This year’s colloquium is sponsored in part through the Ralph Harper Endowment Fund.

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2017
2:00 PM
HODSON HALL
A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I would like to welcome you to our sixth Master of Liberal Arts Colloquium. At this event, we come together as a community to exchange ideas and to honor the hard work and commitment of our students. Students are always curious about the research their colleagues are pursuing and the ideas they are exploring in their various classes. With this event, we can satisfy that curiosity. I wish to thank Dr. Dianne Scheper for organizing this year’s colloquium and for working with students. We hope you enjoy their presentations and will plan to join us again next year as we continue this annual Colloquium tradition.

Elizabeth Patton, Ph. D.
Program Director, Master of Liberal Arts

A special thank you to the following faculty members who are assisting at this event:

Professor Melissa Hilbish
Professor George Scheper
AGENDA

2:00
Poster Session with light refreshments

2:30
Welcoming Remarks
Dr. Elizabeth Patton, Director, MLA Program

Conferring of the Excellence in Teaching Award and the Student Capstone Award
Dr. Elizabeth Patton, Director, MLA Program

2:50–3:50
Colloquium Presentations
Individual Speakers: Rooms 301 and 305

4:00–5:00
Colloquium Presentations
Individual Speakers: Rooms 301 and 305

5:00–5:30
A Musical Coda: “Peace and Protest in the 1960’s: The Sound Track”
Sabrina Scarborough, "Cultural Eras: the 60’s": Dr. Melissa Hilbish

2017 COLLOQUIUM POSTER SESSION

The Child Soldiers of Central East Africa
Presented by Laura McBride

Geocaching: An Interdisciplinary Adventure
Presented by Kristi Metzger

Modern and Contemporary Drama Studies: Student Designed Playbills
Presented by Danielle Poe
TOM MORRIS: “Not Just Coincidence: The Timing and Scope of the Twin Emancipations in Russia and the United States”
In political speeches and debates during the 1850s, Abraham Lincoln described the Russian Government as a tyranny and Tsar Alexander II as a despot. Yet, the Tsar emancipated millions of Russian serfs almost two years before Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The irony of this situation likely vexed Lincoln, who despised slavery. My thesis focuses on the evolution of Lincoln’s thoughts and actions as the United States lagged behind Russia in resolving the contentious issue of human servitude and concludes that Alexander II’s Emancipation Manifesto influenced Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, including with respect to the process and promotion leading up to the announcement of impending emancipation, the textual similarities between the two emancipation documents, and the post-announcement actions of Lincoln.

Capstone Advisor: Dr. D. Duane Cummins

STERLING THOMAS: “The Power of Narrative”
We are creatures of narrative. So much of how we learn and process the world, from our earliest memories to the foundations of our deepest faiths, comes through the form of stories. We learn our languages, our histories, our religions, even the basic concepts of our own identities through narratives. Yet as stories demand our willing suspension of disbelief, these same cognitive processes must also be quite vulnerable to distortion and manipulation. The influence of ‘make-believe’ depends both righteously and dangerously on the moral authority of the ‘beliefs’ in the ‘making’. This presentation examines the underlying power behind what happens to us individually and socially when we consume stories.

Capstone Advisor: Dr. Mary Furgol

In this presentation I reflect on the multiple ways in which my MLA education has enriched and deepened my understanding of the music that is the centerpiece of my life and my career as an opera singer and violinist. In March, I shared my artistic journey by performing a Capstone recital, “Dimensions of Love,” at An die Musik, and I draw on that performance today, blending ethnomusicology and singing together with the history of ideas.

Capstone Advisor: Dr. Leonard Bowman
KRISTI A. AHO: “The Music of the Spheres”
Ancient philosophers, astronomers, and religious thinkers were inspired by the observed order and symmetry of the motions of the heavenly bodies. They believed this demonstrated the work of a divine creator whose ongoing presence governed the universe, and they described this symmetry as a form of celestial music. Scientific and technological advances over the centuries, changing the relationship between humans and their cosmos and altering their belief in divine providence, made these beliefs seem primitive. However, the quest to make sense of the universe continues, and we now know that the intuitions of the ancients were fitting, as recent discoveries and the development of the new physics of the 21st century have revealed that there is, indeed, a musical and harmonic structure to the universe.

Cosmos and Consciousness: Dr. Dianne Scheper and Dr. Forrest Hall

REBEKAH REISIG: “Beyond Time: Prehistoric Art of the Chauvet Cave”
Werner Herzog, rapt in awe, eloquently summarizes the spirit of his documentary Cave of Forgotten Dreams: “We are locked in history, and they were not.” The Chauvet-Pont-d’Arc cave in Southern France is home to a plethora of 35,000-year-old pristine cave paintings—some of the oldest in the world—yet, remarkably, it was discovered only 23 years ago. From various species of predatory animals, to a curious Venus rendering, to handprints from a lone, crooked-fingered Neanderthal, Chauvet is like a living, breathing entity, and the art contained within is its lungs. Life before the influence of history seems unreachable, but Herzog shows us that prehistoric man transcends the limitations of time through his art, and through his connection to the natural world.

Monstrosity and Metamorphosis: Imagining Animals in Early Art and Literature: Dr. Susan Zimmerman

JOHN BARTLES: “Envisioning Milton’s Paradise Lost: Doré’s Illustrations in Context”
Milton’s Paradise Lost enjoys a long history as a magnificent epic poem to complement Biblical scripture and tradition. After publishing the work in the 1660’s, subsequent pressings would begin to offer illustrations to accompany the text. Of all the illustrated works, Gustave Doré’s wood engravings of 1866 are arguably the most popular and well known. Two factors combine to strengthen this popularity: the increase in literacy in the general population and mechanized book production in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. The various editions of illustrations also serve to reflect the timeframe in which they were produced. Placed within the Romanticism genre of the arts, Doré’s imaginative and richly detailed engravings depict traditional elements of Milton’s poem, but also lend themselves to an interpretation that speaks to the sensibilities of the Victorian era. While attention is focused on a selection of Doré’s works, there will be a comparison of one engraving against a similar work created by William Blake in 1807. Do the illustrations enhance and complement the imaginative text? Is romanticizing Satan a sign of the times? How do these works look to contemporary society?

Forbidden Knowledge: The Metaphysical Rebel in Art and Literature: Dr. George Scheper
KENNETH BYRD: “John Locke and the Limits of Prerogative”
In his Second Treatise of Government, John Locke formulated two of the most fundamental and enduring principles of liberal democracy: the separation of powers and the supremacy of the legislative branch. As the representatives of the commonwealth, only the legislature possesses legitimate authority to create laws. Less well known is Locke’s proposition that the executive branch must act outside this constitutional framework in some instances. To justify the use of these extraconstitutional actions, Locke must distinguish between legitimate prerogative and arbitrary power (i.e. tyranny). In this paper, I argue that Locke’s answer is contained in his concept of the natural law; namely, that prerogative is justified only when it is necessary for the preservation of life, liberty, or property.

Western Political Philosophy: Dr. Michael Harding

STEVEN POMPLON: “The Next Great Leap”
Some 70,000 years ago, humanity experienced what Jared Diamond calls the great leap forward. An evolutionary spark that ignited our cognitive abilities, this important moment led to our species’ global expansion, agricultural revolution, and development of modern civilization. Today, scholars believe that we are in the midst of our great leap forward, and this new epoch is fraught with both new dangers and possibilities. We have recently become so advanced that we now threaten all life on Earth through climate change and nuclear proliferation. With the stakes so high, will we be able to harness our potential quickly enough to save ourselves? This study of our social, political, and scientific history aims to provide a foundation for moving forward in this next great leap.

The Rise and Fall of Empires: From Rome to Brexit: Dr. Keith Sisson

THOMAS GREGG: “The Expansionist Self in Chinese Landscape Painting”
“The best of man is like water, which benefits all things and does not contend with them, which flows in places that others disdain, where it is in harmony with the Way.” — Laozi

10th and 11th century Chinese artists knew something that many in the western world (still) fail to recognize: that we are part of nature. Join me as we follow the Tao through traditional Chinese landscape painting (shanshui) to discover the principles which Taoists believe unite us with the surrounding environment. Let’s discover why linear perspective might not be the best way to depict the natural world, why it might be better to learn to paint bamboo by studying its shadow in moonlight, and why “Spirit Resonance” is more important than naturalistic verisimilitude. We will go on a conceptual journey across the continents and centuries to explore how the Neo-Confucian philosophy is turned into majestic artistic vistas.

The Self In Question: Readings in Psychology and Literature: Dr. Dianne Scheper
SARAH SEREDYCH TRIMMER: “Disaster Aboard the General Slocum: the Tragedy that Destroyed New York’s ‘Kleindeutschland’”
Beginning in the 1840s, large numbers of German immigrants entering the United States through New York City’s ports provided a constant population influx to create the enclave known as “Little Germany.” Known in German as “Kleindeutschland,” Little Germany was an immigrant neighborhood on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. In the 1850s alone, 800,000 Germans passed through New York. By 1855 New York had the third largest German population of any city in the world, outranked only by Berlin and Vienna. So, why do many people not recall NYC’s “Little Germany” today? Most of this is attributed to the disaster aboard the steamship USS General Slocum, where nearly 1,100 women and children perished due to a lack of maritime safety standards and regulations. In fact, the Slocum disaster would be New York City’s largest disaster until Sept. 11, 2001. We will explore more closely this disaster, which ultimately destroyed New York’s Little Germany, and the repercussions that followed.

The Cultural History of New York City: Dr. George Scheper

LANCE TIEPERMAN: “How the Personal Narratives of Philip Caputo’s A Rumor of War and Oliver Stone’s Platoon have Shaped Our Public Memory of the Vietnam War”
The Vietnam War is one of several major events that have defined the 1960s in our public memory of that tumultuous decade. Public memory has been defined as the “representation of the past and the making of it into a shared cultural knowledge, by successive generations in ‘vehicles of memory’ such as books, films, photographs, museums, commemorations, and others.” The personal narrative has come to define our collective public memory of the Vietnam War more than any other source. Based on the first person narrative, the authenticity, and the artfulness used by the writers to tell their stories, one could argue that Philip Caputo’s memoir A Rumor of War, and Oliver Stone’s autobiographical film Platoon have shaped our public memory of Vietnam more than any other “vehicles of memory.”

Cultural Eras: The 1960’s: Dr. Melissa Hilbish

DEBI RAGER: “Blanche Calloway – ‘The Siren of Singcopation’”
Who is Blanche Calloway? Ms. Calloway’s role as “Cab Calloway’s big sister” has all but eclipsed her extraordinary career as singer, dancer, actress, bandleader, mentor, and agent – she was an acknowledged queen of jazz in her day. Her achievements are all the more impressive considering the extreme racial prejudices of the 1920s through the 1950s. This Baltimore native has been largely forgotten, and there are no memoirs, biographies, schools, institutes, or even a room dedicated to her legacy. Indeed, her story lies just beneath the surface of the history of Baltimore, like so many of the city’s true gems. This presentation will introduce Blanche Calloway’s talents and characteristics that led to her fame, examine her musical repertoire, and look at her life “after jazz.”

Race and Jazz: Professor Matt Belzer
MASTER of LIBERAL ARTS
where great minds come together
MLA.JHU.EDU