



# Graduate Humanities

students and faculty collaboratively exploring the arts, history, culture, and literature in an open experimental multidisciplinary environment

Graduate Humanities Program  
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## Everyone has a story

The stories in this issue illustrate the unique approach of the Graduate Humanities Program and its connection to the rest of society, a synergistic connection known as public humanities. A connection unlike any other in the university system.

Humanists James Quay and James Veninga write: "We think...[of] scholarship and the public humanities not as two distinct spheres but as parts of a single process, the process of taking private insight, testing it, and turning it into public knowledge." This issue provides several examples of the journey from private insight to public knowledge which are taking place in our Program. We're pleased to share them with you

– Trish Hatfield ('08)  
Program Assistant

## Humanities puts a human face on public policy



**Dr. Renate Pore.** Born and raised in Germany and California. As a college student Dr. Pore was disturbed with what she learned about Germany in the Third Reich. In her

recently published book, *A Family Memoir*, Renate writes "I wanted an explanation. I wondered if my beloved grandparents and other family members were connected to the terrible atrocities of Nazi Germany. I wondered if there was some fundamental flaw in German character and what that meant for my own character. I earned a PhD in German history from WVU in 1977 and was able to satisfy some of my need to know. In her biography of her mother Dr. Pore writes, "As a student of history, I have the long view and want to put my mother's story in the context of time and place in which she lived."

For Dr. Pore, having the long view and knowing the context of time and place is essential to her work in public health as you'll read about in her interview; in addition to her PHD, she earned a Masters in Public Health from the University of North Carolina in 1983. She has contributed numerous articles for publication on rural health, health reform, child health, and child development. She is the Director of Health Care Policy for West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, a consumer directed health advocacy organization.

The reason for our interview with Renate in this issue was two-fold: she has a deep appreciation of the value of the humanities in a democracy, and she is President and co-founder of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, one of the community partners of the Graduate Humanities Program.

### Dr. Pore, before we talk about the humanities, would you explain what policy work means?

I've often said to people that policy is the intersection between ideas and policy. You take big ideas and translate them into something that can make a difference in the world. And you have to sell it, not just to the legislature but to the public. [Take] health care reform. The big idea is that everyone should have access to health care. You can say why it's in the best interest of society, etc., but making it into something that works in society, that's the politics.

### You have used the word "ally" to describe the relationship between the WV Center on Budget and Policy and the Graduate Humanities Program. What do you mean by this?

[Humanities] puts a human face on public policy. Showing the human experience is why they are so important – more important than all the data and statistics. In trying to influence the public debate, I really appreciate what you guys do, like the project we did together on interviewing people on what the water crisis meant to them. The oral history interviews will be really valuable to those people working on water policy.

SEE PORE, PAGE 6

## Recent Graduates

### James Straight '15

Major Emphasis:  
Cultural Studies.

Project Title:  
"Rock Lake Presbyterian History: Handling Change and Challenges in a Reformed Protestant Church"



### Andrew J. Wood '15

Major Emphasis:  
Cultural Studies.

Project Title:  
"A Memoir of Benjamin Wilkes Hale, Sr."



## Looking at activism in West Virginia, past and present

(Reprinted with permission of the Charleston Gazette-Mail from a story by Douglas Imbrogno published Feb. 7, 2016.)

Activists tend to be active in everything but actively recording a story of the change their work leaves behind.

Enter the West Virginia Activist Archive.

"There are a lot of tremendous social change agents in West Virginia that have been doing great work for a long time, and their stories don't tend to get captured. We wanted to catch those stories," said Michael Tierney, himself an activist for nearly 40 years with the regional nonprofit group Step By Step and many other efforts.

Along with Luke Eric Lassiter, Tierney is co-teaching the graduate seminar "West Virginia Activists: Stories of Social Change," through the Marshall University Graduate Humanities Program at Marshall's Graduate College/South Charleston Campus.

As part of the seminar, Tierney and Lassiter, director of the Graduate Humanities Program and a professor of humanities and anthropology, have pulled together a series of panels open to the public (see below). The panels are intended to paint a portrait of some of the people, old and young, at the forefront of social justice, environmental activism, community empowerment, women's rights and other frontline causes across West Virginia.

They hope the panels will not only create a cross-generational dialogue about West Virginia activism, but inspire others to put their own shoulders to the wheel.

"If you really want a sense of joy in your life, hang out with people who are trying to make a difference. Hanging out in a social movement is much more exciting than a lot of the alternatives," Tierney said.

For Lassiter, activism is where those who may feel frustrated by or "shut out" of the political process can feel they're making an actual difference in their communities.

"I'm an anthropologist, and you see that everywhere — people want to

make change in their lives if they're given the opportunity.

"People invest in their communities because they see the return immediately," Lassiter said. "The point of this is people telling stories of success — and failures — as well. One of my interests in this is 'What keeps people motivated?' What seems to be the answer again and again is that



Jim Lewis (right) and Paul Sheridan discuss the activism that has filled their lives as part of an ongoing seminar capturing stories and histories for the West Virginia Activist Archive.

people see actual change. It may be small and localized. But I would say that's just as important as any other kind of change."

Students taking the class will produce oral histories of some of the panelists, craft posters and gather artifacts for public displays that recall movements, campaigns and issues to which the panelists have devoted their energies and often their lives.

Tierney and Lassiter have cast their net wide for the panels while cautioning that they are "the tip of the iceberg" and the featured activists are certainly not the sole representatives of that panel's theme.

The panels began last Wednesday with "Peace Movement/Multi-Issue Activism," featuring the Rev. Jim Lewis and Paul Sheridan. Lewis, an Episcopal minister, has for decades been at the forefront of civil rights, LGBT rights and labor and peace movements, while Sheridan has long been an advocate for human and civil rights in the state.

A March 16 panel features Christine Weiss Daugherty, who has kind of come "full circle in her life," Tierney said. "She came to West Virginia with her late husband, and they founded Great Oak Farm. She was a potter and then got involved with women and economic development. She founded Women and Employment, became an international specialist and across the country, working with the MS Foundation, working with Third World small loan kinds of things.

"Now, she's back in West Virginia and has returned to her pottery roots, but is still kind of a real sage that a bunch of us go to talk with about different things."

On the younger end of things, Tierney said, "we've got a batch of people coming in talking about children and family advocacy, including Stephen Smith, who's the executive director of the Healthy Kids and Family Coalition. But also a young woman named Takeiya Smith, who is one of the student

leaders at West Virginia State University and is looking at issues like the discrepancies and arrest records of African-American juveniles. At the same time, she's working with students to create a safe place for LGBT students on campus."

Featuring older activists with younger ones speaks to Tierney's against-the-grain, upbeat assessment on the possibility for change in West Virginia. All those articles on the Mountain State's "brain drain" and the ongoing rightward tilt of politics in the state house shouldn't divert attention from the fact that change is afoot across the state.

Tierney joked that he initially wanted to call the West Virginia Activist Archives "the Old Fart Activist Club, which is people who have been doing it a long time."

But in the last couple of years of putting on such panels with Lassiter, "the dialogue has been really rich when we invited some 20-somethings and

30-somethings," he said.

"It's very rich to watch the conversations back and forth between people who have been doing it for 30 or 40 years and people who are striking out on that path. I'd say the other piece is — this is just the most exciting time in West Virginia."

People who say otherwise "are not hanging out with the right people," said Tierney. "The people who are actually in elective office I don't think is a terribly thrilling group of people. I think political campaigns are as tired and cynical as any other country. So, the hope has not spread to the actual partisan electoral process, for the most part."

But for hope and encouragement you have only to look to such grass-roots efforts as Our Children, Our Future, which is a statewide campaign and the range of people involved, he said.

"We've got 18-year-olds that were volunteering as high school activists that are running for public office right now. If you look at a lot of the creative regional organizations, like the West Virginia Community Development Hub, Healthy Kids and Healthy Families, it's a nice mix. There are people who have more than a little bit of gray like some of us. But you go to a meeting and the 20-somethings and 30-somethings are incredibly dynamic."

Tierney, who first came to West Virginia as a 20-year-old volunteer after the big April 1977 Flood and was in Williamson, said he has seen "a lot of movements and a lot of eras. And I have never seen a more exciting climate for people working for social change than what we have in the state right now.

"So, it may not be what gets covered in the papers and it is certainly not what is yet showing at the ballot. But people are working tirelessly. They are working very, very hard to envision a great future for West Virginia and do not seem discouraged by what is a pretty depressing legislative process.

"Much of the change they're building is people making changes in each other's lives regardless of who is in political office. But I can't help but think that's a real training ground that 10 years from now we might have a much more exciting process at that level, too," said Tierney.

And here's a sentiment you likely have not heard recently.

"This has become an exciting place for people to come and to work on social change and for people to return," he said. "It's not automatically assumed when you get done with college that you better go someplace else to find interesting, passionate work.

"I think West Virginia is both drawing its children home and it's also drawing people from across the country. The beginning of that was environmental activism. But the children and family advocacy movement, local foods, people getting excited about alternative community economic development ... It's just a real, real rich terrain right now." ■

(Listen to a podcast of the full conversation on West Virginia activism with Tierney and Lassiter at [westvirginiaville.com](http://westvirginiaville.com))

**All the panels** will be held at the Marshall University Graduate College/ South Charleston Campus, 100 Angus E Peyton Dr., in South Charleston, in the main Graduate College building room 137, except for the April 8 event which will be held in room 319. (More about the project and the graduate seminar can be found at [www.marshall.edu/graduatehumanities](http://www.marshall.edu/graduatehumanities).)

#### Other Previous Panels:

February 10

TOPIC: "Children and Family Advocacy."  
PANELISTS: Stephen Smith, W.Va. Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, Our Children, Our Future; Takeiya Smith, student chapter leader, Our Children Our Future; Kristen O'Sullivan Harrison, child welfare and youth leadership advocate; Diane Hughes, Upper Kanawha Valley Starting Points, Parents as Teachers.

February 17

TOPIC: "The West Virginia Water Crisis/ Environmental Activism."  
PANELISTS: Angie Rosser, West Virginia Rivers Coalition; Robin Wilson, West Virginia Citizens Action Group.

#### Upcoming Panels

March 9

TOPIC: "Faith Based Activism."  
PANELISTS: Rabbi Victor Urecki, B'nai Jacob Synagogue; Ibtesam Barazi,

Islamic Association of West Virginia; Rev. Jeff Allen, director, West Virginia Council of Churches

March 16

TOPIC: "Women and Community Development."  
PANELIST: Christine Weiss Daugherty, International and U.S. rural development and women in development.

March 30

TOPIC: "Cultural Preservation."  
PANELISTS: Bob Maslowski Council For West Virginia Archaeology; Carter Taylor Seaton, author, sculptor, former craft co-op director and arts advocate; Michael Tierney, West Virginia Activist Archive, Step by Step, Mosaic/South Boston Foxfire project.

April 6

TOPIC: "West Virginia Chose Me."  
Transplanted Activists including some of the original VISTAs.  
PANELISTS: Colleen Anderson, writer and graphic designer (VISTA 1970-71); Ric MacDowell, Lincoln County youth advocate (VISTA 1968-69); Rachel Dash, Faculty/Therapist WVU Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry

April 8

NOTE: daytime panel from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Change in location to room 319 in main Graduate College building.  
TOPIC: "Civil Rights and Racial Justice."  
PANELISTS: Rev Matthew Watts, Grace United Church; West Virginia student activists.

April 20

TOPIC: "Labor and Economic Development."  
PANELISTS: John David, founder, Southern Appalachian Labor School; Brandon Dennison, Coalfield Development Corporation.

April 29

A 7 p.m. opening in the library of an exhibit on West Virginia Activist Traditions, featuring an exhibit of posters produced on West Virginia activists and artifacts capturing their work.

For more information, call 304-414-4452 or 304-746-1923. Contact Douglas Imbrogno at [douglas@wvgazetteemail.com](mailto:douglas@wvgazetteemail.com), 304 - 348 - 3017 or follow @douglassseye on Twitter.

Marshall's Graduate Humanities Program has a long history of engaging in projects and partnerships that advance its tradition of outreach and civic engagement. This visual shows current partnerships, projects, and outcomes involving faculty, students, community groups, and citizens. These "public humanities" projects have helped to generate 165K+ in grants, cash, and in-kind contributions.

**West Virginia Center on Budget & Policy**

**Projects:** Oral History of the Charleston Water Crisis, Radio Documentary, Collaborative Ethnography

**Outcomes:** Graduate seminars, two forthcoming publications – faculty/student/community members radio production, and a faculty/student/community members written manuscript-length book

**Since 2014**



Students, faculty, community members discussing book.

**Step by Step, Inc.**

**Projects:** Oral Histories of West Virginia Activists

**Outcomes:** Graduate seminars, three forthcoming activities - public exhibit, international conference, publication

**Since 2010**



Panel of long-term community activists sharing experiences with students.

**Historic Glenwood Foundation**

**Projects:** Glenwood Project, Glenwood Center for Scholarship in the Humanities

**Outcomes:** Graduate seminars, Major Scholar Seminars, faculty/student collaborative research, publications, conference presentations, public exhibits

**Since 2007**



West Side citizens listening to faculty presentations on slavery in the Kanawha Valley in the 1800s.

**West Virginia Humanities Council**

**Projects:** Public Humanities Project, Glenwood Project

**Outcomes:** Graduate seminars, faculty/staff/community collaborative research

**Since 2006**



The Glenwood Traveling Exhibit, produced in a graduate seminar, was on the road for a year visiting libraries, schools, churches, the Federal Building in Charleston, and other public spaces in four cities.

**West Virginia Council of Archaeology**

**Projects:** Archaeology of Southern West Virginia

**Outcomes:** Graduate seminars, faculty/staff/community collaborative research

**Since 2005**



Students, community members working at Point Pleasant "shovel test" dig.

## Pore from page 1

### How do you use oral histories in policy work?

Well, when I hear a person's story, like the stories in the water crisis interviews, I usually think of the context in which that story is told. That's what you learn when you study literature and history. Everybody's story is unique but stories often happen within a similar context.

In the policy work I do now, there's a lot of analysis and intellectual work involved but whenever you try to sell or defend policy, the stories of the people who are impacted by that policy are more important than the analysis.

You have to put the analysis and the story together to sell it to people. That's what we do all the time. I'm always looking for stories of people who have been helped by health care policy to tell before the legislature. What do the policies mean for the people of West Virginia?

### So the humanities is integral to your public policy work?

I work in public policy in health care, but my humanities education gave me the foundation to do what I do. I'm able to write, to think, to understand people. I've learned all that from my courses in history literature, art history, and philosophy. They gave me a broad understanding of people, culture and society. I feel very fortunate that I had such a grounding in the humanities.

When I first entered college it was

like scales fell from my eyes. I saw things I had never seen before. I studied European History, English Literature, Philosophy, and Art History. I still treasure my English Literature book from that time period and refer back to it regularly. I just fell in love with learning. And then I started studying German Literature.

### So how is it that you got into health care?

I wanted to be a history professor. I was in college until I was 36 or so. I loved being in school. I ended up in Charleston totally by chance because I had a boyfriend down here and needed a job. Otherwise I might have ended up in DC as in intern in Congress.

**We need people who can think themselves through difficult decisions. Education generally means the humanities – not even science, but the humanities.**

### So you've always had an interest in making policy?

Yes, I have. I wrote my dissertation on the Social Democratic Women's Movement in Germany, from 1919 to 1933 – although I wrote about it from an intellectual distance. Since then I have been baptized in the water of politics and policy and there is nothing more interesting and exciting to me.

I was lucky enough to meet some people who appreciated my education and recruited me for the State Health Department. I worked in health care planning – which really fit very well with the humanities. In the humanities, you learn how to deal with multiple and

confusing facts and make coherence out of them – you learn how to hold more than one idea in your head at the same time.

[Later] people I had known recruited me for the Health Care Reform Commission under Governor Gaston Caperton and that's really how I got into policy work. That was 35 years ago.

### Any final thoughts you want to share?

I'm very troubled by the emphasis on training people to be technicians for jobs.

Thomas Jefferson has been quoted as saying "An educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people." He started the University of Virginia to educate citizens. We cannot just have technicians. We need people who can think themselves through difficult decisions. Education generally means the humanities – not even science, but the humanities.

The human face is important in all human progress. The humanities look back on how we got to where we are [now]. Now that's history. What are human beings really like? That's literature and anthropology. How do we engage with each other? How does our democracy work? These are things you get from the humanities.

West Virginia needs people who have a broad and deep understanding of the world and the time in which they live, which is where an education in the humanities is so valuable. ■



Dr. Jim Hatfield, citizen team member, discussing themes from oral histories to be included in a book.

### Dr. Jim Hatfield. Citizen team member, Oral History of the 2014 Water Crisis project.

I have a technical background, with undergraduate, masters, and PhD degrees in chemical engineering and a twenty five year career as a research scientist here in Chemical Valley.

The tractor beam that pulled me into an activist role was newspaper articles, mostly those in our local Charleston Gazette and mostly those written by Ken Ward, Jr. From my vantage point, the overall technical deficiency on the water company's part was a central, though not exclusive, flaw that helped magnify the January 9 chemical spill into a nine-county, regional public drinking water disaster that caught the nation's eye.

From the interviews we conducted with those impacted by the crisis, I learned that activist initiatives, whether on an individual level or as part of a formal group, help sculpt the social construct called "community" and reveal something of its strength and resilience. A number of interviewees shared their perspective on "community," what animates it, and makes it strong, and what it looked like during the water crisis.

Their comments were not part of a statistically designed survey and no efforts were made to settle on a textbook definition of "community" before they shared their views. Nevertheless, three significant themes emerged: The first centered on conversation and curiosity about community and crisis, the second on the narrative rising out of this intersection, and the third deals with trust broken by the crisis and views as to how it might be rebuilt. ■

## Summer 2016 Seminars ♦ May 16 - August 5, 2016

See [www.marshall.edu/humn](http://www.marshall.edu/humn) for more information and seminar classroom assignments

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE MARCH 28

**CULS 610 Seminar in Appalachian Culture (Lassiter); Technology Enhanced Course, with three live meetings on Thursday May 19, June 16, July 21; 5-8 PM.** Exploration of selected aspects of culture (e.g., art, music, folklore, history, literature), emphasizing regional culture from an interdisciplinary perspective.

**HUMN 600 Introduction to Study in the Humanities (Lassiter); Technology Enhanced Course, with four live meetings on Wednesday May 18, June 22, July 20,**

**August 3; 5-8 PM.** Interdisciplinary core course addresses questions/concepts central to the humanities. Texts from philosophy, history, literature, the arts and the sciences provide insights into selected historical periods. Open to non-degree students.

**HUMN 650 Special Topics (Independent Studies arranged between instructor and student. Contact Director to arrange course)**

For students who need to conduct independent research and/or reading in a specific topic in the humanities, the Program

will offer independent studies in those topics as funds allow. Contact the Director for more information. Examples of Special Topics might include: • Film Criticism • Museum Studies • Studies in Appalachian Music • Studies in Poetry • Language and Communication.

**HUMN 680 Independent Research Symposium, Arranged.**

A pro-seminar required of all Humanities degree students who are beginning the thesis or final project. Arranged with the Program Director.

## Fall 2016 Seminars ♦ August 22 - December 16, 2016

See [www.marshall.edu/humn](http://www.marshall.edu/humn) – for more information and seminar classroom assignments.

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE APRIL 11

**CULS 600 SelTp: Family and Children in Appalachia (Howard); Thursdays, 7 - 9:50 PM.** This seminar is designed to explore the unique aspects of families in Appalachia. It will focus on connections to larger social contexts, but it will also touch on local connections to community. We'll address both the joys and challenges of raising children here, and what it means to be a family in Appalachia. And, finally, we'll talk about issues that don't always get talked about such as literacy, disability, and poverty. *Dr. Howard began her career in special education working with deaf and hearing impaired students. Subsequently, she earned a doctoral degree from the University of Virginia in educational psychology. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at Marshall University where she has received the Pickens-Queen Excellence in Teaching award. Her current interests are including students with disabilities into math and science courses, co-teaching, and inclusion.*

**LITS 600 SelTp: Digital Humanities; (Heaton); Technology Enhanced seminar hybrid with**

**online and live meetings Wednesdays, 7 - 9:50 PM, check the GHP website before the semester begins for updates on live meeting times.** Explore the digital humanities through reading of related literature and hands-on practice using various technologies to produce artifacts such as digital stories. An emphasis will be placed on experiential learning, learning through experience and reflection. *Dr. Heaton is Professor and Program Director of Elementary and Secondary Education in the College of Education and Professional Development. Her work for the past 20 years has focused on using technology to enhance teaching and learning. Educational experiences in English Language Arts (B.S.) and Instructional Technology (Ph.D.) merge to form her particular interest in using digital media to produce products such as data archives, photo essays and digital stories.*

**HUMN 604 Expository Writing for Research (Pleska), M, 7 - 9:50 p.m.** This core writing course develops proficiency in writing for research. Open to non-degree students. *Ms. Pleska earned her MFA in creative nonfiction*

*writing at Goucher College in Baltimore and is an essayist for West Virginia Public Radio. She also is the Editor-in-Chief of Mountain State Press and book reviewer for The Charleston Gazette. Her latest book, Riding on Comets: A Memoir, is published by West Virginia University Press.*

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**public** |'pʌblɪk| adjective\*

open to or shared by all the people of an area or country: *a public library*.

**humanity** (h)yoʊˈmænɪtē| noun (pl. **humanities**)\*

- the fact or condition of being human; human nature: *music is the universal language with which we can express our common humanity*.
- (pl. **humanities**) learning or literature concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy.

*This issue is dedicated to the folks and organizations which help  
the Graduate Humanities program continue its tradition  
of faculty/student outreach and civic engagement  
known as “public humanities.”*

**public humanities** noun\*\*

a humanities curriculum that benefits students and community organizations through partnerships and collaborative projects: *Oral History Project on the 2014 Water Crisis; West Virginia Activist – Stories of Social Change; Museum Studies and Exhibit Design; Public Relations for Nonprofits . . .*

\*New Oxford American Dictionary

\*\*MU Graduate Humanities Program

students and faculty collaboratively exploring the arts, history, culture,  
and literature in an open experimental multidisciplinary environment

Graduate Humanities



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