2016-17

HUMANITIES CENTER

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Student Research Assistants

Introducing Students to the Practice of Humanities Research

"I was surprised to discover in myself a passion for editing; I hope to find some way to develop this skill in future projects."

SRAs are the centerpiece of the Humanities Center's commitment to engaging students in the practice of humanistic research.

2016 Student Research Assistants*

Summer Break 2016

Elizabeth Budd**
Briannon Carlsen
Madison Chambers
Jackie Culotta
Shayna Gleason
Brian Gordon
Camille Jonlin
Lauren Kempton
Mairead Koehler
Natalie Jacobsen
Sasha Mayn
Leah Meltzer
Julia Miller**
Quinn Schiller
Soren Smallwood
Bard Swallow
Christina Tarazi
Will Yetvin

Winter Break 2016

Dan Brodkin
Zobeida Chaffee-Valdes
Yitong Chen
Rachel Everett
Amairany Fuentes
Madeline Geitz
Nate Grein
Brian Gordon
Jordan Kobbervig
Alexandra Pozniak
Jesse Rothbard
Elliot Schwartz
Adriana Smith
Laura Soter
James Smith

*Awards are made possible by a generous gift from Alison von Klemperer '82.
** Travel funds provided by the Dean of the College.

Introduction

Silvia L. López
Director of the Humanities Center

Student Research Assistantships are the centerpiece of the Humanities Center's commitment to engaging students in the practice of humanistic research. Through this program, the Humanities Center has been able to fund close to a hundred and twenty students since its inception in 2009. Faculty members involve students in substantive areas of their research during the winter or summer breaks.

Student Research Assistants (SRAs) gain valuable experience that enhances their academic life at Carleton and prepares them for both careers and graduate school, while professors regularly comment on the substantial boost these students give to their research. The students read and edit scholarly work, and establish bibliographic materials as part of the process of traditional research in the humanities. They also work with digital humanities tools to construct visual archives, build websites, and conduct internet surveys, which are essential new methods for scholars involved in the humanities. Some of our SRAs also travel abroad to do archival work or fieldwork with their professors.

In the summer of 2013, the Humanities Center received a generous gift from Alison von Klemperer '82, in honor of Professor Diethelm Prowe. Her continuous support for the program has allowed us to implement a truly comprehensive undergraduate research-training program in the Humanities. The student researchers featured in this pamphlet worked closely and collaboratively with faculty members from the departments of Asian Studies, Anthropology, Classics, German, History, Sociology, Spanish, and Studio Art. In the past seven years, the Humanities Center has funded SRAs for faculty from twenty different departments.

"{SRAs} gain valuable experience that enhances their academic life at Carleton and prepares them for both careers and graduate school…"

Anthropology

Sunken Virgins, Drunken Donkeys and a Mexican Tarzan: Ecotourism in Unlikely Places

Shayna Gleason '17 with Professor Constanza Ocampo-Raeder

Ecotourism is typically marketed towards elites living in the Global North, and often offers intercultural exchange with 'exotic' populations as one of its main attractions. In this project, we ask: could meaningful ecotourism occur in places that are not considered 'wild' or 'pristine,' like a highly-visited, popular beach in Acapulco, Mexico? Must guests and hosts be considered distinct populations, or could guests come from within host countries, even those located in the so-called Global South? Could a non-Western interpretation of nature also be a powerful inciter of environmental action, or is success bound to perceptions of nature formulated solely in the Global North?

This summer I was involved in the preparation of five different manuscripts for peer review journals in the area of environmental anthropology. The process was a smorgasbord of small, surprising projects, each in is way essential to the publishing process. I had a phone conversation with the Director of the Office of Marine Conservation in the State Department about artisanal fishing, learned to navigate fair-use and copyright laws for Mexican comic books, participated in the process of crafting an engaging article title, and created my own maps with GIS software. Perhaps most importantly, I was surprised to discover in myself a passion for editing; I hope to find some way to develop this skill in future projects.

This position allowed me a glimpse into the world of academic publishing and the opportunity to witness what occurs after field research has concluded. I was involved in the production of five distinct peer-review journal articles. Tasks included conducting online literature reviews of environmental anthropology journals, summarizing findings in memo format, and coding websites for themes, like the privileging of wilderness, targeting of elites in marketing materials, etc. In order to determine which journals might be of most interest to my faculty sponsor, I also examined the journals' guidelines, scanned articles to ascertain the general orientation of each journal, and researched their impact factors.

The Sunken Virgin, part of the Acapulco boat tour

An Acapulco tradition: giving the donkey a beer

Art & Art History

Printmaking and Castle Bravo

Mairead Koehler '17 with Professor Fred Hagstrom

My research this summer was twofold: I primarily focused on the technique of relief and screen-printing in creating artist books. I worked with Professor Fred Hagstrom on his book "Bravo." We printed 31 copies by hand, with 3-4 layers of ink on each sheet of paper, totaling over 3,000 press runs.

Through printing "Bravo" I also learned about Castle Bravo, the hydrogen bomb testing that the US Government organized in the Marshall Islands starting in the 1950s. The effects are staggering: "The total yield of the nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands was the equivalent of 1.7 Hiroshima shots every day for a period of 12 years."

I was astounded to learn about the Castle Bravo testing, not only because of the horrors that an entire nation of people were exposed to, but also because throughout my education I had never heard of this part of our history.

Mazi Archaeological Project 2016 Field Season

Julia Miller '18 with Professor Alex R. Knodell

This summer I worked as a student assistant on the 2016 summer field season of the Mazi Archaeological Project in the Attic region of Greece, an ongoing study led by Alex Knodell and Sylvian Fachard. The project uses survey archaeology methods to examine diachronic occupation and land usage patterns in the area of the Mazi Plain, a valley between the Attic and Boeotian regions of ancient Greece. This field season the project found a lot of useful diagnostic pottery, tile and lithic remains as well as starting to map several settlement areas believed to be from the Neolithic, and Late Roman to Byzantine eras.

I got to participate with my co-workers examining the remains of a collapsed stone building for clues to the original structure's appearance. The work that goes into piecing back a picture of something that is hundreds possibly thousands of years old is very intriguing to watch.

I worked with John Cherry, an expert in examining lithic pieces, who taught me a lot about ancient peoples and their stone tools. He also explained how we can look at the remains of these tools to learn about the people.

Through the project I experienced what archaeological fieldwork involves and how it works. I was able to use both extensive and intensive archeological survey methods and saw how choices are made about the best methods of gathering artifacts and data. I also had the amazing opportunity to see how archaeologists analyze artifacts to deduce when pottery or stone tools were made or what they were used for.

Mapping Masquerades

Jackie Culotta '19 with Professor Thabiti Willis

Putting the pieces together about the history of Otta's masquerading culture with the locations of important masks around town was pretty exciting. It was great to realize I had learned the basics of how to recognize the various types of masks as well as people who have an important standing in the town.

I have developed a knowledge of how to use ArcGIS. Additionally, it was great to actually learn about the culture of the town by reading excerpts from Professor Willis' upcoming book.

In the most general sense, the term **egungun** refers to the bones, the ancestors, a burial shroud, a mask, or, by extension, to any masked figure or masquerade. The mask conceals the identity of its wearer, who embodies a supernatural force, the spirit of an ancestor. More specifically, when it is applied to specific masquerade societies and performances here, **Egungun** refers to a masked spirit whose name, attire, and ritual enactment are associated with an **Oyo** masking tradition.

By mapping the locations of various murals around Otta, Nigeria, we have a better sense of the diversity of the masquerading culture in town.

History

Workhouse Expectations of the Poor

Madison Chambers '18 with Professor Susannah Ottaway

Spinning skeins of worsted was a common work task of paupers living in the houses of industry surrounding Norwich. Paupers would be responsible for converting the raw fibers into yarn using spinning wheels and other machinery. Our research involved collecting data from account books that a number of workhouses kept in order to record weekly production and earnings at the institution. These documents provide a clear record of how much work was being completed by people of different genders and ages, allowing one to draw conclusions on how expectations for work might have differed for distinct groups. Our research and paper seek to understand the importance of labor within the workhouse, finding that workhouses were driven by profit rather than only by moral reform for the poor.

This summer, I worked with Susannah Ottaway in researching a number of workhouses in England. We focused on these institutions as they were in the late 18th and early 19th century, specifically looking at the type and scale of work being done by workhouse inmates during this period. From the archival resources, we were able to get a much better grasp on what jobs workhouse inmates performed, and how much their work earned for the house.

The most gratifying part of this project was that Alex Wachino '18 and I were able to present our paper at the Midwest Conference of British Studies. The presentation itself was slightly nerve wracking, but it was eye opening to see how our work fit in with the other research being done across the country.

One of the most important skills I learned this summer was how to parse meaningful information out of a huge amount of data. Having that extensive amount of information can be overwhelming, but Susannah helped me focus on finding questions that can be answered with the data, and then connecting those answers to far-reaching implications.

Workhouse Archaeology: Uncovering the Material of Workhouse Inmates

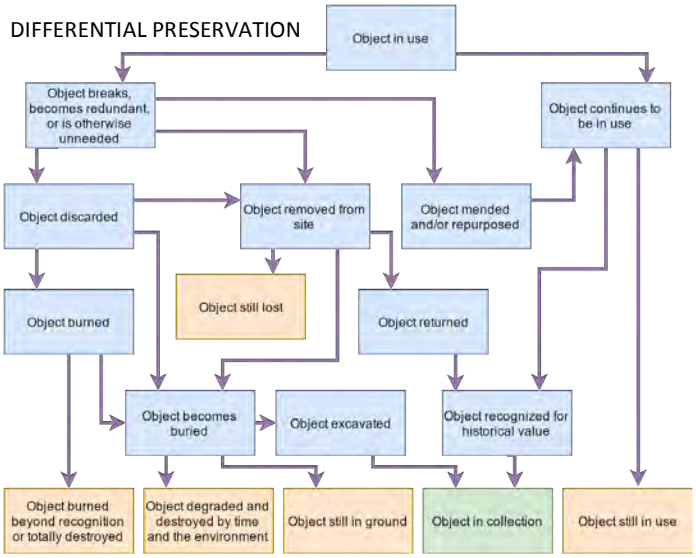
History

Elizabeth Budd '19 with Prof. Susannah Ottaway & Prof. Austin Mason

This past July, Brittany Johnson '18 and I were fortunate enough to receive funding to fly to England and work at Gressenhall, a workhouse-turned-museum, and act as volunteer archaeologists on a recently unearthed rubbish pit. We spent two weeks learning how to properly excavate, clean, and document findings, as well as getting a chance to do more in depth work on material culture.

One of the obstacles that a historian faces is how to properly represent all people - not just those who are rich and literate. Very often those who are poor, have very few possessions, or are illiterate are neglected by history, as their social standing makes it very difficult for material culture to survive. Differential preservation favors the upper classes of society.

Our part of the greater Gressenhall project was to gather as much material data as possible in order to begin creating a digital reconstruction where we could then simulate the daily lives of workhouse inmates. This is accomplished through the use of interactive Twine storyboards within the Unity 3D game engine. Imagine a "Choose Your Own Adventure!" story modeled on historical accuracy within real space and time. Since the inmates at Gressenhall could not leave much of their material lives for us to discover later, we are recreating their lives as faithfully as possible now in order to build a greater and more intimate understanding of just how these people lived, how social attitudes have shifted, and what role digital reconstructions can play in future historical endeavors.



EXCAVATING

SHARDS

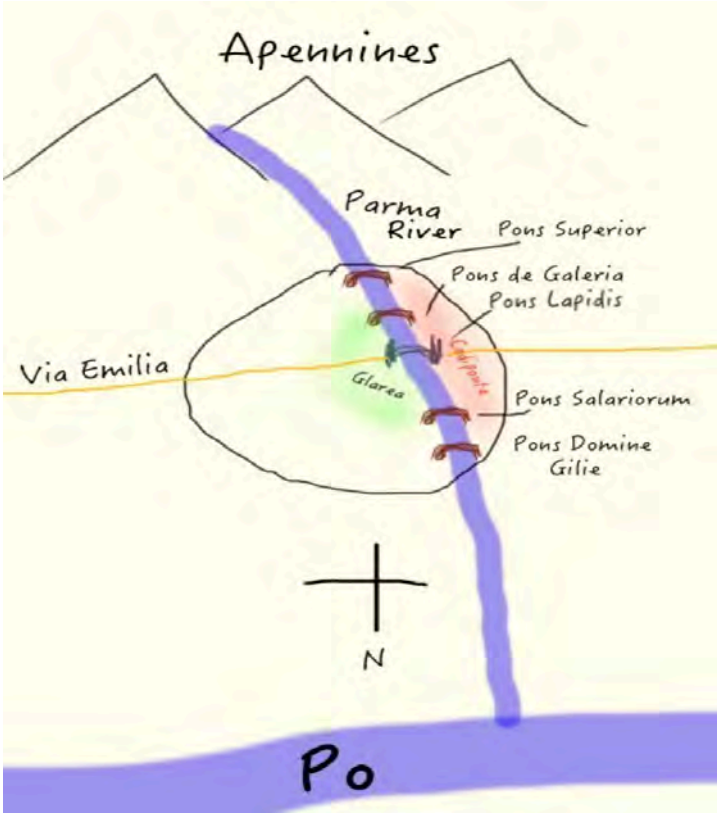
CATALOGUING

History

The Itinerary as Map: from the Alps to the Apennines in the 14th Century

Bard Swallow '18 with Professor Victoria Morse

Professor Morse and I wanted to find out how people thought about space before the map craze in northern Italy in the 14th century. To investigate this, we read the Chronicle of Parma, identifying passages concerned with space, and find the most powerful strategies for describing spatial relationships. Like the classical author Livy, the author of the Chronicle of Parma uses Latin to build itineraries, lists of places along a route. The itinerary form stresses human movement as the main paradigm for thinking about space. For the chronicler, however, itineraries are powerful enough that the language of itineraries bleeds over into realms that don't involve human movement. The itinerary form, whether describing human movement or not, provides a framework for our author in mapping ideas and events onto space.



Bridges in Parma

…a palisade…was made in the Glarea neighborhood…from the Galleria bridge up to the Lapidis (stone) bridge, and then from the stone bridge along the Parma river up to the Salariorum bridge…"

--Chronicle of Parma

GIS (geographical information system) software lets us map itineraries and landmarks. The courses of roads and rivers change over time, so reconstructing their intersections or routes is very difficult.

In this project, conceptual maps are more helpful than approximate locations forced onto exact coordinates.

Finding Common Threads in the Job Loss Experiences of Older Workers

Sociology

Quinn Schiller '19 with Professor Annette Nierobisz

What happens to workers – those age 50 or older – who lose their jobs from an unprecedented economic recession? How do they experience unemployment? How easily do they find new jobs? What specific challenges do they face?

These are some the questions that drove the project, *American Idle: Job Loss Among Aging Americans*. I was first introduced to this project in my A&I seminar, *Working Across Our Lives*, with Professor Annette Nierobisz. This past summer, I had an opportunity to dive deeply into the data with Annette, learning more about how the project was conducted, the people who were interviewed, and what their experiences with unemployment were like.

My role in the project was three-fold. First, I took all of the project's Word files and converted and uploaded them to Google docs. This required me to organize all of the data files in a logical format. The project files needed to be shifted to Google Docs in order to facilitate easier collaboration between Annette and me, and future research assistants and collaborators. I also created a quick reference sheet that summarized the thirty-two different themes onto a single page. This allowed me to more quickly analyze the interviews.

Second, I read and coded nine interview transcripts. This called for me to read each single-spaced 35-page transcript to identify themes in the data. The coding process also required me to gain a deep understanding of the project and the people who were interviewed. I typically read each transcript four times. The first time was simply focused on trying to understand the content and the person who was interviewed. The second and third times were focused on identifying themes in the data. The final time was to transfer passages from the transcript into a larger collection of themes. This was a labor-intensive process.

Finally, I consulted with Annette to better manage the data. Some of the tasks I completed including narrowing down themes and adding links that allowed for faster access to specific quotes. In this way, I was able to use my skills in data organization within a sociological context.

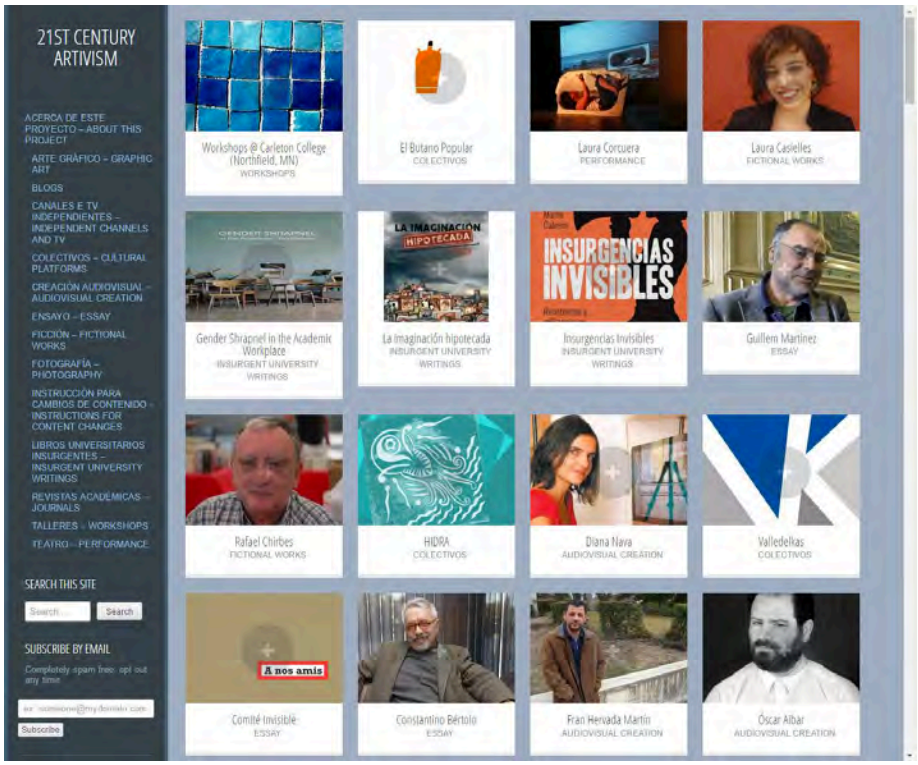
Before this project, I did not have a good understanding of qualitative data. I wondered how data that did not produce quantitative comparisons could even yield useful insights. After spending many hours shifting through qualitative interviews this summer, I have come to appreciate the power of qualitative data. An understanding of qualitative research at this level would never have happened in my academic studies and I loved the deep window into the development of the similar papers I've read in my other classes.

Spanish

Activism in the 21st Century: A Research Teaching Tool on 21st Century Spanish Fiction and Culture

Lauren Kempton '18 with Professor Palmar Álvarez-Blanco

This is an ongoing project to create a website called "Artivism in the 21st Century". The website is an open archive (freely accessible and without charge) that is continuously updated and expanded. All pages are in both English and Spanish. There are three objectives: 1) to offer researchers a place to connect with the work of artists and cultural platforms, as well as with the artists themselves; 2) to offer teachers and professors models of workshops with these artists; and 3) to offer artists and cultural platforms a free space and up-to-date bibliography where others can access their work. This research provides an opportunity for us, as students, to engage with the community of professors and fellow students who are interested in art and activism, and to help create a useful educational resource.



As part of researching the work of artists and intellectuals, I have learned a lot about new, stimulating ideas and the various avenues for expressing them: documentaries, essays, graphic novels, photography. I enjoyed learning about, for instance, how the Spanish filmmaker Oscar Clemente uses the format of the visual essay to challenge the viewer to think critically about the role of art in society. It has been exciting to discuss ideas and possibilities for the site with Palmar and with Christina Tarazi '18.

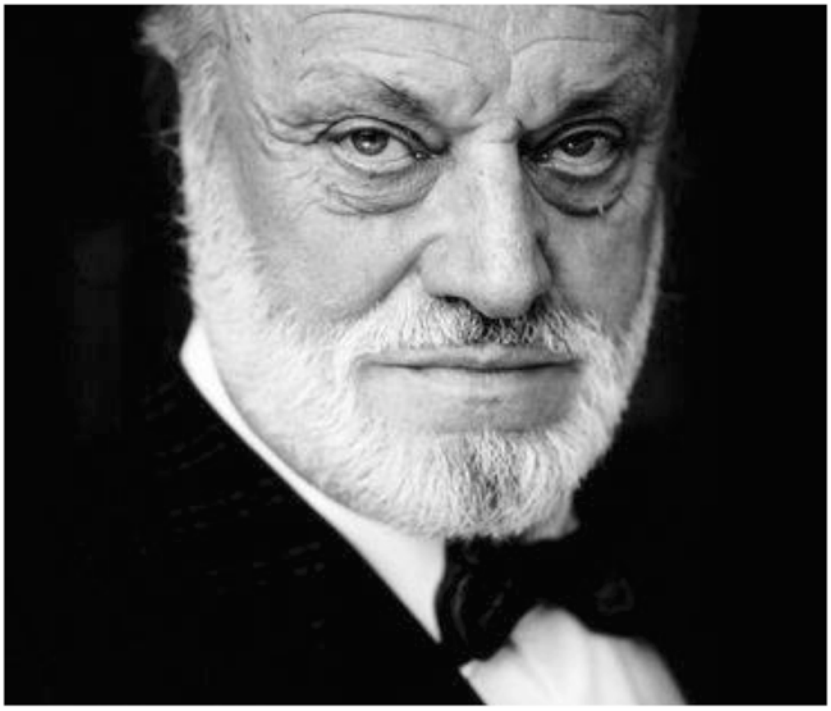
Through translating text between English and Spanish, often operating simultaneously in both languages, my Spanish proficiency has increased dramatically. In an effort to remain faithful to the intent of the original text when translating, I have learned to think about not only the literal equivalent of any given phrase, but also the subtleties of meaning and various ways to convey them in another language. Christina Tarazi '18 and I would often exchange several emails debating the most accurate translation. I have also learned more about web design, particularly how to make a website visually appealing and intuitive for the user to navigate.

A Life in Music: Kurt Masur

Briannon Carlsen '17 and Professor Juliane Schicker

As a long time musician, teacher, and activist, conductor Kurt Masur has remained a central figure in German society long after his death. His contributions to the reunification of East and West Germany were invaluable, and his humanist approach to music has influenced audiences on a global scale. He belongs to a league of conductors with world-renown and exemplary musical expertise that also symbolize the archetype of socio-politically engaged performing musicians wanting to improve society around them. Masur is remembered for his actions during the uprisings in October 1989 in East Germany against the political leadership of the German Democratic Republic, where he, together with five other like-minded artists and politicians, drafted and broadcast an appeal that contributed to the peaceful outcome of the day and encouraged the people of Leipzig to keep pressing for an open exchange of opinions that eventually led to the fall of the Berlin wall.

Kurt Masur's wife Tomoko Sakurai-Masur and their son Ken-David Masur have launched a video project that will be exhibited in museums and online. With our efforts here at Carleton, we are laying the groundwork for this project. Our goal is to familiarize modern American and German audiences with Maestro Masur and his musical and civic engagement. The videos will be used as a research tool for scholars, educators, and the general audience. They have particular significance for scholars in German Studies, Musicology, and Political and Social Science as well as the scholars connected with the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig and the New York Philharmonic. In order to share Masur's story, we began the task of transcribing audio from interviews with Maestro Masur and his colleagues in their native language of German.



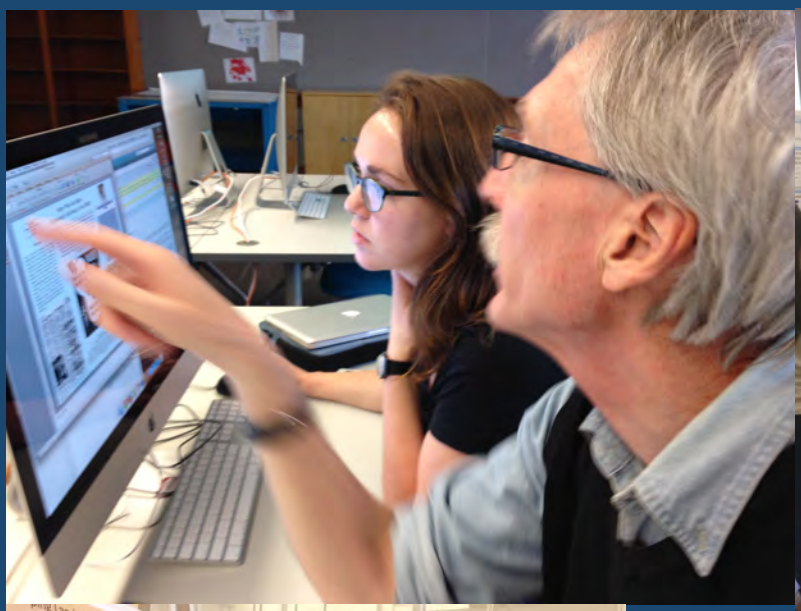
Chinglish

Brian Gordon '17 with Senior Lecturer Gao Hong

This project focused on starting the creation of a multimedia performance piece by my advisor. It is an exploration through music of the meeting points of different languages and concessions they make in order to find middle ground. My role involved finding visual ways to communicate the ideas in tandem with her music and story telling.

Being able to try and adapt meaning across media in a way that doesn't just translate but works synergistically with the other forms of communication to create the desired meaning. Looking at a mixture of animation, shooting footage, and finding and editing footage was interesting and exciting.

My work with my advisor gave me critical experience in working with existing artistic ideas and expanding on them in different media. Through this task, I learned about the process of artistic adaptation or translation, but also how to realize these goals through collaboration.



The Humanities Center expands the ways faculty members and students experience the humanities at Carleton by enhancing interdisciplinary exchange and providing opportunities for humanistic practice through research. "We're giving students invaluable experience and an edge on their résumés, and advantage that Carleton students in the sciences have enjoyed for years," says Cathy Yandell, W.I. and Hulda F. Daniell Professor of French Literature, Language and Culture, Chair of French and Francophone Studies.

Carleton

Carleton depends upon the support of donors like you to keep the Humanities Center and its innovations going strong for years to come. Learn more at *apps.carleton.edu/humanities*.

To discuss a gift in support of the humanities, please contact a development officer at 800-492-2275.