Defining Identity:
Examining Diversity Initiatives at Columbia
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**Letters to the Editor**

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The professional development of our students is one of the principal obligations of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. I would like to report to you on a related GSAS initiative recently implemented, and which I had mentioned to you in my column for the previous issue of SUPERSCRIPT: the Internships in Academic Administration that were inaugurated in spring 2014. In this program, twelve advanced graduate students were placed in academic offices throughout the University such as the Office of the President, the Provost, Columbia College, Columbia University Press, and several others, so that they would experience firsthand for one semester the inner workings of those offices as they managed their tasks and responsibilities. The participants came from a wide variety of graduate departments and programs, and included representatives from the three canonical divisions of the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Natural Sciences.

A survey of the initial class of interns in Columbia academic offices, as well as one sent to the offices in which they were placed, revealed that our students' involvement in their chosen administrative units was everything we had hoped it would be—and more. It seems clear from the survey responses that this initiative channeled and satisfied a significant interest among graduate students. In the case of students who are considering the many alternatives to academic careers, the experience was a welcome opportunity to explore the everyday life of an academic administrator and the work of an academic office. For those students who wish to go on to join the professoriate, it was a chance to understand the workings of the University beyond the familiar yet limited confines of their departmental home base. I would like to share with you some of the comments that we received both from the participating students and the academic offices that hosted them, because together they provide a compelling account of the program’s success. Three of the student responses contained the following reflections:

• I was welcomed to the office’s weekly staff meeting, which was a great chance for me to really see what was going on in the entire office.
• I really enjoyed the opportunity to see how a university operates on a day-to-day basis. We are so far removed from this in our home departments. I enjoyed being able to sit in on important meetings to understand the issues the University faces and how it will approach them. This was helpful in terms of understanding how universities operate and also how organizations in general operate. As a result of this internship, I am definitely considering academic administration as a career option down the line. I am very happy I had this opportunity at this point in my career.
• The workshops on the university and on administrative career paths run by the Dean of GSAS and by other academic officers from throughout the University were very insightful. The offices were no less enthusiastic about the value added to their work by the students they hosted:

• [The intern] was a pleasure to work with. The experience and insight that she brought to the office were incredibly valuable. She caught on very quickly, especially since these projects were more technical in nature. She adapted, learned, and was able to contribute to these efforts effectively.
• [The intern’s] previous experiences as both an instructor and student provided great insight on how best to approach the needs and end goal of this project. He provided critical research/analysis and regularly met with key members of our office and outside units to help push this effort along.

One may lament the fact that academic administration (as opposed to the faculty ranks) is the fastest growing segment of academic employment, but the reality is that the career of university administrator typically requires the doctoral degree as an entering qualification. As such, academic administration will become increasingly an employment path for our always-remarkable graduates. Hence, I am happy to announce that Internships in Academic Administration is slated to be repeated in fall of 2014 and that it will remain a fixture in the Graduate School’s yearly programming for its students. We are also hoping to expand the project soon to nonacademic institutions in New York. These internships are also an excellent example of the enriching opportunities that are made possible by alumni contributions to the Graduate School’s annual fund.
When Andrea Morris first came across a job listing for the newly created position of Assistant Dean for Academic Diversity in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences—a position she has held since September 2013—she wasn’t really looking to leave her post as a tenured associate professor of biology at Haverford College. Something about the ad caught her attention, though—namely, the word academic.

Morris already had plenty of experience, both personal and professional, on the front lines of the effort to increase diversity in higher education. The daughter of Jamaican immigrants and a Haverford alumna, she was the first African-American woman to graduate from Princeton with a Ph.D. in molecular biology. After returning to Haverford, Morris served on the college’s Committee on Diversity and as a faculty adviser to its Multicultural Scholars and Chesick Scholars programs, which provide support for first-generation, underrepresented, and underprivileged students; lectured widely on diversity in higher education; and established herself as a prominent researcher, earning the first National Institutes of Health Career Development Award ever given to a faculty member at a small liberal arts college.

Nonetheless, Morris says that she did not necessarily think of diversity as something that was tied to the academic mission of a college or university, as opposed to something that lived in the realm of social justice. Reading that GSAS job posting sparked an epiphany of sorts. “This is the heart of the matter, right? This is why it’s really important,” Morris says of the University’s decision to locate diversity at the center of its intellectual mission. “We’re a better institution for this commitment.”

That commitment to diversity as a core academic responsibility is made manifest in a variety of ways, from the five-year, $30 million commitment the University announced in 2012 to advance the recruitment of underrepresented minority and female scholars, to the growing variety of pipeline programs designed to encourage students from such groups to pursue graduate studies in the first place. It is a commitment that has been influenced by the past decade or so of research into the benefits of diversity, and by changing notions of what diversity really means. And its effects can already be seen in the day-to-day experiences of those who make up the Columbia community.

Diversity and Doxa

Contemporary ideas of diversity—its meaning, its value, how it can and ought to be addressed—have been shaped by decades of legislation, litigation, and research. Fueled by the civil rights movement and by the executive orders issued by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson that first introduced the phrase “affirmative action” to the American lexicon, early efforts at enhancing student diversity in higher education focused on increasing the numbers of historically underrepresented groups: racial and ethnic minorities and, eventually, women. Over time, however, the definition of campus diversity expanded to encompass socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religious belief, and more. This move toward what Carlos Alonso, Dean of GSAS and Vice President for Graduate Education, calls a more “ample” conception of diversity was accompanied by a recognition that numbers alone were not enough, and that intangibles such as cultural climate—the extent to which difference was
accepted or even celebrated in an institution, and to which members of a diverse community interacted with one another and felt valued and respected by their peers—also mattered, particularly if the benefits of diversity were to be fully realized.

Those benefits, meanwhile, came into considerably sharper focus, in part thanks to the repeated legal assaults on affirmative action in higher education. The 2003 Supreme Court cases of Gratz v. Bollinger and Grutter v. Bollinger were especially influential. Gratz successfully challenged the affirmative action policies of the primary undergraduate college of the University of Michigan when headed by Lee C. Bollinger, now President of Columbia, while Grutter unsuccessfully challenged those of its law school. Both cases inspired a surge in social science research on the role of diversity in higher education, some of which was cited by the Court in its rulings. When Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote for the majority in Grutter that diversity “promotes learning outcomes” and has “substantial, important, and laudable educational benefits,” she was echoing the work of Patricia Gurin, a professor of psychology at Michigan, who submitted an expert report to the Court asserting that diversity is “likely to increase effortful, active thinking” and to spur “growth in intellectual and academic skills.” Nevertheless, attempts to overturn affirmative action policies have continued. In 2012 the Court heard the case Fisher v. University of Texas and returned it to a lower court for review; in 2014 the Court heard Schuette v. BAMN and upheld a ban on affirmative action enacted by Michigan voters. These challenges come even as researchers—such as psychologist and former Columbia Provost Claude Steele, whose work on stereotype threat examines how a student’s social identity affects classroom performance—have collected more data showing that diversity leads to a wide variety of benefits for minority and majority students alike.

Meanwhile, Scott Page, a professor of complex systems, political science, and economics at Michigan, began presenting formal proof for what has come to be known as the business case for diversity: the argument that diversity leads to more innovation and better problem-solving. Though Page was careful to point out that “identity diversity” arising from differences in categories such as race and ethnicity does not necessarily lead to “cognitive diversity,” or variations in ways of thinking, he did contend that the two were often strongly correlated, thanks to the concomitant range of life experiences that differences in personal history and background tend to engender.

Page’s assertion that “in diversity lies value,” and his claim that varied perspectives and cognitive tools allow mixed groups of people to innovate and solve problems more rapidly than homogeneous ones, supported the growing consensus among business leaders that diversity was good for the bottom line—a consensus that was soon echoed in the precincts of higher education: When Alonso, for example, contends that “doxa” and “canonical ideas” would arise if everyone at Columbia possessed the same background, and that, by contrast, diversity is a means of keeping the “creative juices of the institution flowing,” he is in essence making the business case for diversity in academia. So too is Andrew Davidson, Vice Provost for Academic Planning, when he describes a reciprocal relationship between diversity and academic excellence: “At the end of the day, we want to be the go-to place for the world’s greatest academic scholars,” says Davidson, whose office is responsible for building a diverse body of faculty. “And we can’t achieve that aspiration unless we can realize our core values of inclusion and excellence.”

Expanding “Diversity”

Acknowledging the link between diversity and academic quality is one thing, however. The trick lies in creating the conditions under which diversity is not only achieved, but under which it can yield the fruits that Gurin, Page, et al. describe—a task that demands an array of programs as diverse as the community of scholars that the University seeks to foster.

If statistical diversity represents only one step in this process, it is nonetheless the first one, and to achieve it, the University must attract a variegated population of students and faculty. Fortunately, Columbia is hardly new to that game.

For the past 25 years, for instance, GSAS has hosted the Summer Research Program (SRP), an 8- to 10-week program for undergraduates from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Since 1993, the SRP, which belongs to a class of pipeline programs designed to carry students from college to graduate school, has been sponsored by the Leadership Alliance, a consortium that was founded with the ideal of increasing participation by ethnic and racial minorities pursuing graduate studies in the sciences at leading research universities. Yet GSAS has broadened the definition of “underrepresented” to match its expansive conception of diversity itself—a conception that goes beyond the relatively narrow categories of race and ethnicity to embrace the kind of experiential diversity espoused by Page.

Andrea Morris, who now runs the program and is actively involved in recruitment, says that this shift in emphasis is already changing the face of the SRP cohort, making it more racially and ethnically mixed and opening the door to a broader range of
students. And while she doesn’t want to lose sight of the need to redress the inequities that racial and ethnic minorities have historically confronted on the road to academia, she also believes that it is “a great moment to say yes” to a prospective SRP student who, for example, may be a white male, but is also the first in his family to attend college.

In any event, the goals of the Summer Research Program remain the same: to give underrepresented students the opportunity to conduct graduate-level research under the supervision of Columbia faculty, in hopes that the experience will encourage them to pursue academic careers. And it appears to be working: SRP alumni have gone on to pursue Ph.D.s at Columbia in fields ranging from English literature to biomedical sciences.

Marcel Aguëros, ’96CC, a 1994 alumnus of the SRP and assistant professor of astronomy at the University, directs another pipeline program, Bridge to the Ph.D. The Bridge program offers members of underrepresented groups who hold undergraduate degrees and intend to pursue doctorates in the natural sciences the chance to conduct research for two years under the supervision of Columbia faculty, postdocs, and graduate students. Bridge participants also receive services like writing workshops and GRE prep to help them succeed in the program and in the graduate school admission process. (Bridge program graduates have gone on to Ph.D. programs at such institutions as Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins, the University of Michigan, the University of Washington, Yale, and Columbia, among others.) The program is designed to patch the infamously leaky pipeline for minorities in the sciences: according to a 2010 report by the National Academy of Sciences, underrepresented minorities accounted for 30 percent of the U.S. population in 2007, but only 6 percent of people earning science and engineering doctorates. But like many such initiatives, it could prove influential beyond its original scope. For example, a study by Eric Bettinger of Stanford University found that less than half of all students who had intended to major in a STEM field actually graduated with a degree in one. In that context, the Bridge program’s successes could illuminate strategies for helping anyone, regardless of background or field of interest, advance toward a terminal degree.

Creating Connections

The idea that programs intended to smooth the path to academia for members of underrepresented groups could serve the broader interests of the University is central to another, more recent addition to Columbia’s quiver of diversity initiatives: the Creating Connections Consortium, or C3.

Emerging from conversations between members of the Liberal Arts Diversity Officers (LADO) consortium and administrators at Columbia and the University of California at Berkeley, C3 is unusual among programs of its kind insofar as its pipeline flows in more than one direction.

LADO members wanted to increase faculty diversity at their liberal arts colleges while sending more of their undergraduates—especially ones from underrepresented groups—on to graduate programs at top-tier research institutions, while Columbia and Berkeley wished to recruit a more diverse body of graduate students and expose their newly minted Ph.D.s to an oft-overlooked job market. The result was a uniquely reciprocal arrangement, designed in conjunction with the Center for Institutional and Social Change at Columbia University Law School. Beginning this year, underrepresented students from LADO member colleges can apply for eight-week summer research internships at either Columbia or Berkeley, with mentoring provided by doctoral students and senior faculty, while underrepresented graduate students from Columbia and Berkeley can apply for two-year postdoctoral fellowships at Middlebury, Connecticut, and Williams Colleges. The postdocs will be grouped into cohorts of three per college. First-generation college student Nathaniel G. Nesmith, Ph.D. ’13, Theatre, has joined the C3 Fellows at Middlebury, while Seema Golestaneh, who is completing her Ph.D. in anthropology, is one of the C3 Fellows at Connecticut College.

If the SRP and Bridge to the Ph.D. address recruitment and retention, C3 adds professional development to the mix. When a diverse quartet of tenured faculty from LADO member colleges came to Columbia last November to speak with doctoral students and recent graduates about C3, they devoted an entire panel discussion to life at liberal arts colleges—a discussion that dealt primarily with the nitty-gritty of teaching, research, and promotion, and touched only occasionally on issues of gender, ethnicity, and the like. In the end, says Shirley Collado, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Middlebury College and cofounder of LADO and C3, the larger goal of the initiative is to reap the lasting benefits of diversity, not, as Collado puts it, in a “Kumbaya kind of way,” but in the practical sense of helping everyone in the pipeline to succeed in the academic communities they call home.

That success is not guaranteed to anyone, regardless of race, color, social status, or creed, but the challenges faced by underrepresented groups can make their path to the professoriate even rockier, and the support provided by mentors and cohorts even more crucial.

Students and alumni of the Bridge to the Ph.D. Program

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doctoral study. He also participated in the University of Chicago’s Summer Research Program and has received funding from the Ford Foundation and the National Science Foundation while at Columbia. Nevertheless, navigating the byways of Morningside Heights has not always been easy. When he arrived on campus, Wade found it difficult to establish relationships with tenured faculty who looked like him and shared his research interests (he is black, and his scholarship focuses on race and ethnicity, social inequality, and crime). And though he has found support both inside and outside his department, he did at first “long for faculty of color” who were engaged in work similar to his own. He also couldn’t help but notice how rarely he ran across other graduate students of color, partly because GSAS currently lacks a formal association for underrepresented graduate students. “Grad school in general is difficult because it’s isolating,” Wade says; but he adds that it is even more isolating when you are the only person of color in your cohort, for example, or the only first-generation college student from a state school. And that’s not just bad for the individual who feels alienated, it’s also bad for the University, which will never realize the benefits of diversity unless everyone within its walls is fully engaged in the academic community.

This is, in part, why Morris has been talking to students like Wade about reestablishing an organization for underrepresented students within GSAS. It is also, in part, why the University intends to use the $30 million pledged in 2012 not only to recruit a diverse corps of graduate students, postdocs, and faculty but also to provide them with the mentoring and professional development opportunities that will help them flourish.

**Diverse Applications**

There is, however, no one-size-fits-all solution to either increasing or leveraging diversity across an institution as large and as complex as the University, which is itself composed of many different schools and departments, each with its own history, priorities, and needs. That is why every school was asked to develop its own three-year diversity plan and made responsible for determining how best to employ tools such as the new Provost’s Fellowships, which are aimed at recruiting Ph.D. students from traditionally underrepresented groups. (While the School of Nursing might legitimately consider men to be an underrepresented minority, for example, The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science would not.)

One can already see those plans in action, often dovetailing with long-standing efforts at encouraging diversity within the various schools—some of which have their own compelling reasons for pursuing greater inclusivity. Linda P. Fried, Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health, cites both general arguments in favor of diversity (e.g., our responsibility as a society “not to permit the waste of talent and intellect”) and ones that flow more directly from the goals and responsibilities of her institution: to train professionals who can work with colleagues, not to mention populations, whose backgrounds may be quite different from their own; to untangle the factors that drive the serious disparities in health outcomes that exist among people both at home and abroad—factors that include race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Consequently, when the School overhauled its curriculum two years ago, it added a daylong orientation session on cultural awareness; and for the past five years, it has been strengthening its faculty and student pipelines. The federally funded Initiative for Maximizing Student Development, for example, aims to boost the numbers of underrepresented students who receive graduate training in public health by providing full-time doctoral students with research assistantships, strong mentoring relationships with Mailman faculty, and workshops on topics like coping strategies for graduate school.

Dean Bobbie Berkowitz, meanwhile, had already made diversity one of the principal goal areas in the School of Nursing’s broader strategic plan, a decision that led to the appointment of Vivian Taylor as the School’s first Associate Dean for Diversity and Cultural Affairs in 2013. The push for greater diversity aligns well with nursing’s historic commitment to social justice; but, according to both Berkowitz and Taylor, it also has an eminently practical component. Nurses, after all, work in interdisciplinary teams, and they must often cooperate with, and care for, people whose backgrounds they do not share. Like their colleagues at Mailman, they must also attend to what Berkowitz describes as the “social determinants of health,” including the discrimination and stereotyping that can lead to unequal treatment and access to care. That, says Berkowitz, is a problem the School would like to fix, in part by ensuring that its own graduate students don’t carry such attitudes with them into the workplace.

Toward that end, the School has been weaving training in cultural competencies—the skills required to work effectively in cross-cultural situations—into its curriculum, and engaging students and faculty alike in conversations about diversity through surveys, retreats, and committee work. It is also working on recruitment and retention. For example, the School’s Combined B.S./M.S. Entry to Practice (ETP) Program, an accelerated nursing program for non-nurse college graduates, recently began offering scholarships to enhance the diversity of its students. Funding is provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its New Careers in Nursing (NCIN) program, which requires that mentorship and leadership development activities be made available to all recipients.

Elizabeth Gary, a first-year ETP student and NCIN scholar from Brooklyn, recognized that a lack of effective mentoring played a significant role in her decision to quit the premed program at Bowdoin College. Gary, who is black, had dreamed of a career in health care since her teens. But by her junior year, the academic and social pressure she felt had become overwhelming, especially since her assigned adviser had gone AWOL. So Gary was delighted when she received a survey asking her to list her preferences for an NCIN mentor—“fitting me to a mentor,” as she says, “rather than just assigning the one who doesn’t understand where I’m coming from.” Gary describes her current faculty mentor, Tawanda Rwell-Cunisolo, an assistant professor of social welfare science, as part therapist, part academic coach: someone to whom she can speak candidly, and who has a knack for keeping her on track. As a member of the Committee for Diversity and Student Retention, Gary is also trying to figure out how the NCIN mentoring model could be scaled up and applied to all incoming ETP students—perhaps by assigning them peer mentors or placing them in study groups with accompanying faculty advisers.

What’s happening at Mailman and the School of Nursing illustrates how Columbia’s commitment to diversity is being realized at the local level, and how the various initiatives being undertaken contribute to what Alonso calls the goal of “normalizing” diversity within the institution: of ensuring that diversity does not “sit on the sidelines of academic and intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual life,” but instead “suffuses the intellectual
A Meteorologist for the Millennial Generation

By Andrew Ng

In September 2013, the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a 1,500-page report that stated, in boldface, “It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.” It also stated, “Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system. Limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.”

For meteorologist Eric Holthaus, M.A. ’06, Climate and Society, this report hit especially hard. On September 15, the day the report was released, Holthaus wrote on his medium of choice, Twitter, he broadcast the following to his then roughly 15,000 followers:

“I just broke down in tears in boarding area at SFO while on phone with my wife. I’ve never cried because of a science report before. #IPCC

In today’s world, it’s not unusual to announce a lifestyle change on social media. But unlike most people, Holthaus drew international attention when numerous news outlets publicized his tweets with headlines such as “IPCC Report Makes US Meteorologist Cry” (The Guardian) and “The Meteorologist’s Meltdown” (The Daily Beast). During the ensuing Internet frenzy, Holthaus gained his share of supporters as well as critics, earning monikers as varied as “rebel nerd” (Rolling Stone) and “drama queen” (Fox News). Some commenters even suggested that he commit suicide if he really wanted to reduce his carbon footprint.

Four months later, it was time for Holthaus to put his very public vow to its first test. He had to travel from his home in Wisconsin to the annual meeting of the American Meteorological Society in Atlanta, Georgia. He opted for a 400-mile bus ride, tweeting the following on the road:

“I’m taking a #noflybusride to #ams2014 because it’s the best mode of transit for the climate.

Not everyone is going to choose to take the bus over plane because of the climate. We have to start somewhere.

Afterward, he wrote an article for Slate titled “I Spent 28 Hours on a Bus. I Loved It.”

* * *

For the 33-year-old Holthaus, the journey to becoming a “rebel nerd of meteorology” began in the American Midwest and includes stops in Latin America, Columbia, and the villages of Ethiopia along the way.

His fascination with the weather started while growing up in Kansas. “The sky is so big there,” he says. “I would watch thunderstorms and wonder how they worked.” Later, while pursuing a bachelor’s degree in meteorology from St. Louis University, he had an encounter that forever focused his professional interests on not just the weather but the social justice of weather.

“St. Louis University was big on service,” he says. “You thought of yourself as a citizen of the world first, and how you can make the world a better place. On a spring-break service trip to Mexico, I met refugees from Honduras, who had just suffered through Hurricane Mitch. I realized these severe weather events have big consequences outside the United States. In places like Central America, the effect can linger for decades. That’s when I geared my professional interests toward severe weather and climate change—it’s what matters most in my field.”

Following graduation, he volunteered for a year with migrant farm workers in Oregon, then jumped immediately into an M.S. program in Meteorology at the University of Oklahoma, chasing tornadoes from New Mexico to South Dakota. The transition from social work to scientific research was jarring. “My brain couldn’t handle the extreme transition,” he says. “I wanted something that blended both worlds.”

So in 2005, he enrolled in Columbia’s M.A. Program in Climate and Society as part of its second-ever cohort. Housed at the Earth Institute, this interdisciplinary program explores the impacts of climate change from both a scientific and social perspective, with an emphasis on the developing world. As a student, Holthaus was able to continue the interest that began with that seminal spring-break experience.

For his master’s thesis, “The Social Justice of Weather: Hurricane Risk Management for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,” he traveled to Cuba and Honduras to interview residents about their experiences with hurricanes and investigated the factors that make a country more or less vulnerable to severe weather. Working with Columbia scientists Mark Cane, John Mutter, and Walter Baethgen, he created a vulnerability index based on correlations between hurricane mortality and human development indicators used by the United Nations, such as deforestation, infant mortality, and income.

“The M.A. in Climate and Society does more than explain how the climate system works,” says Cynthia Thomson, assistant director of the program. “It also covers the challenges it poses to people around the world and how to address them. We’re a great fit for people like Eric who really want to help societies cope with all the challenges that climate change and climate variability throw at them.”

Holthaus earned his M.A. in 2006 and stayed on at the Earth Institute for another six years, working for its International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), which is based at Columbia’s Lamont campus in Palisades, New York. After briefly teaching at the University of Wisconsin, Holthaus moved to the University of California at Berkeley and is now an assistant professor, teaching students how to make the weather tell a story of climate change.

Eric Holthaus. Photo by Karen Edquist.
As part of the institute’s Millennium Villages Project, he helped scientist Cheryl Palm develop a drought-based crop insurance program for villages in Africa—a program that uses environmental indicators like rainfall (or lack thereof) to trigger automatic payments to farmers. Later, Oxfam America approached the IRI to extend the same idea to communities in Ethiopia.

“Eric came at a time when the project was transitioning from an experimental pilot to something bigger,” says Daniel Osgood, IRI research scientist and Holthaus’s supervisor for the Ethiopia project. “His personality and talent were valuable in the field, where we were scaling it up from a couple of villages to dozens of villages.”

To this day, Holthaus continues to consult on drought-based insurance for subsistence farmers in Ethiopia, this time in partnership with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. “These farmers make about a dollar a day,” Holthaus says. “We’re trying to provide a safety net for them when the weather goes bad.”

While working at the IRI, Holthaus started dabbling in two things that would eventually come to dominate his professional life: journalism and Twitter. In 2011 the Wall Street Journal decided to start a local weather blog, and the editor reached out to Holthaus through a mutual friend. Holthaus’s blog gained some traction during Hurricane Irene in August 2011, but it wasn’t until Superstorm Sandy in October 2012 that his weather coverage really caught on.

In the span of one week, he spent more than a hundred hours tweeting and blogging about Sandy, even though he was in Arizona at the time. He sent the first tweet eight days prior to landfall, and his tweets grew more and more breathless as Sandy approached.

As a result of his unflagging coverage, Holthaus’s Twitter following grew from 2,000 to 14,000, and he was invited to speak about the experience as part of an American Meteorological Society panel the following January.

“I tried to raise every alarm I could,” he says. “This was the worst storm that New York City would see in over 200 years. I tried to translate the technical information coming from the National Weather Service so that I and the public could understand it.”

The experience also inculcated in him the value of Twitter. “It’s my primary source of story ideas and for getting responses to what I write. I can’t imagine my job without it now,” he says. (Until recently, his @EricHolthaus profile page featured a photo of the Empire State Building getting struck by lightning, in front of a banner featuring Columbia’s Schermerhorn Hall.)

A year after the Sandy experience, Holthaus’s 140-character communiqués received widespread attention again, this time for a more personal reason—his no-fly vow. “I had thought about giving up flying before, on my flights to and from Ethiopia,” he says. “But the IPCC report was the trigger. It contained giant disaster scenarios out of sci-fi movies, and yet society was doing nothing about it. I thought, I have to start somewhere. To me, flying was a symbol of continuing with our current system without caring about the consequences. I couldn’t live with that on a personal level.”

The ensuing media attention shocked Holthaus and reinforced the notion that drastic lifestyle changes spurred by concern over climate change are still difficult to fathom. “I thought my vow wasn’t that big of a deal. I understand the extreme reactions to it, because the solutions to climate change are extreme. People say I’m an alarmist, but if you look at the numbers, extreme solutions are necessary.”

In January 2014 Holthaus joined Slate as a full-time writer, reporting on weather and climate across the country from his home base in Wisconsin. With articles ranging from “Coming Winter Storm Will Basically Make the South Like The Walking Dead,” to “California’s Rainiest Week in More Than Two Years Is Freaking People Out,” Holthaus has found a niche that leverages both his meteorology background and his distinctive millennial-generation voice. In his very first article, he interviewed Weather Channel CEO David Kenny about the beloved network that he grew up with in the eighties and nineties, even confessing that he used to wait excitedly for the “Tropical Update” at 58 minutes past the hour. In recent years, however, the channel has shifted to more reality programming like Highway Thru Hell and Coast Guard Alaska. It’s a shift that disappoints Holthaus and symbolizes the reduced emphasis on science in popular culture.

“Carl Sagan used to talk on TV about nuclear war—he saved the world because he made us terrified of nuclear war,” Holthaus says. “We have no one like that now for climate change. The Weather Channel has a chance to do it if they dedicate themselves to the weather, science, and climate. They realize they’ve gotten off track, and they’re trying to steer it back.”

On a broader scale, communicating about climate change—and getting past the politics of it—remains an ongoing challenge for meteorologists, journalists, and policymakers alike. Holthaus’s strategy is to take the offensive. He’s critical of the disclaimer mentality that pervades climate change communication. “Every time there’s a severe weather event, it’s as if scientists are required to say, ‘This event may not be directly caused by climate change, but events like it will become more typical with climate change.’ I think the science supports a link between every extreme weather event and climate change, even if it’s currently undetectable—it may be a small connection today, but the connections will only increase. To me, it’s irresponsible to say otherwise.”

Consider it another vow. As long as the Internet’s around, Holthaus will continue to spread the word about our changing planet, one tweet at a time.
Half language game, half parable, this monologue that appears near the climax of the film Bethlehem is perhaps the only clue that the spare psychological thriller was directed by a philosopher—Yuval Adler, Ph.D. ’99, Philosophy.

After a varied career that, in addition to his time in academia, featured stints in real estate and as a quant for a hedge fund, Adler turned to filmmaking and made his directorial debut with Bethlehem, which traces the complicated relationship between a Palestinian informant and his Israeli handler during the second Intifada. Adler, a native of Israel who currently resides in Tel Aviv and worked in military intelligence during his service in the Israel Defense Forces, cowrote the film with Ali Waked, a Palestinian. The two worked for years to collect materials and craft a script that would have the correct tone.

“We worked together for three and a half, almost four years. It’s a very complex thing,” Adler recalls. “We wanted something that’s both authentic and a genre movie. To get that balance was the difficult part. We spoke with everyone: Israeli secret services, Israeli army guys on the ground, Hamas militants, Palestinian authorities, Christians in Bethlehem. The details in the film are based on something real.”

The film begins in medias res, with the protagonist Sanfur torn between his loyalty to his brother, a Palestinian militant, and the closer relationship he has with Razi, his handler.

“We thought about showing the recruitment, but we couldn’t have a 12-hour film,” Adler remarks. “It’s a long process; it can take a year before they start to use an asset. The handler’s job is to create intimacy. It’s about slowly developing a relationship with someone, seeing what’s missing in their world and giving it to them.”

Sanfur’s position between two worlds becomes increasingly untenable as the story progresses, and indeed much of the film’s power stems from the escalating tension of the narrative. But there are also small moments that go against the plot-driven conventions of the thriller genre—a character vomiting in the middle of a chase sequence, for example—that give Bethlehem a verisimilitude absent from most films of its type. This attention to detail is the result not only of Adler and Waked’s thorough research but also of Adler’s philosophical training.

Two men saw something on the top of a hill.
The first one said: “It’s a bird.”
The second one said: “No. It’s a goat.”
They argued—bird, goat, bird, goat—until the first one threw a stone at it, and it flew away.
The second one said: “That’s a goat, even if it flies!”
Bethlehem was named Best Film in the Venice Days section of the 2013 Venice Film Festival and received six Ophirs (the Israeli Oscar), including Best Screenplay for Adler and Waked, Best Director for Adler, and Best Film. The film was released in the United States this spring and earned positive reviews: Manohla Dargis of The New York Times praised its complexity; in Variety Leslie Felperin remarked on Adler’s “confident grasp of pace, place and thespian handling.”

Much of the praise for the film, however, has focused on its nuanced treatment of Israeli-Palestinian relations—not on its cinematic qualities. “In Israel reactions were remarkably positive, both on the left and the right,” Adler says. “Outside Israel, it’s been branded as right wing or left wing; this wasn’t the case here. When the film opened in France and Germany, they liked the film, but they just talk about the politics. They don’t talk about the film as a film at all—it’s completely about the politics. “We tried with each of the three main characters to make them as authentic, interesting, and three-dimensional as possible: each is great in his own way. I think when you see something like this, you should be open to just looking at the people and not looking for symbols. Let them be people.”

The success of Bethlehem, which featured largely unprofessional actors and was produced on a small budget, has presented new opportunities in the film industry, and Adler has already begun working on his next project. But, ever the polymath, Adler continues to work in philosophy, teaching a graduate seminar on Martin Heidegger at Bar-Ilan University, and also plans to write a book on the Book of Job. He notes, however, that cinema offers something unique.

“When you sit at home alone in your underwear and have an idea that no one cares about, and then later there’s a film in the world, it’s amazing. There’s nothing like it.”

Both philosophy and film come from a deeper root,” Adler says. “You’re trying to understand the world by being open to it. There’s something similar in the way that philosophy and film offer a way to explore the world after observing it.”

Adler combined his studies in analytic philosophy with instruction in sculpture under the artist Judy Pfaff, then a professor at Columbia’s School of the Arts and now at Bard College. In fact, the two come together in his dissertation, which examines metaphysics and indexicality (the condition of always being situated somewhere within the world and seeing from a certain viewpoint) and, as an example, discusses the ability to differentiate a statue from a chunk of clay. Pfaff remarks that, although it was somewhat unusual for a Ph.D. candidate to request to study with her, admitting Adler was “a no-brainer.”

“He was just so unusual for me in his intelligence and his approach to art, and he took it on really, really easily,” she recalls. “He was very knowledgeable of aesthetics and the current art world. I’ve never seen anyone as confident and as bright.

Unlike most scholars or academicians, he’s very physical. He’s an imposing man. It wasn’t just fun working with him—he tested me, and I was forced to kind of ask questions of him and of the work.”

Pfaff also remarked upon another quality that would serve Adler well in preparing for Bethlehem. “He doesn’t hang around with trendy art people or egghead academics. He really likes the street—real people with real lives, and some of those lives are dangerous. He had kind of an instinct about the underbelly of things.”

Ultimately, though, the experience of making a film was quite different from either his art or his scholarship. “After being in art and academia, where you’re so alone and so in control of what you’re doing, film is the most opposite place you can be,” Adler says. “You are constantly dealing with people and trying to be creative and fight with people and answer questions. It’s very difficult to deal with so many people in such an intense environment in such a short amount of time. There’s a famous director, I
On April 9, 2014, the new Graduate Student Center officially opened in 301 Philosophy Hall. Featuring a lounge area, conference room, pantry, and other enhancements, the Center offers a dedicated space on campus for formal and informal interaction among graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty across a variety of disciplines.

On April 8 a ribbon-cutting ceremony took place with President Lee Bollinger, GSAS Dean Carlos J. Alonso, Provost John Coatsworth, Executive Vice President David Madigan, GSAS Senior Associate Dean Andrea Solomon, architect Robert Siegel, GSAS Alumni Board Chair Louis Parks, and representatives from the Graduate Student Advisory Council. Also in attendance was a gathering of alumni, students, faculty, and administrators.

The Center was designed by Robert Siegel, '90GSAPP.

**Study Pods**

Smaller areas to the side are ideal for small-group discussions or individual study.

**Seminar Room**

Located in the adjacent room 302, a redesigned conference room is available for seminars, meetings, and presentations.

**Lounge**

With ample natural light and a state-of-the-art acoustic system designed to reduce background noise, the lounge is the focal point of the new Center. The chairs and tables can be reconfigured into different setups, while an audiovisual system is available for presentations, conferences, and film screenings.

**Café**

The Center’s café, Nous Espresso Bar, offers food and beverages for purchase.

**Entrance**

Glass doors mark the entrance to the new Center on the ground floor of Philosophy Hall.
Anita Demkiv

M.A. '04, Regional Studies: Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe

Interview by Andrew Ng

Why did you decide to pursue a master's degree at Columbia?
I was assigned to Ukraine when I volunteered for the Peace Corps from 1999 to 2001. I taught at Odessa National University. The Peace Corps volunteers not only taught classes but also engaged in an exchange of cultures with the people there. I became charmed by the culture and gained a level of affection for the Ukrainian people. I stayed in the country for another year and a half as a coordinator for the International Renaissance Foundation, a consultant for the World Bank in Kiev, and a Peace Corps Volunteer trainer. So my experiences in Ukraine were really the springboard for pursuing an M.A. in Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies. I became fascinated with the post-Soviet legacy and its lasting influence.

What was your master's thesis topic?
I wrote about the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the influence of NGOs in facilitating that revolution.

What are your thoughts on the current political and civil unrest in Ukraine?
I think that Ukraine is facing three main challenges. The first is how the new government will represent the eastern and southern parts of the country effectively, so that Russian speakers and ethnic Russians don't feel marginalized. Citizens in those areas tend to think that the conflict boils down to an East-West dichotomy. But the uprising was about overturning a corrupt government. Second, the country is in an economic free fall. Ukraine can borrow money from the European Union and International Monetary Fund, but then they will have to put austerity measures in place, like reforming their energy policies and reducing gas and energy subsidies. Austerity measures will breed public dissatisfaction. Third, they have to build a new government, one that is more transparent and democratic. Many were disenchanted with the previous government, so I hope this will be a new step forward in democracy.

How was your experience at Columbia?
Overall I loved my experience. I enjoyed the atmosphere and the interaction with students and professors. It was the chance of a lifetime. Regional Studies is a multidisciplinary program, and it's not too easy to find those. Plus, I became interested in energy issues through Columbia—it's what led me to my current profession as an oil market analyst. I came to appreciate the huge role that energy plays in Russia's wealth and foreign affairs.

What do you do as an oil market analyst?
I research crude oil and respond to client inquiries about the research we provide. I also write special reports, which are in-depth studies on some aspect of the oil market.

Are you able to leverage your M.A. experience in your job?
Yes—besides giving me regional expertise, it also helps me look at energy issues from a multifaceted, geopolitical perspective. While I was an M.A. student, I spent a lot of time in the School of International and Public Affairs building. I was exposed to events, conferences, and lectures that brought me up to speed on global issues. In my job, I focus mainly on the U.S. and Canada, but I also look at the whole world, including the Middle East, post-Soviet states, and China.

You are also a GSAS alumni volunteer. How did you get involved?
I attended an alumni mixer where Dean Alonso spoke sincerely and candidly about GSAS's dedication to its students. His speech was very inspiring. That's why I got involved. I'm part of the Leadership Advisory Council of the Alumni Association—I help to contact alumni on behalf of GSAS to get them involved.

You received your Ph.D. in Global Affairs from Rutgers University in 2012, and you recently spoke at a "What Can You Be with a Ph.D.?" event at the Columbia Alumni Center. How did that event go?
I enjoyed motivating the attendees and helping them realize that a Ph.D. can open up a lot of doors. As great as academia is, you can apply the Ph.D. to many nonacademic areas. With today's job market, seeking alternatives to academia is a reality that must be acknowledged. I imparted the need to establish a network, and I emphasized the value that a Ph.D. recipient can offer in terms of researching, writing, and presenting data in a clear and coherent way. I think that companies do appreciate the skill set that Ph.D.'s can offer.
Daniel Duzdevich

‘09CC, M.A. ’12, M.Phil. ’13, Biological Sciences

Interview by Andrew Ng


I’ve known for a long time that I want to be a biologist, so I tried to read On the Origin of Species in high school. But I couldn’t get through it—the writing was too convoluted. I came back to it in college, when it was assigned reading for a class taught by Professor Walter Bock. I have a habit of notating what I read, and I realized that I was making mostly stylistic changes to the text—changes that made the language clearer. Professor Bock suggested that I try ‘translating’ one chapter. I was happy with the result, so I kept working on it.

Has this been done before—a “translation” of the entire Origin into modern language?

No, but other writers have handled the Origin in different ways—for example, annotating it with detailed notes and references, or layering modern science onto it. But no one had addressed the language directly, which was very surprising to me.

Take me through your writing process.

My goal was to translate the Origin into stylistically lucid and clear text, without sacrificing content. I started with a paperback copy and broke it down into sentences and paragraphs with penciled-in notations, working piece by piece. This was slowly translated into the working manuscript. Then I meticulously cross-checked against the original to make sure I hadn’t altered content or Darwin’s meaning. After that—many, many rounds of rereading and rechecking. I also asked biologists and nonspecialists to critique the manuscript, which was very helpful.

What was your biggest challenge in this project?

In many ways, I’m an outsider. I’m a molecular biologist, not an evolutionary biologist—but I actually consider that an advantage because I approached the Origin without too many preconceptions. Also, I’m just a student ‘messing with’ a masterpiece. But I didn’t undertake this project to challenge Darwin. I did it to give him a voice for a larger audience.

Did you have a hard time balancing this project with all your obligations as a Ph.D. student?

Yes, definitely. But I was careful not to compromise my graduate-school responsibilities. I’m an insomniac, so my habit was to work on the book late at night or early in the morning, after I had finished all my other work. I enjoy the ritual of writing, of having something else to turn to.

Olivia Judson, an evolutionary biologist and award-winning writer, wrote the foreword for your book. How did that come about?

Olivia Judson is one of my science-writing heroes. She has a style that is immediately engaging but also scientifically rigorous. I contacted her with the manuscript, and after some correspondence and feedback, she agreed to contribute. She wrote a terrific foreword with great details that will give someone who’s unfamiliar with the Origin all the necessary background.

Having studied at both Columbia College and GSAS, how would you compare the two experiences?

They’re very different. I chose the College for the Core Curriculum, and all those humanities classes—with students from every department mingling and arguing—were a highlight of my undergraduate years. As for the sciences, it was important for me to be at a research university, to be taught by active scientists.

In graduate school, my focus is on research, engaging with the scientific community, designing experiments, and exchanging ideas. It’s a wonderful intellectual environment.

What is your Ph.D. research on?

I work at the Medical Center campus in the lab of Professor Eric Greene. Overall, we study how biological molecules interact with DNA, and my focus is on systems that manipulate DNA in complicated but very regulated ways. Using a technique originally developed by Professor Greene called “DNA curtains,” I can actually watch these interactions happening between individual molecules. Everyone in the Greene lab uses this technique, but we study different biological systems.

How did you first get interested in biology?

My passion happens to be a grade-school subject, so it was easy to discover. I was lucky to have teachers who brought enthusiasm to science classes, or otherwise encouraged me. At some point in high school I realized that scientists get to discover things. That did it for me.

This interview has been condensed and edited; read the full interview on the GSAS website.
Faculty Publications

Do Muslim Women Need Saving?
Lila Abu-Lughod, Anthropology
Offering detailed vignettes of the lives of ordinary Muslim women, Lila Abu-Lughod investigates gender inequality and the discourse surrounding it.

Breaking Out: An Indian Woman’s American Journey
Padma Desai, Economics
In this memoir, Padma Desai describes her tumultuous road to assimilation and liberation with a scholar’s insights into culture and society and a novelist’s flair for language.

William Kentridge and Nalini Malani: The Shadow Play as Medium of Memory
Andreas Huyssen, Germanic Languages
Andreas Huyssen compares the work of artists William Kentridge of South Africa and Nalini Malani of India, both of whom belong to generations shaped by colonialism and decolonization.

Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860–1950
Marwa Elshakry, History
Marwa Elshakry examines how Darwin’s ideas and other works about evolution influenced Arabic thought from the late 1860s to the mid-20th century.

Deaths in Venice: The Cases of Gustav von Aschenbach
Philip Kitcher, Philosophy
Philip Kitcher examines Thomas Mann’s 1913 novella Death in Venice, as well as its subsequent adaptations into opera and film, from a philosophical perspective.

Democracy Disfigured: Opinion, Truth, and the People
Nadia Urbinati, Political Science
Nadia Urbinati focuses on technocrats, demagogues, and media operatives as covert threats to democratic society in an age of hyperpartisanship and media monopolies.

Alumni Publications

Mao’s Little Red Book: A Global History
Alexander C. Cook (editor), Ph.D. ’07, East Asian Languages and Cultures
This pioneering volume brings together a range of scholars to explore Mao Zedong’s Quotations from Chairman Mao as a phenomenon of world history.

How to Write Anything: A Complete Guide
Laura Brown, M.A. ’86, M.Phil. ’89, Ph.D. ’96, English and Comparative Literature
Laura Brown provides more than 200 how-to entries and models—organized into sections on work, school, and personal life—in this practical guide to writing.

The Blazing World
Siri Hustvedt, M.A. ’79, M.Phil. ’82, Ph.D. ’86, English and Comparative Literature
The latest novel from Siri Hustvedt tells the story of a female artist who presents three successful exhibitions under the guise of male artists and the repercussions that follow.

In Light of Another’s Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages
Shirin A. Khanmohamadi, M.A. ’98, M.Phil. ’00, Ph.D. ’05, English and Comparative Literature
Shirin A. Khanmohamadi challenges the traditional notion of medieval Europe as insular and xenophobic by examining the work of early ethnographic writers from that time.

In the Writers Afterlife
Richard Vetere, M.A. ’74, English and Comparative Literature
In Richard Vetere’s novel, a deceased author arrives at an afterlife for writers—including Shakespeare and Tolstoy—and discovers a way to still achieve earthly fame.

Breathless: An American Girl in Paris
Nancy K. Miller, Ph.D. ’74, French and Romance Philology
Nancy K. Miller’s memoir chronicles her 1960s adventures in Paris after rebelling against the conventional expectations of young middle-class American women.

Balinese Food: The Traditional Cuisine and Food Culture of Bali
Vivienne Kruger, M.A. ’74, M.Phil. ’77, Ph.D. ’85, History
Vivienne Kruger presents the full range of food experiences available in Bali and explores the island’s culinary art within the context of its religion, culture, and community life.

On the Shelf
In Memoriam

Kathryn Wasserman Davis
M.A. ’31, International Relations
Phanthropist and international relations scholar Kathryn Wasserman Davis died in April 2013 at 106. She earned a B.A. at Wellesley, an M.A. at Columbia, and a doctorate in political science from the University of Geneva. Russia long held special interest for her, inspiring her book The Soviets at Geneva: The U.S.S.R. and the League of Nations, 1919–1933. She and her late husband, Shelby Cullom Davis, M.A. ’31, maintained a remarkable record of philanthropy that included extensive support for environmental charities, humanitarian projects, and higher education. The Davises’ gifts to Columbia have established a chair in the practice of international diplomacy at SIPA, a chair in economics and international affairs at GSAS, and significant fellowship funding for international graduate students at SIPA and GSAS beginning in 2014–2015.

Richard Heffner
’46CC, M.A. ’47, History
Richard Heffner, professor of communication and public policy at Rutgers University, died in December at 88. As host of public television’s The Open Mind from 1956 to 2013, he interviewed many prominent guests, including Margaret Mead, Malcolm X, and Jimmy Carter. He authored A Documentary History of the United States and A Conversational History of Modern America.

John Eisenhowe
M.A. ’50, English and Comparative Literature
John Eisenhowe, son of President Dwight Eisenhower, died in December at 91. A graduate of West Point and Columbia, he served in World War II and the Korean War and was appointed ambassador to Belgium from 1969 to 1971. He authored several books, including The Bitter Woods; about the Battle of the Bulge, Strictly Personal, a memoir, So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846–1848; Aliens: Pearl Harbor to D-Day, Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I, and General Ike: A Personal Remembrance.

Arlene Swift Jones
M.A. ’50, English and Comparative Literature
Writer and educator Arlene Swift Jones died in December at 84. As a teacher, lecturer, and administrator, she worked at the elementary, high school, and university level at institutions throughout the world, including serving as principal of the American School of Warsaw, as a lecturer at the International School in Geneva, and as the assistant academic dean at the Ethel Walker School in Simsbury, Connecticut. She published three books of poems, a memoir, and an autobiographical novel, and received a number of awards for her writing.

Joyce Brothers
M.A. ’50, Ph.D. ’53, Psychology
Psychologist and media personality Joyce Brothers died in May 2013 at 85. She was well known for communicating psychological research in terms that engaged the general public, from her work on radio and television—including appearances on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson and her own shows on NBC and CBS—to writing a column that was syndicated in 300 newspapers. The American Psychological Association awarded her a presidential citation for her pioneering work in the mass media.

Arthur C. Danto
M.A. ’49, Ph.D. ’52, Philosophy
Arthur C. Danto, a prominent philosopher who penned influential essays on the meaning of art, the definition of art, and the end of art history, died in October at 89. Born in Michigan and a veteran of World War II, he began teaching philosophy at Columbia in 1951, was named a full professor in 1966, and became professor emeritus in 1992. He authored numerous books, including Nietzsche as Philosopher, Mysticism and Morality: The Transfiguration of the Commonplace, Narration and Knowledge, Connections to the World: The Basic Concepts of Philosophy, and Encounters and Reflections: Art in the Historical Present, a collection of art criticism that won the National Book Critics Circle Prize for Criticism in 1990. He also served as art critic for The Nation from 1984 to 2009 and was editor of The Journal of Philosophy.

Kenneth Waltz
Ph.D. ’54, Political Science
International relations scholar Kenneth Waltz died in May 2013 at 88. Waltz was known for both controversial ideas and incisive analysis, exemplified in his books Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis, which grew out of his dissertation, and Theory of International Politics, where he articulated his concept of neorealism, which emphasizes the influence of inherent structural constraints in the international system. Waltz earned his undergraduate degree in economics at Oberlin College, then began studying political science at Columbia as a graduate student. His graduate study was interrupted by service in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. After completing his dissertation, he taught at a number of institutions and eventually returned to Columbia as a senior research scholar at SIPA’s Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies after retiring from the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley.
Robert L. Belknap
Ph.D. ’60, Slavic Languages and Literatures

Robert L. Belknap, professor emeritus in Columbia's Slavic Languages Department, died in March at 84. He was an expert on Russian literature, particularly the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky. He was the author of two major studies on The Brothers Karamazov: The Structure of The Brothers Karamazov (1967) and The Genesis of The Brothers Karamazov (1992), both of which appeared in Russian translation. Together with his Columbia colleague Richard Kuhns, Belknap wrote Tradition and Innovation: General Education and the Reintegration of the University (1977), which stated that interdisciplinary understanding, tolerance, and humility are central to a whole, “reintegrated” university. A native New Yorker, Belknap was educated at Princeton, the University of Paris, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) State University, and Columbia.

Robert Fogel
M.A. ’60, Economics

Economist and historian Robert Fogel died in June 2013 at 86. He won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1993 “for having renewed research in economic history by applying economic theory and quantitative methods in order to explain economic and institutional change,” particularly for his data-driven research on slavery and railroads in the United States. He was a professor at the University of Chicago, authored 22 books, and published 90 papers in academic journals during the course of his career.

Wayne Paton
M.A. ’60, English and Comparative Literature

Scholar and educator Wayne Paton died in January at 78. He served as a lecturer in the School of English at the University of Leeds from 1963 to 1998, teaching English, American, and French literature.

James Emanuel
Ph.D. ’62, English and Comparative Literature

Poet James Emanuel died in September at 92. A scholar of Langston Hughes, he was a professor at City College in New York before moving permanently to Europe. He published several books of poetry, including The Treehouse and Other Poems, Black Man Abroad, and Whole Grain: Collected Poems, 1958–1989, as well as The Force and the Reckoning, a collection of different narrative forms.

James Sterling Young
Ph.D. ’64, Political Science

Oriental scholar James Sterling Young died in August at 85. His doctoral dissertation was published as The Washington Community, 1800–1828 and won a Bancroft Prize at Columbia. He served on the faculty and administration at Columbia before joining the University of Virginia, where he founded the Presidential Oral History Program at the Miller Center. The program has documented the presidencies of Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush through interviews with White House staff and associates.

Owen Lynch
Ph.D. ’66, Anthropology

Anthropologist Owen Lynch died in April 2013 at 82. He taught at SUNY, Binghamton before joining the faculty of New York University, where he was professor of anthropology from 1974 to 2003. His scholarship in the field of South Asian cultures included studies on the Dalit community, emotions in Indian life, and the politics of emancipation.

Jaime Alazraki
Ph.D. ’67, Spanish and Portuguese

Jaime Alazraki, a specialist in Latin American literatures and cultures, died in February at 80. Twice distinguished as a recipient of the prestigious John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, he was world renowned for his many scholarly studies on Jorge Luis Borges. Alazraki was born in Argentina and studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem before moving to New York City in 1962 to begin his doctoral studies at Columbia. After professorial appointments at UC San Diego and Harvard University, he returned to Columbia in 1988 and served as chair of the former Department of Spanish and Portuguese for several years, until his retirement in the early 1990s.

Lucia Lermond
Ph.D. ’85, Religion

Lucia Lermond died in February at 64. A graduate of Queens College, she specialized in the philosophy of religion. Her dissertation was published as The Form of Man: Human Essence in Spinoza’s Ethic by E. J. Brill and is considered a significant work in contemporary Spinoza studies by scholars. She served as an adjunct associate professor at Queens College, teaching philosophy, religion, and feminist theory.

For additional and expanded obituaries, visit the GSAS website.
Anthropology

APAM: Applied Mathematics

DAWEI: University of Ottawa
Weiwu Li.Portfolio optimization with transaction costs and taxes. Sponsor: Mark N. Broadie and David E. Keyes.

DAWEI: University of Washington
Sarah Martha Angelini. High-speed videography on HBT-EP. Sponsor: Michael E. Mauel.

Dissertations Deposited Recently

Architecture

Art History and Archaeology
Heidi Applegate. Staging modernism at the 1915 San Francisco World’s Fair. Sponsor: Elizabeth W. Hutchinson.

Artificial Intelligence
Annie Hurnell Chen. From the seed of the gods. Art, ideology, and cultural exchange with the Persian court under the Roman Tetrarchs, 284–324 CE. Sponsor: Francesco de Angelis.

Biophysics

Biomedical Engineering
Matthew Bouchard. 2D and 3D high-resolution imaging systems for taste sensation of carbonic anhydrase. Sponsor: Andrew F. Lane.

Biotechnology and Molecular Biophysics
Joo Heon Yoon. Gas around galaxies and suggesting the career of Nicholaus Artifex (c. 112–1164) in the context of later twelfth-century north Italian politics. Sponsor: Holger A. Klein.

Chemistry

Dissertations Deposited Recently
Astronomy

Economics

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Announcements

Ginger Shulick Porcella, M.A. '07, Anthropology, was named executive director of the San Diego Art Institute.

Christian Kleinbub, M.A. '00, M.Phil. '02, Ph.D. '06, Art History and Archaeology, won the Gustave O. Arlt Award for his book Vision and the Visionary in Raphael.

Neil deGrasse Tyson, M.Phil. '91, Ph.D. '92, Astronomy, premiered as host of the Cosmos television series on Fox and National Geographic Television.

George Farmer, M.A. '95, M.Phil. '95, Ph.D. '96, Biological Sciences, was appointed chief executive officer of Cortice Biosciences in New York City.

Ethan V. Torrey, M.A. '96, History, '99LAW, was named legal counsel for the Supreme Court.

Wallace S. Broecker, Ph.D. '58, Earth and Environmental Sciences, received the Dean’s Award for Distinguished Achievement at the 2014 GSAS Ph.D. Convocation ceremony.

Diane Ravitch, Ph.D. '75, History, won the Grawemeyer Award in Education for her book The Death and Life of the Great American School System.

Aurelia Bardon, Ph.D. candidate in Political Science, became the first student to complete the Dual Ph.D. Partnership program between Columbia and Sciences Po in Paris.

The following Ph.D. students won the 2014 Presidential Awards for Outstanding Teaching at Columbia: Royden Jay Kadyschuk, English and Comparative Literature, Roberto Pesenti, Art History and Archaeology, and Aya Wallwater, Industrial Engineering and Operations Research.

The following faculty members were honored with the Lenfest Distinguished Teaching Awards: Elizabeth Blackmar, professor of history; Virginia Page Fortina, professor of political science; Erik Gray, associate professor of English and comparative literature; Peter Kelemen, professor of earth and environmental sciences; Ioannis Mylonopoulos, assistant professor of art history and archaeology; Christine Philiou, associate professor of history; Valerie Purdie-Vaughns, assistant professor of psychology; Joanna Stalmaker, associate professor of French and Romance philology; Brent Stockwell, associate professor of biological sciences; and Rafael Yuste, professor of biological sciences.

The following GSAS alumni were awarded 2014 Guggenheim Fellowships: Devin Fore, Ph.D. '05, Germanic Languages; Arthur Kampela, D.M.A. '98, Music Composition; Joseph Thornton, Ph.D. '00, Biological Sciences; Lu Wang, D.M.A. '12, Music Composition; and Alexandra Wettlaufer, Ph.D. '93, French and Romance Philology.

Umit S. Dhuga, M.A. '02, M.Phil. '05, Ph.D. '06, Classics, was awarded a fellowship at the Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, to research Greek tragedy and opera.

The following Ph.D. students won the 2014 Presidential Awards for Outstanding Teaching at Columbia: Royden Jay Kadyschuk, English and Comparative Literature; Roberto Pesenti, Art History and Archaeology; and Aya Wallwater, Industrial Engineering and Operations Research.

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