. Across two semesters, these classes move chronologically through six major “tipping points” starting with the Neolithic Revolution and ending with the Digital Revolution. As befits its interdisciplinary approach, the three course curriculum was unified under one title: *Changing Times, Changing Minds: Revolutions in the Ancient World to the Digital World*. Students complete the first semester courses between January and May. They, and their professors, then take a week off before resuming with their second semester in London, which they complete in six weeks. Trips and events are linked to the subject matter. As one of the original seven liberal arts of the classical world, Rhetoric is critically important to the development of students’ critical thinking skills, research abilities, and written and oral eloquence. It works in concert with Humanities and Social Sciences in inviting students to think and write about historic and global questions in ways that are contextualized, informed, and enhanced by travel and real world experiences.

### Theoretical Rationale:

The January Boston-London Program was developed to reach students interested in committing to an intense experiential learning program taking place in six months and two countries. The goal of the program is to foster informed and engaged global citizens and lifelong learners who are able to think intelligently and creatively about the challenges of the twenty-first century. The January Boston-London Program is a true interdisciplinary educational experience consisting of innovative, unique, and integrated courses team taught by faculty committed to exploring new boundaries. In every unit, we made the effort to tie the lessons and concerns of the past to issues contemporary and relevant to the students’ lives. We believe that the program will increase rates of student retention and engagement and ensure that students who pass through the program are strong thinkers, excellent writers, and informed and ethical citizens of the world.

The January Boston-London Program developed its curriculum based on research in interdisciplinary learning as well as studies in general education (see Works Consulted below). Surveys of the history of general education have demonstrated that coherence—in the form of interdisciplinary integration among courses—enhances learning, as does experiential learning coupled with reflective writing. The January Boston-London Program’s approach to creating and teaching this program is grounded, theoretically, in George D. Kuh’s 2008 *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, a work published by the AAC& U. Describing ten “High-Impact Practices” widely tested and shown to increase rates of student retention and engagement (regardless of student background), this work outlines the parameters for successful teaching at the university level. The five practices below, summarized from Kuh’s work, inform the pedagogy of the January Boston-London Program curriculum:

1. First-Year Seminars and Experiences - Small groups of students see the same faculty regularly in seminar-style classes that emphasize, among other things, critical inquiry, frequent writing, and collaborative learning.
2. Common Intellectual Experiences - A set of required core courses is integrated and these frequently focus on broad themes, e.g. technology and society, global interdependence.
3. Learning Communities - Communities encourage interdisciplinary learning and focus on “big questions” that resonate outside the classroom. Students take at least two courses together and work closely with one another and their professors, often exploring common topics or readings.
4. Writing-Intensive Courses - Writing is emphasized in all courses, and students are encouraged to revise.



## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

5. Diversity/Global Learning - Courses and programs help students explore different cultures and worldviews and are augmented by experiential learning in the community or through study abroad.

[\*The other five practices, internships, capstone projects, collaborative assignments, service learning, and undergraduate research, are encouraged and supported in the students' sophomore year at CGS].

### Course Description & Syllabus:

#### Unit 1: Cities, Crops, and Gods: The Neolithic Revolution and Monotheism

Social Sciences provides the students with the historical context for Rhetoric's discussion of how writing—first invented in summer around 3200 BC—profoundly changed how people thought and communicated as well as how they interacted with nature. In Rhetoric, students learn about what Walter Ong calls the “psychodynamics of orality,” and explore how the invention of literacy impacted human connection with the natural world. They read about how oral language was patterned to be retained and transmitted—how the use of mnemonic devices, parataxis, polysyndeton, parallelism, formula, repetition, cliché, epigraph, rhythm, and rhyme shaped oral speech. They see these characteristics and patterns in the Homeric poems, Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament passages they are reading in Humanities, and come to understand why oral stories were so vivid, antagonistic, and dramatic.

#### *Writing (5-7 pages):*

Students write an expository synthesis that requires academic research. This assignment requires that they become adept at reading closely, extrapolating main arguments, seeing connections between different readings, practicing the skills of definition and exemplification, summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting source material, and integrating this material with signal phrases and correct citations. These papers are highly organized and coherent with a clear thesis.

#### *Readings:*

David Abram “Animism and the Alphabet” in *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*

Jared Diamond: “Farmer Power” and “Apples or Indians” in *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*

Walter Ong “Some Psychodynamics of Orality” in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World*

James Suzman: “Sympathy for a Desert Dog” in *New York Times Online*

#### *Connections to Later Units:*

In Unit 2 students are required to write persuasive speeches they deliver orally. The emphasis, in Unit 1, on how certain syntactic patterns, rhetorical figures (e.g. alliteration, polysyndeton, parallelism), and rhyme ensure that oral speeches are vivid, emphatic, memorable, and persuasive provides them with concrete tools for working on the style of their speeches.

Unit 1 also encourages students to start thinking about what we gain or lose as we move deeper into technology and further from the natural world. Students continue to reflect on these issues in Unit 4, reading Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William T. Vollmann, and Billy Giraldi before composing a thesis-driven essay in which they argue for the ideal balance between access to nature and immersion in technology.

Unit 1 introduces students, through Walter Ong and David Abram, to the idea that literacy has actually changed the way people think, behave, communicate, and interact with one another. In Unit 6 they will consider the effects, if any, of the Digital Revolution on the ways people read, write, think, and remember.



## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### *Experiential Learning:*

Students attend a talk by a guest lecturer from the Natural Sciences. This professor offers them a scientific explanation of the changes occurring in nature as humans move from hunting and gathering to farming.

Students also visit, on their own, the Harvard Peabody Museum to look at relics from the Neolithic Age. As the first part of a three-part Humanities museum assignment, this short interpretive assignment asks them to analyze the display of these pieces.

### Unit 2: The Development of Democracy and the Democratic Self: Greeks, Romans, and Social Structure

In Unit 2, Social Sciences introduces students to the birth of democracy and heightens their understanding of the “democratic self.” They learn how the earliest democracies emerged and what their strengths were. They come to understand that because democracy gives a voice to the people, “the people” suddenly have a need and desire to learn how to use their voices in their largely oral cultures in order to influence policy and law. In other words, students see how the advent of democracy creates a need for rhetoric. In Humanities, Social Sciences, and Rhetoric, the students read Aristotle, Cicero, and Plato, with the focus, in Rhetoric, on how classical rhetoric was theorized and practiced. Students are introduced to multiple definitions of rhetoric, consider the possibilities for a “true” rhetoric, examine the role of persuasion in a democracy, learn about the education and responsibilities of the orator in classical times, and consider the power, magic, and dangers of speech. The students’ reading of Euripides’ *Medea* and Plato’s “The Ion” in Humanities extends their understanding of speech’s persuasive power and “magical” properties. In Rhetoric, studying the patterns of Gorgias’ *Encomium*, students are able to identify his use of such figures as parallelism, alliteration, polysyndeton, isocolon, assonance, and antithesis as well as the rhythmic phrasing of his syntax, and they are encouraged to think about how they might improve their own writing style. As they write their own 10 minute speeches, they are prompted to think about what will make those speeches memorable and persuasive in the same way that stories were in Homeric times.

Finally, students learn the formal arrangement of a classical rhetorical speech and are introduced to the concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos and the Rhetorical Canons of memory and delivery. They are counseled, as well, to avoid common logical fallacies (e.g. ad populum, post hoc ergo propter hoc, red herring, faulty generalization, either/or).

### *Writing (6-7 Pages Drafted but Delivered Orally):*

Students compose speeches that are meant to be delivered in an engaging and persuasive manner. They are given 10 minutes and permitted to use notes/outlines/drafts. They must structure their argument according to the 5-part arrangement specified by ancient Greek rhetoricians. Some time is given over beforehand to watching famous speeches (MLK, Reagan, and Morrison) and to discussing memory and delivery (eye contact, appropriate modulation of tone, effective hand and body movement) in the context of the advice offered in the classical readings and in contemporary Ted Talks.

### *Readings:*

Cicero “Book 1, Part V 17-23 and Book 1, Parts VIII-XVI, 30-73 in *De Oratore* Loeb edition

Gorgias “Encomium of Helen” in *the Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*

Plato *Phaedrus* MIT Internet Classics Archive Trans. Jowett

Quintilian Book II, Part XV 1-38, in *Institutio Oratoria* Loeb edition

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### *Connection to Other Units:*

Unit 2 picks up Unit 1's focus on the unique patterns of oral communication, reinforcing what students learned about the powers of sound. Unit 2 also refers back to Unit 1's concern about literacy estranging humans from nature, something that Abram sees as problematic but Cicero views as advantageous. He asserts that eloquence is "our greatest advantage over brute creation" and believes that eloquence's highest achievement is a power "strong enough... to gather scattered humanity into one place, or lead it out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up to our present condition of civilization as men and as citizens, or, after the establishment of social communities, to give shape to laws, tribunals, and civic rights." Unit 2 also anticipates Unit 5 with its focus on propaganda and rhetorical analysis. In that unit students will draw on what they learned about ethos, pathos, and style to analyze the ethicality, effectiveness, and effect of visual rhetoric.

### *Experiential Learning:*

Having read, in Social Sciences, Thucydides *Pericles' Funeral Oration*, with its focus on its argument for social justice for all, and having studied Aristotle's *The Politics*, which defines democracy as a form of government that includes the poor, students visit, on their own, the Museum of African American History to explore (and reflect on in writing) the visions of equality in Boston and the realities of actual lived experience.

In Rhetoric, this unit anticipates the students' travel to London roughly 10 weeks later. There they can visit Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park to view people deliver speeches orally (and passionately) on a variety of subjects all hours of the day. If they like, they can deliver their own.

### Unit 3: Renaissance

In Social Sciences the students learn about modernization, the Reformation and the Renaissance, and in Humanities they are introduced to painting, poetry, art, and architecture produced during this time. They also read Petrarch, Shakespeare, Sidney, and other Elizabethan poets and study Da Vinci's theories about painting and perspective. Provided a sense of the Renaissance *Zeitgeist* by their other classes, students are encouraged, in Rhetoric, to consider how it might have led to the birth and popularity of the essay, as conceived by Montaigne. Reacting against the rigidities of scholasticism, Montaigne invented a genre of writing that deemphasized form and encouraged free thinking and radical questioning. Students come to see, through their work in all three courses, how Renaissance Humanism with its emphasis on the study of rhetoric, eloquence, and, of course, study of the humanities, provided the ideal environment for the creation of a genre that challenges authority, entertains doubt, prioritizes the individual voice and observation, and values the human mind.

Students learn the characteristics of the exploratory essay (as conceived by Montaigne and theorized by recent scholars and journalists), and consider the following: How are these characteristics well suited to Renaissance times and how are they well-suited to our own? What kind of writing voice does the essay allow writers to express? What role does the personality of the essayist play in the essay? How is it different in form than classical rhetorical speeches? What are its concerns? What is the relationship between the essay and truth? The essay and received knowledge? What is its form? Length? Style? Is it fiction or nonfiction or a blend? How does an essayist compare with the critic, the scholar, the journalist, the fiction writer?

### *Writing (5-7 Revised Pages):*

Students compose an exploratory essay on the subject of their choosing. They are counseled to avoid the certainty of their oral speeches and to balance their voice with the voices of authorities on whatever subject they choose. Some time is spent on how to use academic research to deepen one's exploration of a subject.

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### Readings:

Francis Bacon, "Of Truth," "Of Innovations," "Of Youth and Age," in *The Essays* Scribner & Sons

Joan Didion "Seacoast of Despair" in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Adam Gopnick "Bumping into Mr. Ravioli" in *Writing in Response* Bedford St. Martin

Michael L. Hall, "The Emergence of the Essay and the Idea of Discovery" in *Essays on the Essay: Redefining the Genre* U of Georgia P

Carl Klaus, "Essayists on the Essay" in *Literary Nonfiction: Theory, Criticism, and Pedagogy* Southern Illinois UP

Michel de Montaigne, "Of Prompt or Slow Speech," "Of Cannibals," "Of Books," in *Complete Works: Essays, Travel Journal, Letters* Everyman Library

David Foster Wallace "Consider the Lobster" in *Gourmet* Aug 2004

### Connection to Other Units:

Students continue to explore essayistic writing in Units 4 & 6—the long list of readings in this unit is meant to give them a firm foundation in the genre. In addition, when they begin to learn about the Industrial Revolution and Capitalism and the effects of these on social classes in Humanities and Social Sciences in Unit 4 and Unit 5, they return to Didion's essay as they travel to Newport, RI and take a servant's life tour at the mansions Didion critiques.

### Experiential Learning:

Students attend the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Boston's Symphony Hall to listen to classical pieces that inform their Humanities discussion "Music in Classical Times, Music in Our Times" (performances have included works by Beethoven, Debussy, and Brahms).

### Unit 4: Reason to Revolution: The Enlightenment Gives Birth to Revolution and Romanticism

In Social Sciences students consider how cultural attitudes toward God, authorities, tradition, and humanity changed with the Enlightenment and how the Industrial Revolution transformed cities and deepened the estrangement between nature and civilization. In Humanities the realities of life in the city during the Industrial Revolution are made vivid to students through their reading of Dickens and Gaskell.

Students also learn in both Humanities and Rhetoric about the Romantic era and Transcendentalism and how these challenged conventional ways of thinking about authority, emotion, spontaneity, nature, and the sublime. Reading Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats in Humanities and Locke, Hobbes, Voltaire, and Rousseau in Social Sciences, the students are introduced to, or reacquainted with, writers whose perspectives they are encouraged to inhabit at least temporarily in order to come to meaningful conclusions about the ideal balance between tradition and innovation, reason and emotion, the city and nature, civic life and individual endeavor.

### Writing (5-7 Revised Pages):

Students continue to work with the essay form, but in this unit, rather than compose an open-ended exploratory essay, as they did in the previous unit, they compose one driven by a thesis in which they make a clear claim. They synthesize the views of the writers they read and then set their voice in conversation alongside these writers in order to persuade readers to adopt their perspective. Their essays explore the tension between city living and nature, between finding the sublime only in the "woods" versus the possibility of "getting lost" and finding it regardless of physical location, between finding knowledge in books or technology versus finding it in their own experiences. Essayistic conventions encourage them to synthesize their personal voices with voices of "authority" and to consider their own experiences vs. received wisdom.

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### Readings:

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" in *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Essays and Lectures* Library of America

William Giraldi, "Splendid Visions: A Meditation on the Childhood Sublime," in *Bookforum* Spring 2013

Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" in *Walden* and "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" Project Gutenberg Literary Archive

William T. Vollmann "Let's Get Lost" in *Artforum* Summer 2013

### Connections to Other Units:

Students are asked to recall the Abram reading from Unit 1. In his article Abram explains how Plato both dismisses the things that nature can teach man and embraces nature as a source of wisdom. Students see this for themselves in Unit 2 when they read Plato's *Phaedrus* and see Socrates contend that "trees and open country won't teach me anything, whereas the men in the city do" and then wander outside the walls of the city for his famous dialogue with the young Phaedrus. The writing assignment also pulls on concerns from Unit 1: How can they explain and synthesize the voices of the past? How do literacy and technology change our relationship to nature? Students must additionally consider what they learned about persuasive speech in Unit 2: How do writers create an ethical, credible, persuasive, and stylistically sophisticated writing voice? As well as Unit 3: What are the conventions of essayistic writing, and how does one conduct academic research? Finally, Unit 4 anticipates the concerns of Unit 6: How does the digital revolution impact how we interact with nature? How does it impact how we read and write?

### Experiential Learning:

Students study (in both Rhetoric and Humanities) how Romanticism encourages a turn to nature's beauties, a search for the sublime, and the prioritizing of emotions. They read Thoreau and visit Walden Pond as they contemplate their own stance on the proper balance between nature and civilization.

Students also read Emerson in Rhetoric and learn about how Transcendentalism promotes self-reliance, the embrace of nature, and the good of people. They visit the Old Manse in Concord, Emerson's (and later Hawthorne's) former home, and learn how each of these writers developed their attitudes toward nature.

The Industrial Revolution, with its large migration of people to cities, deepens the divide between nature and city, a topic the students began studying in Unit 1 and continued to explore in Unit 3. In both Lowell, Massachusetts and, later, Manchester, England, students tour textile factories, walk alongside working canals, visit mills, and factories, and view former boarding houses as they consider how earlier writers experienced city life in a much different fashion than students do today.

### Unit 5: The Century of Change: The Long Nineteenth Century Yields Twentieth - Century Breaks with the Past (in London)

In Social Sciences students learn about how the rise of industrial capitalism led to the formation of new social classes, the West gained dominance across continents, and national rivalries resulted in two world wars. They read Marx and Engels and discuss Nationalism, Fascism, and the Depression. In Humanities they read World War I poems, Eliot, and Woolf. In Rhetoric, students draw on the historical and cultural contexts provided by those courses to understand the background and rhetoric of the memorials and monuments that surround them in the city of London. They consider the following: How do monuments and memorials act rhetorically? Whose version of history do they tell? In what ways might they suggest the validity of one perspective over another? How can their meanings change across time and with changes to their physical

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

locations? How do we “use” monuments and memorials to remember, and what complications arise from this use? Students analyze how the stories we tell ourselves about the past, our nation, our communities, and our heroes are rhetorical, how our history is written in public spaces.

### *Writing (8-10 Revised Pages):*

Students chose a monument or memorial in London and conduct a rhetorical analysis of it. This analysis is contextualized with a consideration of the history of memorialization, an overview of the time in which their monument/memorial was created, a history of the monument/memorial’s creation, and a detailed visual description of its current condition.

In the analysis they consider such things as: What messages are suggested by the visual elements (i.e., what do things like the type of material, the scale of the monument, the style of any font, the use/lack of color, etc., communicate)? In its selection of one reality, from what other aspects of reality is a visitor’s attention deflected? How are aspects of a society’s identity expressed in this monument?

### *Readings:*

Cecile Alduy, “Philip Gourevitch: Memory is a Disease” Interview in *Salon*

Patricia Cohen “At Museum on 9/11, Talking Through an Identity Crisis.” In *New York Times Online*

Allen Greenberg, “Lutyens’s Cenotaph.” In *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*

George Orwell “Politics and the English Language.”

Marita Sturken, “The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial.” In *Representations*

Sarah Tarlow, “Landscapes of Memory: The Nineteenth-Century Garden Cemetery.” In *European Journal of Archaeology*

Jay Winter, “War Memorials and the Mourning Process (Excerpt).” In *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*

James E. Young, “The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today.” In *Critical Inquiry*

### *Connections to Other Units:*

Students draw on what they learned in Unit 2 about the artistic proofs of ethos, pathos, and logos, as well as what they read about the relationship between rhetoric and truth. They employ research skills emphasized in Unit 3 in order to gather historical information about the time period in which their monument and memorial was created and revealed.

### *Experiential Learning:*

Students are given links to websites detailing the memorials and monuments in the city and are encouraged to explore them. Some class time is spent walking to nearby monuments, such as the Prince Albert Memorial and the Princess Diana Memorial. All the students go on a sunset tour of the famous Highgate Cemetery, where they learn how various attitudes toward death and the deceased are communicated visually through architecture, sculpture, and symbols. They similarly tour Westminster Abbey, where some of Britain’s most famous figures are entombed and memorialized.

The Social Science course requires them to take a trip to the Imperial War Museum, and the Humanities course arranges for tickets to “War Horse” at the London Theater; these experiences deepen their understanding of the history behind the monuments and memorials they analyze.

### Unit 6: The Post-War Maelstrom and the Digital Revolution (in London)

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries were and are marked by rapid and profound changes and challenges in human and civil rights, the arts, and technology. Having begun the year learning about the movement from hunting and gathering to agriculture and cities as well as studying the birth of writing, reading, and rhetoric,



## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

the students conclude the year by looking at the more recent past as well as the present, with its ever-changing media of communication. In Humanities students study post-colonialism and feminism and are introduced to cultural studies. In Social Sciences students discuss human rights, poverty, terrorism, and the civil rights moments. In Rhetoric the students, transplanted to a foreign country far from home, friends, and family, consider the following: How is our experience of the mediated world different from the experience of older generations? How do the media we use become extensions of us? In becoming extensions of us how do they alter us (our memory, our ability to focus, our ability to read and think, and our ability to interact with others face-to-face)? How do digital tools alter our relationship to our physical surroundings and our ability and desire to navigate or engage with the real world?

### *Writing (8-10 pages):*

Students write a thesis-driven essay in which they draw on the assigned readings and class discussions of these in order to argue for their own claims about how digital technology may or may not impact us cognitively, socially, or psychologically.

### *Readings:*

Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" In *Atlantic Monthly*  
 Brian Christian, "Mind vs. Machine." In *Atlantic Monthly Online*  
 Stephen Marche, "Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?" In *Atlantic Monthly Online*  
 Jane McGonigal, "Be a Gamer, Save the World" In *Wall Street Journal Online*  
 Evgeny Morozov, "The Death of the Cyberflaneur" In *New York Times Online*  
 Mark Oppenheimer, "Technology is Not Driving Us Apart After All." In *New York Times Magazine*  
 Sarah Prickett, "Sign of the Times: It's Instagram Envy." In *New York Times Online*  
 Tony Schwartz, "In Praise of Depth." In *New York Times Online*  
 Mitchell Schwarzer, "A Sense of Place, A World of Augmented Reality: Part 1." In *Places Journal*  
 Emily Esfahani Smith, "Life on the Island." In *The New Criterion*

### *Experiential Learning:*

Students spend six weeks in London, a city completely foreign to many of them. There they must navigate unfamiliar streets, find their way to various museums, and communicate with family and friends back home. They also travel to Paris for two nights—there they visit Versailles and the Louvre as a group and are given free time to explore the city on their own. The assignment in this unit encourages them to reflect on how digital technologies impact how they navigate, experience, and capture (through photograph and video) the city as well as how they communicate their experiences to others near and far.

### *Connections to Other Units:*

In Unit 1 students read David Abram and learn about Plato's distrust of the new skill of writing. Plato fears that writing will make men more forgetful, as they will no longer have to depend on their memories. This ancient concern resurfaces here in Unit 6 as students consider how their reliance on digital technologies may have impacted their capacity for remembering. Also, at this point in the year, students have, due to earlier writing assignments in Units 1-5, become adept at explaining, synthesizing, and analyzing many different kinds of texts as well as generating, organizing, and styling a persuasive argument. They have learned from these earlier units how to do research, and they have come to understand that they are expected to read closely in order to delineate their positions, contextualize their arguments, anticipate and address opposition, substantiate claims, and appreciate the complexity of the issue under debate. All of these skills are employed in the writing of their final paper.

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### **Critical Reflection on Course and Program:**

#### Strengths

##### *Student Assessment and Evaluation*

The first January Boston-London Program was intense, exciting, and successful. Assessment of student learning carried out by the College of General Studies assessment committee found that student work from the program demonstrated strong critical thinking and writing skills. The committee observed that students were notably adept at making productive interdisciplinary connections. Not only do these assessments speak to student engagement, but data on retention rates show that the College retained 95% of the students in the program. These rates were not only higher than retention rates across the University, but also 2% higher than the College's September Freshmen program of that same academic year.

Course evaluations praised the courses, readings, and professors, and all the professors elected to return for the second round of the program. Travel and experiential learning was embraced by the students who have subsequently remarked on how much these complemented what they were learning in the classroom.

##### *Professorial Collaboration:*

Professors' willingness to compromise, to abandon comprehensive survey and breadth in favor of intersection and integration, allowed students to focus on several time periods, movements, events, and theories from multiple perspectives, which reinforced their understanding of these and encouraged their engagement with the material.

The creation of a 4-columned joint syllabus (a column for each class as well as one for trips and events) shared amongst the professors was extremely helpful for focusing our attention on productive crossover between classes (see Appendix 1).

As well, the creation and maintenance of a Google Drive made the sharing of readings, notes, assignments, and syllabi effortless and prevented the need for endless emails with attachments. Similarly, because students were asked to post assignments to e-portfolios to which we all had access, we were able to see how our students were thinking and writing in all their classes, which provided us with a much fuller sense of who are students were and of what they were capable. It also allowed us to work together to focus on writing issues we saw students having in all three courses.

Professors worked out due dates for major assignments together so that students did not have overlapping due dates for papers and exams, an important consideration in a program that is intense and condensed, especially in the summer.

The entire team adopted one online handbook created by one of the professors. We all referred to this handbook in our assignments, our classes, and our conversations with students. All three courses required the same citation style at the same time (MLA or Chicago), which encouraged students' familiarity with these.

The Humanities and Social Sciences professors worked with each other's core texts as well, with each requiring some readings found in the texts for the other course. All three professors communicated with one another about their expectations for student writing, down to the level of grammar and style. All three communicated these expectations to students on writing prompts and in writing feedback, often explicitly referring to advice offered to students by another of their professors.

#### Proposed Modifications

##### *Travel:*

When in Boston, we determined it was best to avoid scheduling trips on the weekends, and, when possible,

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

to avoid full day trips, which require considerable planning and expense in terms of providing the students with transportation and meals.

Flexibility is important—lousy weather, inept tour guides, museum closings, delayed and disabled buses, and illnesses all need to be anticipated. No one trip should be so critically important to the program that its loss or alteration significantly impacts student learning. Those teaching a similar course or set of courses should make themselves aware, ahead of time, of any rich learning opportunities provided by their locations so that flexibility becomes a strength of the program, as it did for us. (For instance, students who finished the tour of Versailles earlier than they would have liked, due to the demands and cost of the bus transportation, were encouraged to try the reasonably-priced hop-on hop-off sightseeing boats on the Seine.)

Every site visit should be accompanied by a formal assignment. Students got the most out of trips when they were asked, post-travel, to reflect, in structured assignments, on connections between their experiences and course material. They were encouraged to take pictures when permitted, and these were frequently uploaded to their e-portfolios and captioned with 500-word reflective paragraphs drawing on relevant scholarly sources and course material.

### *Interdisciplinary Connections:*

The demands of creating an entirely new program sometimes made it difficult for professors to keep up with readings in all three subjects. Professors committed to spending more time in the future with one another's course materials, as students commented favorably on instances when professors explicitly referred to one another's classes, whether in class or on assignments. Considerable time is needed to create such a program (planning started in the summer of 2012 for a program that began in winter 2013); those wishing to create their own should build in sufficient lead time and be willing to meet weekly once the program has begun.

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## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### “On Art, Resonance and Resilience,”

By Christine Tannous, Boston University

“All art is autobiographical to some extent,” he digressed as we shifted our discussion from brush strokes in Gerhard Richter's *Vase* to abstract patterns in Chuck Close's *Paul IV*. It was a crisp, unforgivingly chilly November afternoon in 2014. As we meandered along the crowded galleries of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, intoxicated by the cornucopia of perennial masterpieces adorning its walls, Daniel Jay and I basked in candid meditations on contemporary art.

Jay belongs to a rare breed of artists working at the interface of art and science who are at once artists and scientists. A Tufts University researcher and lecturer on weekdays, an artist at night and on Sundays, for the past thirty years Jay has kept both worlds squarely apart. Yet in the summer of 2013, after attending an experimental painting workshop at The Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts, he found a unique voice in a series of chemical drawings he made using liquid nitrogen and chemical elements. Jay showcased *Archemy*, his first sci-art work and the brainchild of his Provincetown experiments, at Tufts University's Slater Concourse Gallery in the fall of 2014. His journey from Provincetown to *Archemy* is the subject of [Supercool Art](#), an essay he wrote for *Impact's* 2014 winter issue.

I had intended for our dominical stroll through the MFA to be at once an icebreaker and a discreet way into the mind of the artist. As I had never met Jay prior to that November afternoon and hence neither knew the man nor the artist, I calculated that a museum visit was the shortest possible distance to a candid conversation. More pressingly, however, I had to observe the artist in his natural milieu, and slowly, gently peel the layers to peek through.

In my modest experience interviewing artists and musicians, I have noted that the more cutting-edge an artist's work is the less likely they are to clearly articulate the-what-and-the-why of their art. Perhaps because they wrongly assume the matter is too complex for a layperson. Whatever the reason, this couldn't be further from the truth here. A frequent leitmotiv during our lunch at the MFA was the nineteenth-century specialization and the ensuing divorce between science and the humanities. Jay's account of the cultural dynamics behind the division is effortlessly simple yet profoundly perceptive. He bemoaned the rise of an elitist contemporary art form and the loss of thought diversity as a result of the divergence, adding that everyone can think at the interface and “the more people the better.”

As we discussed the feasibility of his vision, I shared my misgivings about a [Britten documentary](#) I had been working on for my online journalism class. I had decided to turn my final project, at first a video report on Boston University's Symphony Orchestra and Chorus' [rendition of Benjamin Britten's War Requiem](#), into a short documentary about the work itself. As a writer and former musician, I was eager to share Britten's music with the largest audience, but an opus as fundamentally complex as the *War Requiem* was a rough beast to tame. The highlight of a 1962 three-week arts festival celebrating the reconstruction and dedication of Coventry Cathedral after its bombing by the Luftwaffe, The *War Requiem* is Britten's unique pacifist statement and a colossal choral and orchestral work. It juxtaposes texts from the Latin Mass for the dead, delivered by a symphonic orchestra, a chorus and a soprano, with poetry from World War I poet Wilfred Owen, delivered by a chamber orchestra, a baritone and a tenor. A children's chorus provides a timeless third dimension to the piece.

The *Requiem's* anti-war message would no doubt resonate with many an audience what with the Great War centennial celebrations and continuing conflicts all over the globe. Britten's division of choral and orchestral forces, his use of the poems as a commentary on the Mass, his unusual closing harmonies all collide to convey a pacifist message. But

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

deconstructing without oversimplifying was indeed proving difficult. Was I to abandon this foolhardy endeavor then? I offer Jay's response unabridged.

"When you teach you look for resonance and you know that not everyone will resonate with your message. You are looking to inform but you are also looking for that pair of eyes fixed at you like this is life-changing. This is how you build a community that will hopefully lead the next generation."

Earlier that morning, Jay had been figure drawing with a group of friends at the Cambridge Art Association. When I asked the significance of figure drawing and why he had been doing it for thirty years, he likened it to playing Chopin's *Etudes* for pianists. The whole purpose is to train your hand and your eye to work together to capture a scene, to create a universe on a page. To capture a scene and create a universe on a page, and to look for resonance — all art is autobiographical indeed.

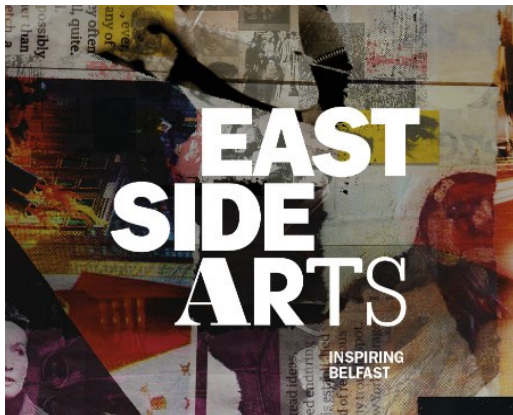
But so is writing a novel, a memoir, an aria or a symphony. The canvases may be different yet the poetry of the language is the same, as Jay would put it.

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

### “A Triptych of Voices on Art and Life,”

By Kaz Hawkins, Meg Tyler, and Holly Connell Schaaf

*In December 2014 the Boston University Institute for the Study of Irish Culture, the BU Arts Initiative and the BU Center for the Humanities hosted Northern Irish musician Kaz Hawkins. Hawkins' work is rooted in Eastside Arts, a strategy and collective that aims to teach others about the rich history of East Belfast – where C.S. Lewis, Van Morrison and other notables were born – and to encourage contemporary artists. Below Hawkins talks about the relationship between art and life, and BU faculty reflect on Hawkins' contribution to art, music and the next generation.*



#### Kaz Hawkins: BOSTON UNI

On December 1, 2014 I travelled for the first time from East Belfast to Boston. I was in Boston to represent Belfast's Eastside Arts, to share my music and life story, and to demonstrate how the East Belfast Partnership has helped my career. I live in an area that still suffers the after effects of the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. It is difficult for us to achieve anything creative, so we cherish those greats who came before us and who lived among our community. As an artist I try to voice my opinion or thoughts via my music, but my main aim is to inspire; it was music that saved me in the end. With Eastside Arts I am now able to celebrate the artists that came before me and tap into a lot more to help my career.

I grew up in a poverty stricken home, with an abusive father and a sexually abusive uncle; this laid the foundation for a destructive beginning. I got pregnant to get out of the home, and this led me to abusive men. Abusing alcohol was normal at home, so I carried on the local tradition. My life took on many faces in those years of destruction. I sank into depression, I was suicidal, I was addicted to drugs, and I wanted to die. I explain my harsh life and use my story to break down barriers around mental illness and make it easier for people to talk about.

My trip to Boston was special for me as I felt with it I had come full circle. To be asked to represent your community in the arts could be a frightening prospect, which it was at first and right up until I caught my flight. As it always does my harsh beginnings kicked me a boot and told me to pull up my big girl panties and move it. My beginnings have taught me never to be afraid again; I've learned to use these moments to be proud and to show the world that success does not necessarily mean piles of cash or letters after your name. I've learned you can rise from the ashes like a phoenix and shine a light for everyone to see.

As I arrived in Boston my senses were on high alert. I wanted to breathe in every millisecond that I experienced. That little girl afraid of so much at such a young age was long gone, but as I walked down Massachusetts Avenue I felt unsettled and out of my comfort zone in a way I hadn't been in over 10 years. I still hold on to that frightened little girl, just to remind myself of my own journey and to keep me humble during life's harsh waves. With my first strong cup of American coffee I headed to Berklee College of Music to meet Professor Victor Coelho & Band, who had been learning my songs for our up & coming gig at Bill's Bar.

On the way and lost for directions I was overwhelmed by BU & Berklee students' offers of help. This influx of American accents was so lovely. I was a little tired from travelling and was instantly uplifted by these kids. After they quizzed me on my accent and why I was in Boston, we had an impromptu vocal session on the sidewalk. 'Hallelujah' I sang out as one teenager did a vocal arm up standing wrapped in hat and gloves on a brisk Boston night; I giggled like the teenager I wish I had been all those years ago.

Rejuvenated by these youths' zest for life and by my first American coffee, I practically skipped to where they directed me. I opened the door to one of Berklee's music halls and again students with instruments and high-pitched glorious voices overwhelmed me. Everyone was so happy, so open and fresh. This was something I had never experienced; the youth in my local area don't express much hope. As I walked down the corridors and up the elevator I wished our youth

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

from Eastside had this, but then I realized THIS costs a lot of money. I know that if you don't have a family who can save or a scholarship to further your time in the arts, then you will lose hope. In my heart I was here for those kids back home who filled up street corners; I was here for the teenagers who got pregnant and were bored beyond belief. I wanted them to experience this kind of youthful energy and excitement for the arts. That first impression on Massachusetts Avenue will be locked in my mind forever as it was my first experience of how much hope Boston students would give me that week.

I wish I could give you every sense, feeling and emotion I had and let you know how much I adored the ethos of Boston Uni. I wish I could tell you how BU wrapped this Eastside girl in its arms and guided me up & down Commonwealth Avenue in temperatures I had never felt before. I wish I could tell you how its youth represented this ethos in their humble messages to me after my talks; or how the professors I met were women I could identify with in strength and how when they stood tall with happy faces it made me think I was at a Red Sox game and not a university. It would take a book for me to show people back home just how great you were Boston, but I took enough photos for my fans to live the experience with me.

Thank you BU for educating this educator of life just a little bit more. I hope to see you all again soon.

Yours in Arts,

Kaz Hawkins, Belfast

### **Meg Tyler: Kaz in Boston and Belfast**

Kaz Hawkins, an unusually talented blues singer and musician from Belfast in Northern Ireland, graced us with her vibrant presence for a week in December. Kaz is what some might call a force of nature. I heard about her talent from the founder and director of Eastside Arts in Belfast, Maurice Kinkead. Maurice is a gentle and generous spirit, his smile as much a permanent feature on his visage as his eyes. He's done a great deal to support artists and musicians in a town where alternatives to these constructive activities can easily take a darker turn. He nurtured the young Kaz and encouraged her talent. In the States we take the blues almost for granted; it so much permeates American music. In Ireland, the blues is an anomaly. But because it grew out of the field songs of slaves, as a way to express the resurgence of self and spirit against oppression, one can see how the blues might have a place in a riven landscape like Belfast. Ireland is also a fairly conventional society. For Kaz to make it as a lead singer, a star even, in a society where male musicians and poets have almost always held center stage, is a marked achievement.

When Kaz visited BU, she came to two classes, one at CFA (Music Appreciation) and one at CGS (Ethics, where we were thinking about Ethics and the Arts). Over 100 students reaped the benefit of her honesty, her audaciousness and her talent. She told her life story, which is painful to hear. And she sang some of the songs she wrote about that story. At CFA, Professor Victor Coelho accompanied her on an acoustic guitar. At CGS, she accompanied herself even though she was healing from a broken wing. The students were mesmerized. No tale wrought in a novel or intimated in a poem could have moved the students more. Especially thrilling was witnessing her strength and ability in transforming darkness into light, sorrow into meaningful art. Her presence and performance were inspiring in a way perhaps that a book cannot be. Rarely have I witnessed such generosity and humility combined with great talent. She brought to us the streets of Belfast, the need for continued optimism, an appreciation of the ways in which difficulty can defeat us and what hard times can teach us. Her live performances in local clubs (including the Brendan Behan Pub in Jamaica Plain and Bill's Bar on Landsdowne Street) did just what such performances should: stunned and delighted the audiences. But I think Kaz is so much more than a talented performer. Her voice is enormous, yes, and she wields it with great power. But she is also innovative in her craft and in her diplomatic maneuvering. She has taken a well-used and familiar form (blues) and a familiar story (awareness borne of suffering) and brought them into happy collision with the trickyness of life in Northern Ireland, where the sides of cities denote not just geographical direction but also tribal division. She points the way towards a future where divisive lines can begin to fade.

### **Holly Connell Schaaf: Transforming Corners: Kaz Hawkins' Blues at the Brendan Behan Pub**

That night, in Kaz's honor, Boston brought forth misty drizzle almost worthy of Belfast. Delighted to open for her, spattering wet rhythms played across the cab windows as Kaz and I rode to Jamaica Plain's Brendan Behan Pub from the Hotel Buckminster. I'd met her at that iconic Kenmore Square wedge just days earlier. A few weeks before that, I'd cried healing

## ESSAYS - CONTINUED

tears listening to her songs “Lipstick and Cocaine,” and “Because You Love Me.” My dear longtime friend Meg Tyler, whose vision and hard work brought Kaz to Boston, introduced us. Talking with Kaz had instantly felt both comfortable and exciting.

The cozy pub was filling as we arrived. At first glance I could not see where she could sing. There must be some other room, hidden hallway, or secret portal, I thought. There was not. Peering through the crowd’s thrumming ebb and flow, I glimpsed a microphone far back from the entrance. Kaz sang from a corner – or at least what had seemed a corner before. As she sang, the walls disappeared in the magic of her voice. And yet they must have still been there, for we could feel keenly the joyous power of her cadences channeled into the narrow space. Some of us stayed close to her all the while she sang; some slid in and out of the crowd to go to the bar now and then. But all moved in Kaz’s orbit. As she spoke and sang with brutal authenticity about life’s challenges in songs like “I Saw a Man,” none could resist her gravity.

It was not all serious, however. With genuine warmth and lively humor, she drew exuberance and boisterous laughter from the diverse crowd. Many had come far just to hear her. But even regulars hitting the neighborhood pub paused in amazement, discovering in Kaz an enchanting surprise that freed them from their daily routine more surely than the pints they held in hands that unconsciously extended towards her. In the rollicking rhythms she shared in “Shake,” “Hallelujah Happy People,” and “Can’t Afford Me,” no hands and feet could be still.

Seduced into singing along with her sensual song “Born to be Lovers,” we felt destined to be in this place with each other and with her on this night. We added our voices to hers. With each note, Kaz wove us together, giving us the best experience that can be had in a crowd – the seemingly impossible blend of collective closeness and individual freedom. We responded all as one and also felt free to explore our own dreams: the unique visions her songs stirred in each of our hearts. She simultaneously stood apart in her glorious blue-haired beauty and was one of us.

It is not just on that night that Kaz sang from a corner and transformed it. In her life she has been backed into countless corners and taught silencing walls to sing. She found the courage and imagination to save herself from abuse, depression, and addiction, but also works tirelessly to give others the strength to survive trauma and embrace life. Telling her story with unflinching honesty, Kaz has raised thousands of pounds for East Belfast Community Counseling, a life-saving organization in her community that helps those with nowhere else to turn. Her dedication has and will give many people the peace and love she sings of in “Get Ready,” a song written to help heal her native Northern Ireland.

Meg and I are now talking excitedly about Kaz’s expected return in October. Until then, I listen to her album *Get Ready*, happy to have her songs with me. This album has given me an even deeper appreciation for the intricate poetry of her lyrics in “Walkin on My Own,” “Believe With Me,” and “Coz You,” so I cannot recommend it more highly. But to hear and see her live is to become part of a delicate yet strong circuit of song, to know a rush of shared passionate energy that will bring you new hope and vitality long afterwards. Through any medium, Kaz’s blues deeply convey life’s struggles and sorrows, but express with even more vivid beauty the boundless possibilities for joyful resistance and resilience.



## BOOK REVIEWS

**Fayez, Sharif. *An Undesirable Element: An Afghan Memoir*. Ed. Matthew Trevithick.\* Foreword by Ryan Crocker, Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. Berlin: First Draft Publishing, 2013. 81 pp. Paperback ISBN: 978-3-944214-18-4.**

Reviewed by June Grasso, Boston University

Dr. Sharif Fayez, American-educated Afghan scholar and Afghanistan's first post-Taliban Minister of Higher Education, has almost single-handedly rebuilt a system crippled by years of war that not only devastated the country's infrastructure, but also nullified personal, intellectual, and academic freedom. This brief but eloquent memoir traces Fayez's travail as he was forced to flee his homeland that was being "bombed to oblivion" (30) by the Soviets, while his Kabul University colleagues were disappearing, never to be seen again, following the 1978 coup instigated by Hafizullah Amin, an old classmate at Columbia University. Facing certain death, Fayez escaped to Iran.

Having fled the communists in Afghanistan, Fayez found himself in a country blighted by the terror of brutal sectarian warfare and run by the fiercely loyal Revolutionary Guards of the Ayatollah Khomeini, whose government glorified martyrdom and death. It was in Tehran during the horror of the Iran-Iraq War that Fayez was deemed "an undesirable element" by the Iranian government because of his reputation as an iconoclastic Muslim educator. He was allowed to leave. Decades later, after he had won numerous international awards for his work in higher education, Fayez recalled that he wished he could have kept an even more prized possession—his exit paperwork with the heading: "An Undesirable Element To Be Deported As Soon As Possible" (46).

Fayez rejected the narrow-minded extremism that characterized the policies of Iran's Islamic Republic, Afghanistan's Soviet-controlled communist regime, and its replacement, the Taliban-controlled Islamic Emirate, a sponsor of international terrorism. Living as an expatriate in the United States when the Taliban ruled, he was an outspoken critic.

He explained,

I was not interested in hearing someone attempt to explain the rationale behind their public executions and massacres of women and minorities. I was not interested in hearing a defense of why schools and universities had to be closed. I was not interested in their exclusively ethnic Pashtun nationalism, pursued at the expense of Afghanistan's diverse ethnic heritage. I was not interested in hearing why the burqa had become mandatory for women. (56)

Instead, he wanted for the Afghan people what he had experienced in the West—a "normal, predictable life," where his children had been able "to pursue their passions without issue" (62).

The Taliban's defeat in 2002 brought with it a new Western-sponsored interim government for Afghanistan under the leadership of Hamid Karzai, who afforded Fayez the opportunity to pursue his vision for renewing Afghan higher education. One goal was to model at least part of a new system on the private, independent universities in the United States where he had studied and taught. First, however, coping with the stark reality of post-war conditions, Fayez needed to fix the basics, rebuilding the physical structures of old public universities that had been the targets of Taliban assault and opportunistic looting. Perhaps more challenging was his fight to restore what he considered the essentials of higher education that had been in place in Afghanistan before recent conflicts. He immediately fired unqualified, politically-connected administrators and faculty, replaced ideology-based curricula with the liberal arts, and ended male-only education. He asserted that he became particularly militant about the issue of co-education because he faced overwhelming resistance, even from Afghan-Americans, to allowing boys and girls to study together. He tried to transform Afghan universities into the kinds of places he remembered from his youth, characterized by "fairness and equality" (72) and the intellectual freedom his generation of educators had taken for granted.

Fayez's next task was to realize what he called his "biggest dream" (78), to establish an American University of Afghanistan, similar to those in Cairo and Beirut, to entice an international, multi-disciplinary academic community to

## BOOK REVIEWS - CONTINUED

Kabul, where classes would be taught in English. Even his staunchest supporters in Washington suggested that he had gone too far. In 2014, nearly 2000 students studied at the university; thirty percent of them were women.

Fayez remains determined that a bright future for the Afghan people lies in the success of a rigorous, expansive, and liberal educational system that will eventually spread to all parts of the country and produce new generations of open-minded leaders. He is cautiously optimistic that the specters of intolerance and extremism will not return, despite problematic global political conditions. Only time will tell if he is correct. The reader will find his memoir uplifting in its optimism, but also unsettling because the perpetrators of past violence against education are alive and well, both within and outside the porous borders of Afghanistan.

\*A note about the editor:

Matthew Trevithick (CGS, '06; CAS, '08) is now co-founder and Director of Research at the Syria Research and Evaluation Organization in Gaziantep, Turkey. Previously, he served as Director of Communications at American University of Afghanistan for four years. In September 2014, Matt was awarded Boston University's Distinguished Young Alumni Award for his outstanding humanitarian work in Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan.

A decade ago, Matt sat in my Social Science classes not sure what major to pursue or which direction his career path would take. A bright, creative student, he combined the study of International Relations with a four-year commitment to B.U.'s Varsity Rowing Team. He was a silver medalist in the 2008 Head of the Charles Regatta. Today, he is the head coach of the Afghan National Rowing Team. He is also a prolific writer on issues concerning the people living in the conflict zones of Southwest Asia.



## BOOK REVIEWS - CONTINUED

**George, Susan A., and Regina M. Hansen. *Supernatural, Humanity, and the Soul: On the Highway to Hell and Back*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 223 pp. Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-137-41255-3.**

Reviewed by Gregory Stevenson, Rochester College

When done well the horror genre is an accurate barometer of the things that frighten us. Fictional monsters become a means of plumbing the depths of the monstrous within ourselves and within society. As such, horror wears many hats: it is at once a psychologist who forces us to face our fears, a commentator who critiques social issues and concerns, a philosopher who pushes us to think more deeply about evil in all its varied manifestations, and a theologian who counsels us regarding our innate desire to connect to a reality outside ourselves—one that can be as frightening as it can be benevolent. Because horror addresses some of the most complex and meaningful questions of life, it provides fertile ground for academic analysis. The television series *Supernatural*, which has just completed its tenth season on the CW network, is a horror show in the best tradition and one that has generated a significant amount of academic attention.

A recent collection of essays, *Supernatural, Humanity, and the Soul: On the Highway to Hell and Back*, edited by Susan George and Regina Hansen, examines various aspects of the series from social, philosophical, and theological perspectives. Following an introduction by the editors, the book unfolds in three sections, with the first section reading aspects of the series through theological and philosophical lenses. Included in this are an allegorical interpretation of several characters as representations of the virtues of faith, hope, and love and an interpretation of the show's concept of the soul in light of Platonic and Augustinian thought. In an essay that also contains a good treatment of the role of determinism in the series, Regina Hansen argues that *Supernatural* employs angelic hierarchies as a means of deconstructing the authority of religious faith and replacing it with the authority of the narrative. The most intriguing essay in this section is K. T. Torrey's examination of free will, which demonstrates how Sam and Dean Winchester, the main characters of the series, actively resist being reduced to characters in someone else's story by regularly asserting their own narrative agency.

Section two of *Supernatural, Humanity, and the Soul* looks at the show's representations of evil and monstrosity. Amidst discussions of the show's use of canines and fairy tales is an essay that represents the tradition of horror shows embodying societal issues in the form of monsters. Erin Giannini analyzes the monsters from season seven, the ancient Leviathans whose leader masquerades as CEO of a large corporation, as a reflection of the psychopathic qualities of corporate America at a time when the Occupy Wall Street Movement was happening concurrently with the show. The best essay in this section, and arguably in the book as a whole, is "The Hunter Hunted: The Portrayal of the Fan as Predator in *Supernatural*" by Cait Coker and Candace Benefiel. *Supernatural* is a show that has an active fan base that regularly engages the show in critical and creative ways through the writing of fan fiction and the posting of messages on social media. The showrunners of *Supernatural* not only recognize the activity of their fans but engage it themselves by incorporating fan activity as a recurring theme within the series itself. Coker and Benefiel examine this avenue of mutual critique, particularly since the showrunners of the series do not always portray fan activity in complimentary ways, sometimes going so far as to depict fandom itself as a predatory activity. As the lines continue to blur between the writers of television shows and the fans who view them, studies like this become an increasingly helpful guide for thinking through the ever-evolving nature of fandom.

The penultimate essay in section two, "'A Shot on the Devil': Female Hunters and the Identification of Evil in *Supernatural*" by Ralph Beliveau and Laura Bolf-Beliveau, introduces a topic that resurfaces throughout many of the remaining essays and is particularly represented in section three, which focuses on the portrayal of gender in *Supernatural*. This topic is the show's often problematic relationship with gender issues. The major characters on *Supernatural* are all male and the show itself actively embraces a traditional masculine *ethos*. This *ethos* finds representation in the essays that look at the show's treatment of father issues, its use of classic rock within the context of white masculinity, and its exploration of the masculinity of Dean Winchester as viewed through his obsession with his beloved 1967 Impala. The extent to which gender issues dominate the discussion in this book is clear from the fact that half of the essays (seven out of fourteen) address the issue in a substantive way.

Several of the contributors undertake a feminist interpretation of the series, examining, for instance, how the show both promotes and challenges its own patriarchal structure and how the show situates the rare female hunter within its male-

## BOOK REVIEWS - CONTINUED

dominated world. Not a few of the essayists are critical of the show's overarching masculine viewpoint and its representation of female characters, yet they clearly write as fans of the series. This highlights a missed opportunity. An interesting sociological question, an examination of which would have fit well within this collection but which goes mostly unaddressed, is why a show without any female leads and which actively embraces a masculine identity is so popular among women, who make up a huge portion of the *Supernatural* fan base, even among academics (fourteen of the sixteen contributors to this volume are women). The one essay that comes closest to addressing this dichotomy is Rhonda Nicol's examination of "Feminism without Women in *Supernatural*." She poses the interesting question of whether a show that embraces traditional masculinity and is even borderline misogynistic in its portrayal of women has to be considered antifeminist and regressive. She suggests it does not, arguing that the show is not only aware of its overwhelmingly masculine orientation, but regularly challenges the validity of its own masculine privilege.

As with any collection of essays, *Supernatural, Humanity, and the Soul* is uneven in quality. When taken as a whole, however, it is a helpful addition to the growing body of literature on *Supernatural* as well as on the academic analysis of television. For those unfamiliar with the series, this book would be of limited value, but for fans of the series it offers a provocative and diverse look at the series that allows them to appreciate it in new ways.

## PREVIOUS ISSUES

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# APPENDIX

Appendix 1				
Sample Page                      January Boston-London Program Combined Syllabus 2014				
	Humanities	Social Science	Rhetoric	Experiential Learning
Mar 17-21	Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry"	<i>Modernization</i> , Ch. 3 "Europe in the Medieval Era (19-29) and Ch. 4, "The Late Middle Ages" (30-39)	Montaigne, selected essays	
	Petrarch	<i>Magna Carta</i>	Michael Hall, "The Emergence of the Essay and the Idea of Discovery"	
	Shakespeare sonnets	Herlihy & Cohn, "The New Economic and Demographic System"	Bacon, selected essays	
	Poems by Wyatt, et al.		Wampole, "The Essayification of Everything"	
			Gopnik, "Bumping into Mr. Ravioli"	BSO- All Beethoven concert
Mar 24-28	Guest Lecture, Sally Sommers Smith (Natural Sciences) on science and the arts	<i>Modernization</i> , ch. 5, "The Italian Renaissance (40-49).	Klaus, "Essayists on the Essay"	
	Da Vinci, from "Precepts of the Painter"		Sanders, "The Singular First Person"	
	Kleiner, "The Early Renaissance in Europe" and "High Renaissance and Mannerism in Europe"	Erasmus, <i>The Complaint of Peace</i>	Foster Wallace, "Consider the Lobster"	

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