

Hanna Holborn Gray Undergraduate Research Fellows

Summer 2013

Daniele Arad-Neeman '14

History

Coltan Mining in the DRC: An Invisible Conflict Mineral in Our iPhones

My research will focus on addressing the question of coltan as a relatively unknown yet essential conflict mineral, and what factors contribute to that, using analysis of the institutions (UN or NGOs) reporting and documenting the coltan mining conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The research will further attempt to address the disconnect between mineral and consumer, miner and iPhone.

Ingrid Asplund '14

History of Art

Beyond the Stitch: Yarnbombing and Artistic Lineage

Agata Oleksiak (street name Olek) is a street artist working in New York. Under the cover of night in December 2010, Olek covered Arturo di Modica's Charging Bull sculpture on Wall Street in crocheted pink-and-purple yarn. This piece is charged with gendered connotations and references to hot-button political issues, especially considering its Wall Street context. This work was part of a broader movement commonly referred to as "yarnbombing". In my research, I hope to map Olek within an artistic context, which would include gathering a history of the yarnbombing movement as well as exploring the other artistic movements Olek may have borrowed from, including street art, guerilla art, feminist fiber art, Interventionist art, public art, and feminist performance art, and unpacking how Olek's work might be similar or different from these movements. I also hope to discover what other movements and artists Olek could be identified with.

Kathryn Azizo '15

English and Classical Studies

Necromancy in the Ancient Greco-Roman World

The treatment of necromancy in Ancient Texts is very different from its treatment in the modern era. Instead of being a trope of horror, in Ancient Greece and Rome necromancy was portrayed in multiple lights; in the Odyssey, for example, Odysseus invokes spirits in what is portrayed as a heroic act, but in the Histories an act of necromancy is attributed to the tyrant Periander to show just how corrupt he is. What this project strives to do is explore this phenomenon, and such questions as: what can necromantic texts say about how the concepts of death and the afterlife were handled in the Ancient Greco-Roman world? In what ways does the treatment of necromancy vacillate, and what might this mean for the society? What is it about necromancy that allows it to be so horrifying, or so awe inspiring in turn?

Isabella Bartenstein '14

Growth and Structure of Cities

A Case Study of Historic Preservation in South America

I am proposing to conduct a case study of historic preservation in South America, looking specifically at a colonial university. I have narrowed down three candidates for this study, the first being Universidad Santo Tomas de Aquinas, located in Bogota, Colombia. The second is Universidad San Marcos, located in the historic centre of Lima, Peru. The third option is Universidad Nacional de Cordoba, in Argentina. Once a site is chosen, fieldwork would entail visiting the site and touring the campus to determine which structures are present, and how historic preservation has been used at the chosen university. Preservation policies would also be examined. After having established initial conclusions, a larger comparison of historic preservation in the United States could emerge from this study. Positive and negative experiences of historic preservation at this South American University would provide examples for us, North America, in terms of Historic Preservation and campus planning.

Ani Chen '14

Political Science

Between Regionalism and Federalism: Siegfried Lenz's Post-War Hamburg

The Second World War devastated Hamburg, Germany both physically and politically. As a member of the historical Hanseatic League, Hamburg has a proud heritage of economic and political independence from the greater German state. Upon German unification in 1871, Hamburg was brought under the federal German state, although retaining a certain amount of economic and political privileges. Consequently, Germany's "second city" was able to strike a comfortable medium between its regional and federal identities. Under the Nazi regime, however, Hamburg was stripped of its privileges,

destabilizing Hamburg's medium between regionalism and federalism after World War II. While scholars have focused on how these historical events have influenced architectural reconstruction, they have not examined the influence on political reconstruction, or its articulation in literature. This project will examine the political philosophical changes in federalism between 1871 and 1949, to strengthen analysis of Hamburg's political reconstruction in novelist Siegfried Lenz's works.

Esther Chiang '14

Growth and Structure of Cities

Travel through Space and Time: The social implications of transportation in Boston and Cape Town

This thesis explores the intersections of race in relations to transportation opportunities in Cape Town and Boston. Moreover, it addresses how long-term planning and investment in infrastructures for both mass and private transportation reinforce social divisions that have gone undetected in formal policymaking. In Boston, my focus is on how bus and subway plans have responded to social divisions as well as car culture. In Cape Town, my focus is how apartheid still affects black Africans through how well the minibus, taxi, and train systems work in terms of cost of time, convenience, and environmental impact. This comparison of these systems and plans will give a better understanding as to what might be done to transform these cities. Overall, this paper looks to show how segregation by privatization, shared systems in relation to segregation, and systems of resistance has occurred parallel in Boston and Cape Town despite space and time.

Madeleine French '14

Growth and Structure of Cities

Food Systems from National to Local: Sustainable solutions for Healthier Urban Populations

I propose to research the modern American food industry and the history of food systems in cities. I will incorporate this research with an exploration into the New York City food system and into the nutrition related health of New York City Residents. Through the establishment of this research, I will assess political, structural, and systematic influences on the urban food system and propose what can be done to naturalize, localize, and make sustainable the food system at play in New York City.

Mikayla Holland '15

Comparative Literature and Russian

Scenes of Violence in the Works of Flannery O'Connor and Mikhail Bulgakov

Through the close analysis of the works of Flannery O'Connor and Mikhail Bulgakov, I hope to explore connections between the literatures of Russia and the American South. I will focus on depictions of violence in *Wise Blood* and *The Master and Margarita* in order to investigate the role of violence within the texts. I propose to answer two related questions. What purpose does graphic imagery serve in the texts? What can we learn about the environments in which the two authors wrote, the Jim Crow South and Stalinist Russia, through the comparison of their works? Comparing the two texts will allow me to contrast differing approaches to portraying violence and gain insight into commonalities and disparities between Russia and the South.

Egina Manachova '14

History of Art

Representation of Islam at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

My research would focus on how The Metropolitan Museum of Art as a Western cultural institution represents Islam through its curatorial techniques and museological methods as they relate to the historical social and political parameters that define Islam in today's world.

Haley Martin '14

Philosophy

Role of Art With Regards to the Development of Self Consciousness: Hegel and Nietzsche

For the Hanna Holborn Gray Research Grant, I will examine the differences and similarities between Hegel and Nietzsche with regards to their understanding of art. Hegel believes that art is meaningful because art affords humanity the opportunity to feel "mutual recognition." Mutual recognition is to feel in and at home with oneself in another; therefore, art allows a viewer a sense of community. Nietzsche, on the other hand, feels that art is vital for life because art acts as an illusion that enables humanity to act. Without art, man is only left with reason; with reason alone man feels stifled and nauseated by the everyday. I will investigate the transitions from pre-modern art to contemporary art and trace how contemporary art reflects the philosophy of Nietzsche. Then I will determine why this transition occurred and whether this is a positive or negative change.

Monica Quinones-Rivera '15

Classical Figures and Agency in Shakespeare's Plays

Shakespeare's plays and characters are often influenced by core Classical texts and figures. This project will focus on Shakespeare's adaptations of Classical female figures by exploring three of his female

characters: Lavinia from Titus Andronicus, Miranda from the Tempest and Hermione from The Winter's Tale. Often Shakespeare draws upon multiple Classical figures to influence one of his characters. In addition, through his adaptations Shakespeare sometimes gives agency and voice to these female characters, breaking the wall of silence that has often separated these Classical female characters from their male counterparts. In this research project I will explore how he uses Classical figures to influence his own characters and how he grants agency to his female characters.

Hema Surendranathan '14

English

Citation Practices in Digital Publishing

The foundational purpose of my project is to investigate the relationship between spreadable, owned media and the circulation of profit. The goal of this research is to understand how technology creates profit, particularly in terms of literary digital publishing on social media sites. Moreover, the interdisciplinary analysis (literary close readings, social statistical aggregation and economic interpretations) of this project speaks to collaborative efforts in contemporary scholarship. I intend to produce a 30 page presentation paper which can be used as a platform for my senior essay. From interacting with case studies and the text websites, I hope to comment on literary copyright in America today. Through the theoretical lens of cultural studies, I intend to historicize and evaluate digital literary publications as allegorical sites that reconstruct or undermine ownership practices.

Linh Tong '14

Growth and Structure of Cities

Local Culture and Global Space: Government Policies on Street Vending and the Transformation of Public Space in Hanoi

The informal economy that involves casual social interactions as in traditional markets or street vendors creates the vibrancy of public spaces and contributes to the urban culture of Hanoi, especially in the eyes of foreign tourists. However, the local authorities have seen street vending as a negative image to the city's vision of a global tourism city, thus banned them from the scene of public space. This research will examine the transforming relationship between street vending and public space through shifting political and economic regimes, from the planned economy era to the modern time of economic reform. Using ethnographical research methodologies, the paper will reveal the social and cultural functions of street vending in the city's public sphere, and conclude on the implications for the city's future urban development in today's context of globalization.

YueXie '14

History of Art

Chinese Art in Exile, 1979-1999

The summer research consists of two parts. I will conduct on-campus research by collecting materials on Chinese artists who are/were in exile during 1979-1999 due to political reasons. The second part will be several off-campus interviews with some of these artists, as well as with art historians and critics who have been writing on related topics.