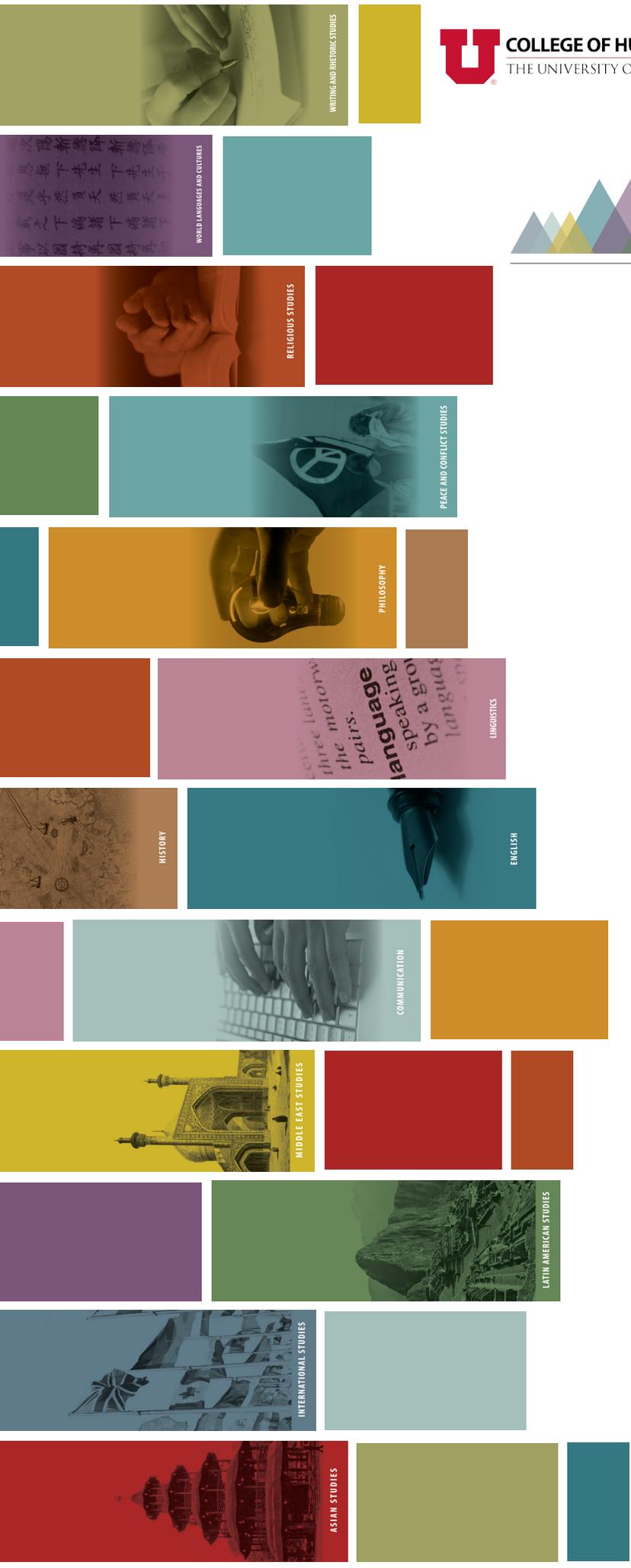


Humanities Newsletter

SEPTEMBER | 2016



In This Issue

Dean's Message | Exciting "Firsts"

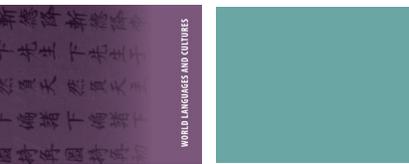
Featured Alumni | Maria K. Houtchens

Featured Student | Anastasia Najarian

News | Communication Professor and Associate Chair Helene A. Shugart published her new book

Upcoming Events | The 24th Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Lecture in Iranian Studies





"I feel like Communication was a good life major. With everything I do, I have these tools I can use that I learned in school. I tell lots of people that no matter what you do, make sure you at least take classes in the humanities. Trust that your humanities skills will carry over to whatever you need to do. I've been fully equipped to handle what has come my way and I have the tools to excel because of my studies in the College of Humanities."

-Kristina Baskett, B.S. in Communication, 2009



Message From The Dean

As we begin this academic year in the College of Humanities, there is much for which we are both grateful and excited. In addition to welcoming a wonderful, diverse, talented, and extraordinary group of students, our year is launching with some exciting "firsts":

- Our first group of 19 undergraduate Humanities Scholars arrived in August and started their year with a week-long orientation at our unparalleled Taft-Nicholson Environmental Humanities Education Center in Montana's Centennial Valley;
- Our College is welcoming 11 superb new tenure-track faculty members who bring exceptional intellectual and creative energy to our departments and programs;
- To ensure the success and retention of our new faculty, we are collaborating with the Office of Equity and Diversity to pilot a new and highly innovative semester-long workshop that will be led by Professor Vincent Cheng from the Department of English;
- We are launching our "Digital Matters Laboratory" in collaboration with the Marriott Library and a range of university partners as a pop-up space for the exploration of all things related to the digital humanities and beyond;
- We'll be occupying newly remodeled spaces in LNCO—a bright and beautiful College of Humanities office that is now accessible and navigable for all our students, as well as some classroom and office spaces that better accommodate our needs;
- We are also launching a new campaign: "Humanities Gives You the Edge"—an axiom that will ring true to every alumni reading this since you know, better than anyone, that your College of Humanities degree provided the essential ingredients for your life of personal and career success.

This newsletter is also a "first," one of many efforts we are launching to help keep you better informed about the many exciting, challenging, innovative, and wonderful things happening throughout our College. Please look for its monthly arrival in your inbox, and let us share with you the exciting road ahead.

With my best wishes,
Dianne Harris, Dean

Featured Alumni

Maria K. Houtchens

BA, Languages and Literature (Russian) 1995

Maria Houtchens, MD, wears many hats in her successful neurology career in Boston, Mass. She currently serves in three significant positions: Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, Associate Neurologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Director of the Women's Health Program at the Partners Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Center in Boston. Dr. Houtchens credits some of that success to her educational foundations in the College of Humanities at the U.

As a young student and recent transplant from Russia, Maria's undergraduate education in Languages and Literature started as a way to simply pursue an interest she might not have time for once she was accepted to medical school. She's grateful she made that decision. "I don't think I'd have been quite as effective a clinician as I am without my humanities training," she said. "It is as important as coursework in biology and chemistry on the path to medicine. Reading, learning people's stories and the ability to relate to the human condition, to misery, the ability to be empathetic and sympathetic -- all of that comes through training and coursework in humanities."



"Instead of being given problems to solve, our students generate them; instead of rehearsing narratives, they challenge them... Trained to navigate zones of interpretation rather than fixed rules, they emerge from the humanities with a highly adaptable creative intelligence, capable of analyzing complex systems and exploiting nuance in a world that is rarely black and white. They become lawyers, doctors, activists, artists, educators, scholars, and CEOs—producers of culture rather than consumers of it."

-Professor Richard Preiss, English

Featured Student

Anastasia Najarian

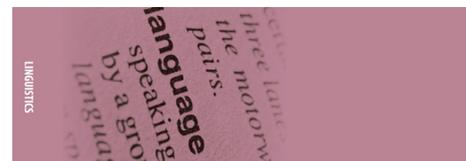
Honors Communication Major



Communication student Anastasia Najarian was chosen by the Honors College to represent the University of Utah at the Oxford Consortium for Human Rights at Oxford University, which she

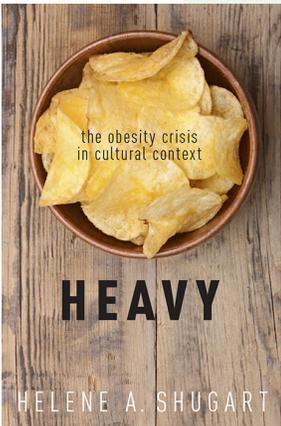
attended June 24-July 8, 2016. Anastasia said the consortium was an intimate opportunity to learn from global experts on human rights about current issues and how to address them. She is currently finishing a double major through the Honors College in Communication and Psychology and completing her honors thesis with Communication Professor David Vergobbi.

Her research focuses on the legal aspects of global dissemination of information regarding sensitive populations receiving mental health treatment, specifically relating to issues in Northern Ireland (political prisoners, police, and civilians) and the civil rights violations and reconciliation process demonstrated in the region. Anastasia and the other student participants engaged in intense discussions at Oxford surrounding the consortium's theme, "Religion and Human Rights: Citizenship in a Global Era," and appropriate means of communicating this information and then traveled to Northern Ireland to research an area suffering from post-conflict.



News

Communication Professor Helene Shugart publishes new book on the cultural context of the obesity crisis



Communication Professor and Associate Chair Helene A. Shugart published her new book, *Heavy: The Obesity Crisis in Cultural Context*, in July 2016 through Oxford University Press. In *Heavy*, Shugart interrogates why obesity campaigns have failed and are failing, argues that there is a disconnect between

official campaigns and cultural understandings of obesity, and places the contemporary instability regarding what obesity is (and why it is) in political and economic contexts.

The John R. Park Debate Society recognized as one of six recipients of the U's Beacons of Excellence Award

The Debate Society and five other recipients, including Taunya Dressler, College of Humanities Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, will be recognized at a luncheon ceremony on October

27, 2016, in the Olpin Union Ballroom. Martha Bradley-Evans, Associate VP for Academic Affairs, said, "[The Debate Society] has brought prestige to the U through accomplishments and award winning performance at state, national and international competitions. Your efforts are inspirational to many within our campus community and it is a privilege to recognize you!"

2016 selections for Artist-in-Residence Program at Taft-Nicholson Center announced

The 2016 selections for the Artist-in-Residence program at the Taft-Nicholson Center have been announced. The prestigious lineup includes English Professor Jeff Metcalf.

Find the full list of artists here:

taft-nicholson.utah.edu/center-news/2016air.php

UCEER awarded \$4 million from National Human Genome Research Institute

With \$4 million in funding from the National Human Genome Research Institute, the U of U Center of Excellence in ELSI (Ethical, Legal, & Social Implications) Research (UCEER) will explore ethical, legal and social questions raised by advances in genomic research and the increasing availability of genomic information. UCEER is carrying out research projects with collaborations across campus that include Humanities faculty members Heather Canary, James Tabery, Avery Holton, Leslie Francis, and Kim Kaphingst.

English Professor Paisley Rekdal named the 2016 winner for Creative Non-fiction by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs

English Professor Paisley Rekdal was named the 2016 winner for Creative Non-fiction by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. The award was granted for her book, *The Broken Country: On Trauma, A Crime, and the Continuing Legacy of Vietnam*, in which Rekdal examines the larger scope of the war,



including the sheer number of people who were, as a result, permanently wounded and/or psychologically maimed. Additionally, Professor Rekdal has a book of poems that will be coming out this fall called *Imaginary Vessels* with Copper Canyon.

L2TReC wins language training center award from Department of Defense

Our Second Language Teaching and Research Center (L2TReC) was selected by the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) as a Language Training Center (LTC) Program winner. The LTC Program is a Department of Defense initiative to accelerate the development of foundational or higher-level expertise in strategic language and regional studies for DoD personnel by leveraging U.S. institutions of higher education to meet the existing and demonstrated training needs of DoD units, offices, or agencies. L2TReC was one of eight institutions to become part of the program.

Mariam Thalos publishes new book

Philosophy Professor Mariam Thalos published a new book, *A Social Theory of Freedom*. Thalos describes the book as: "an extended phenomenological argument, arguing that the theory of human freedom should be a broadly social and political theory, rather than a theory that places itself in opposition to the thesis of determinism." She "rejects the premise that a theory of freedom is fundamentally a theory of the metaphysics of constraint and, instead, lays out a conception of freedom that is closely aligned with questions of social identity, self-development in contexts of intimate relationships, and social solidarity."

For all **news stories** and to read more about these, please visit our website at humanities.utah.edu/news

Events

The 24th Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Lecture in Iranian Studies

U.S.-Iranian Relations: Enemies Forever?

Ambassador John Limbert,
United States Naval Academy
Friday, Sept. 9, 6:30 p.m.
Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities
Building (CTIHB), Room 109



Philosophy Colloquium Series presents Neil Sinhababu from the National University of Singapore

Thursday, Sept. 1, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building (CTIHB)

Chinese Culture Week

Sept. 30 - Oct. 9

Modern Codex

Sept. 20, 11 a.m., Gould Auditorium, Marriott Library

The Africa Meets Africa Project

Aug. 15-Oct. 12, Utah Cultural Celebration Center, 1355 W. 3100 S., West Valley City, UT 84119

For all **events** and to read more about these, please visit our website at humanities.utah.edu/events





“While majoring in International Studies and Writing & Rhetoric Studies, I’ve had many opportunities to delve into fascinating discussions, enlightening topics, and incredible experiences. I’ve taken classes ranging from writing with veterans to lectures on topics affecting our globe like terrorism and intercultural issues. Although I’m not sure where life will take me, I know my humanities education has given me a unique edge that will continue to be tremendously helpful in my personal and professional life.”
-Thomas Whitworth, International Studies and Writing & Rhetoric Studies

Our theme for the year reflects a powerful truth: **Humanities Gives You the Edge**. Alumni of Humanities not only lead lives of extraordinary fulfillment, but they also excel at whatever they do. Our thousands of alumni unanimously tell us that **Humanities gave them the edge** that helped them succeed as excellent communicators; multi-lingual and culturally sophisticated global citizens; critical, ethical, and logical thinkers; and outstanding creative partners. And research backs this up! Studies prove that Humanities students find careers that provide financial security and job satisfaction that matches those of students in nearly every other major. Employers increasingly seek employees who have strong skills learned in Humanities (think writing, reading, listening, speaking, critical thinking, etc.). Humanities gives people the edge they need to thrive today. How does Humanities give YOU the edge?



GIVE TO HUMANITIES



Your contributions provide scholarships for students, help develop new programs, and fund innovative research that keeps this college on the cutting edge.

humanities.utah.edu/giving.php