

Volume 43, Issue 1, Spring 2020

# GRADUATE HUMANITIES

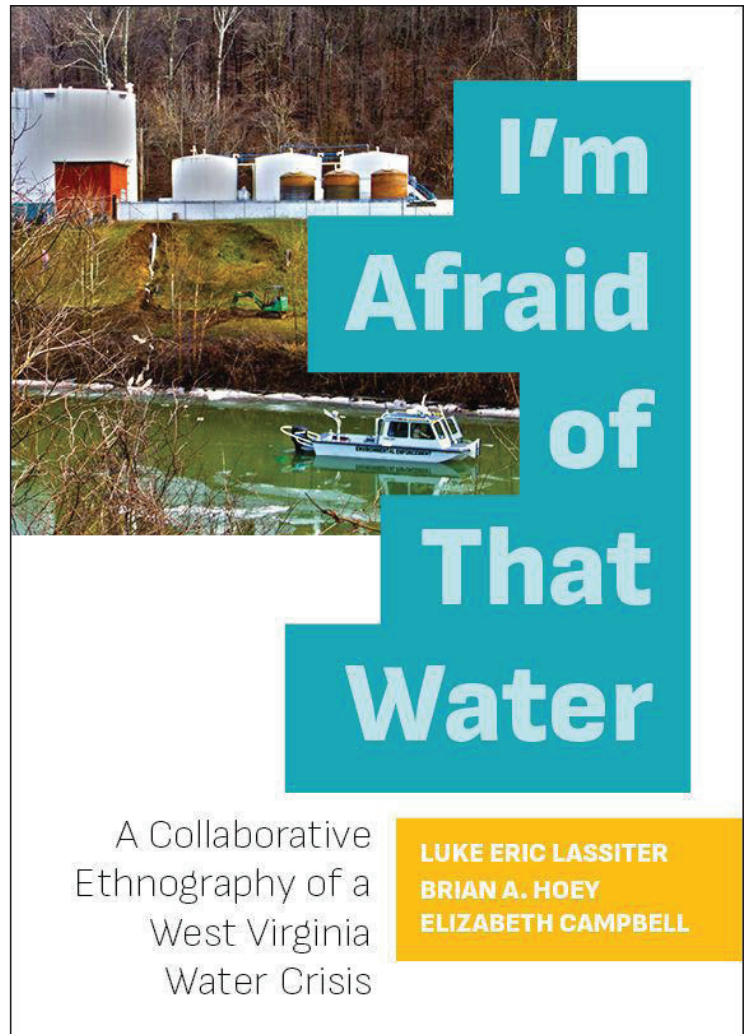
Students and faculty from a variety of backgrounds collaboratively explore interdisciplinary intersections of the arts, historical, cultural, and literary studies within an open, exploratory, and experimental graduate-level educational environment.

## *Everyone has a story*

On January 9, 2014, residents across Charleston, West Virginia, awoke to an unusual licorice smell in the air and a similar taste in the public drinking water. That evening residents were informed the tap water in tens of thousands of homes, hundreds of businesses, and dozens of schools and hospitals—the water made available to as many as 300,000 citizens in a nine-county region—had been contaminated with a chemical used for cleaning crushed coal.

This book tells a particular set of stories about that chemical spill and its aftermath, an unfolding water crisis that would lead to months, even years, of fear and distrust. It is both oral history and collaborative ethnography, jointly conceptualized, researched, and written by people—more than fifty in all—across various positions in academia and local communities. *I'm Afraid of That Water* foregrounds the ongoing concerns of West Virginians (and people in comparable situations in places like Flint, Michigan) confronted by the problem of contamination, where thresholds for official safety may be crossed, but a genuine return to normality is elusive.

– From book's jacket cover, *I'm Afraid of That Water*.



## **“Shifts in Perspective: The Workings of the Duck / Rabbit Metaphor”**

Our second article illustrates how one of our students used certain practices of philosophy to explore personal questions.

For more on this book, see West Virginia University Press website ([wvupressonline.com](http://wvupressonline.com)).

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY  
Graduate College South Charleston  
Graduate Humanities Program  
Dr. Luke Eric Lassiter, *Director*  
Trish Hatfield '08, *Program Assistant*  
Phone: 304-746-2022  
[marshall.edu/hum](http://marshall.edu/hum)



# Excerpts from “Introduction” to *I’m Afraid of That Water*

Used with permission from West Virginia University Press

... We begin with one story collected by Elizabeth (Beth) Campbell during the oral history phase of a project that would eventually unfold into this book, and that would come to involve a team of oral history researchers, writers, community activists, and academics.

.....

In late July 2014, I (Beth) was running late (as ever) and grabbed one of the old Zoom H2 recorders on the way out the door. I was fairly certain I had the one that worked, but I gave it a quick test when I got into the car. It did work, fortunately, so I backed out of the driveway and made the short drive downtown to the lovely historic townhouse community where Rebecca and her husband, Ted, were nearly finished restoring one of the century-old rowhomes. Rebecca had agreed to be interviewed about her experience of the Elk River chemical spill in Charleston and the water crisis that followed. We’d been looking forward to her interview; in addition to being a thoughtful and articulate person, she was also a young mother. At the time of the chemical spill, her first child was a toddler, and her second was on the way.

Rebecca Roth has lived in Charleston since 2009. She was born and raised in southern West Virginia, about an hour and a half from Charleston. She works part time as a grant writer and takes care of their two-year-old daughter. Their second child was due in early August of that year, 2014. We talked for a little while about shared friends and acquaintances and about the many layers of difficulty we experienced during the water crisis. I began the interview by asking Rebecca to go back to the day of the chemical spill, or the days immediately before, and describe when she first knew or suspected that something was going on.

She paused to look at her daughter, then turned back and began to speak. Although there were some reports of chemical smells and water issues in the days leading up to the announced spill,

she’d had no indication that anything was amiss until January 9. That evening, she recalled, “I was in the process of putting my daughter to bed and I got a text from one of my friends. It said, ‘There’s a water emergency and don’t

**“The next day,” Rebecca remembered, “I just was getting more and more uneasy not knowing what was going on, and how it was affecting our young child and the baby I’m carrying.”**

drink the water.’ It was a group text to lots of folks. So at that point I went on Facebook, also on my phone, and started to see some of the reports from the *Gazette*, the local TV station, and realized that something serious was going on.”

After she put their daughter to bed that night, she went downstairs. Ted was just starting to hear the news, too, and they decided he should go out and get some bottled water for the family. But when he tried to leave the neighborhood, he immediately ran into a major traffic jam—the likes of which had not been seen before in this neighborhood—and never made it to the store. “It was just as well,” Rebecca said, “as the stores were probably sold out of bottled water at that point.” (In fact, they were.) At the time, they were in the process of renovating the townhouse and hadn’t yet moved in. Late that evening, Rebecca remembered there was some expired bottled water at the townhouse and drove across town to retrieve it. No one really knew much of anything at that point, and she just hoped that the water would be enough to carry them through the next twenty-four hours or so.

... “The next day,” Rebecca remembered, “I just was getting more and more

uneasy not knowing what was going on, and how it was affecting our young child and the baby I’m carrying. So we left town and went to stay with my mother-in-law, who is about two hours from Charleston. That growing feeling of unease and uncertainty and wanting everything to be very safe for our kids led us to leave Charleston.” The next day, they left town and did not return until we were all informed that the water was safe to use again—even though, as we later discovered, it may not have been.

I remembered that unease as well. At the time, Eric and I lived in a historic neighborhood called Edgewood, which is just about a mile northwest of the Elk River, and a few hundred feet higher. I still remember the smell that morning when I went out to get the paper. It was heavy in the air, and I stood there for a few minutes, trying to identify the smell. What was it? Tires? Rubber? Licorice? By then we’d lived in Charleston for eight years and had grown accustomed to the different chemical smells that occasionally wafted through the valley. Fishy smells were common, as were bleach smells, sulfur smells, and a host of undefinably odd rotten smells. But this smell was a new one. It reminded me of a tea I used to drink called Morning Thunder, or of car tires, with a kind of sweet, anise edge to it.

... I thought back to that day as Rebecca talked, remembering how uncritically I had thought about the smell that morning. When we were finally made aware of what had happened, I experienced terrific anger, a building sense of helplessness and powerlessness and rage. How would I have felt if I had had a young child? If I had been pregnant? I asked Rebecca to talk a bit more about her personal feelings at the time, whether *unease* captured the crux of the experience for her, or whether there was more than that.

She looked at her daughter again and said, “I just felt this growing urgency of

# Legal derivation for West “By God” Virginia

Contributed by Dr. Eric Waggoner, Executive Director, WV Humanities Council

“By God,” is a shortened version of “I swear by God,” or “I swear before God.” It’s used by the speaker to indicate “What I’m about to say is for the record, and I’ll put myself under penalty of perjury if it’s not true.” In other words, the phrase doesn’t mean “by the grace of God” or “created by God,” but rather is intended to echo the language of personal testimony. “By god” attests to the speaker’s deep, fervent belief in the truth of the statement that’s about to follow.

My guess, though it’s only a guess, is that since the phrase doesn’t seem to appear anywhere in print until about 50-60 years after statehood, “by God” answers two needs: (a) to distinguish “West Virginia”

from “Virginia,” in order to dispense with any geographical confusion--“No, not Virginia, but West BY GOD Virginia!”--and (b) to articulate pride in being from the Mountain State, probably in response to general negative stereotyping.

Interestingly, the timeline of the phrase’s public life puts its early use close to the time of expansion of the state highways systems and increased radio broadcast range, suggesting that as more efficient travel and media routes connected near neighbors to each other, the need to articulate both statehood and state pride developed as an ancillary effect. “By God” meets both needs--quickly, humorously, and effectively.

## Recent GRADUATES

### *Royce Diehl '19*

Major Emphasis: Historical Studies

Title: “Glenwood Project: A Traveling Exhibit for the Historic Glenwood Foundation”

### *Chuck Ocheltree '19*

Major Emphasis: Historical Studies

Title: “I Should be Perfectly Willing to Live My Life Over Again’: The Autobiographical Notes of William Henry Edwards, Edited and Annotated.”

### *Allana Marie Morgan '19*

Major Emphasis: Cultural Studies & Appalachian Studies

Title: “Saint Albans Junior High.”

## Fall 2020 SEMINARS • August 24 - December 11, 2020

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

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE August 17

### **CULS 600 Selected Topics: Native North America (Lassiter)**

TH, 7 – 9:50 pm

This seminar will explore the historical and socio-political, economic, and cultural processes that have given rise to contemporary Native North America. Dr. Luke Eric Lassiter is director of the Graduate Humanities Program and professor of humanities and anthropology.

### **HUMN 603 History & Theory of the Arts (Emily Hilliard)**

W, 7 - 9:50 pm

Core course provides chronological survey of the arts, emphasizing the social, political and/or religious motives that underlie artistic production. This seminar will explore the theory and practice of expressive arts, with consideration of visual, verbal, cinematic, public, protest, visionary, and performance forms, among others. Using anthropological, folkloristic, and arts and cultural studies theoretical frameworks, we will explore the engaged relationship of the arts to society and consider how these concepts can inform current work in arts administration, museums, public folklore,

and community development. The course will rely on participatory critical analysis and discussion, with some excursions to area museums, organizations, artist studios, and public installations. *Emily Hilliard is the West Virginia state folklorist and founding director of the West Virginia Folklife Program at the West Virginia Humanities Council. She holds an M.A. in folklore from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a B.A. in English and French from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. For over the past ten years she has worked at cultural heritage organizations including Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, the American Folklife Center, the National Council for the Traditional Arts, and Maryland Traditions. Her writing and media work have been published by NPR, Humanities Magazine, The Bitter Southerner, Southern Cultures, and Ohio University Press, among others. Find more of her work at emilyehilliard.com.*

### **HUMN 604 Expository Writing for Research (Pleska)**

M, 7 - 9:50 pm

This core writing course develops proficiency in writing for research. *Cat Pleska, MFA, is a 7th generation West Virginian and*

*her memoir, Riding on Comets, was published in 2015 by WVU Press. She is a former book reviewer and radio essayist, and is currently working on a collection of travel/personal essays, The I's Have It: Travels in Ireland and Iceland.*

### **HUMN 650 Special Topics - Independent Studies arranged between instructor and student**

(contact Program 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 (Lassiter)**

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

needing to get out of town and not be anywhere around it. I was really nervous about what it was doing to my health and the health of my family. You know, I don't think it was until later that I really was angry. I think at the time I was just so scared about what was going on."

They stayed away from Charleston until the call to flush the water system came.

She wasn't clear on exactly how long they were away. She frowned and said, "My memory is sort of blurry about that time. But we kept watching online to see what was happening. When the governor held press conferences, we would try to watch. Then we heard that the part of town we lived in had been called to start 'flushing the system,' and there were certain instructions to follow. And so at that point we gathered up our things, got back in the car, and drove back to Charleston to do the flushing process. My husband actually was the one who did the flushing, but we followed the directions pretty closely."

"It wasn't until later," she continued, "that we found out about how much was unknown and that the flushing directions were thus incomplete. For example, some of the scientists who worked on analyzing the chemicals involved [later said] that you weren't supposed to have kids around when you did the flushing. But that wasn't in the written directions we were given, so we didn't know that. So during part of the flushing process, my husband had our daughter with him, so that was a very, again, scary feeling to think that we had inadvertently endangered her. If keeping her away while we flushed the system had been part of the directions, we certainly would have followed it."

"We would smell the odor at different times, too," she said. "It would come and go, and that added to that feeling of unease, which has stayed with us for most of these last few months. That makes it a very uncomfortable way to live. It's not just what I keep describing as 'camping conditions' that changed our day-to-day lives. Cooking and cleaning with bottled water, rigging up bottled water showers and baths, driving to

laundromats twenty miles away. It's this uneasiness that you don't know what's going on. We don't know what the longterm effects are going to be. We don't know what the short-term effects are going to be. We're just uneasy, and to have to live with that is a very difficult—it's a very difficult thing."

**"... the flushing directions were thus incomplete. For example, some of the scientists who worked on analyzing the chemicals involved [later said] that you weren't supposed to have kids around when you did the flushing. But that wasn't in the written directions we were given, so we didn't know that. So during part of the flushing process, my husband had our daughter with him, so that was a very, again, scary feeling to think that we had inadvertently endangered her."**

Rebecca's words reminded me of the general unease of that time and of the weeks and months afterwards when that smell would keep coming back, continually raising concerns about whether or not the water was actually safe. I asked Rebecca if, once they returned, she developed some kind of daily routine to deal with the water situation.

"Every single decision that was related to water," she said, "became a big deal. I had never been conscious of what a big deal water is. In the United States, in a town or urban environment, you don't really think of the water. You trust it. I've had times in my life where I've been in more rural environments, and even the water awareness that you have in those locations was nothing compared to what it was like after January 9. Every single aspect of the day

had to be thought through. So you wake up, and you want to brush your teeth. Well, you need to go to the store to get more bottled water. But the stores were often out of bottled water. So you had to carefully plan your trips to the store. Where were you going to get water? We had friends from out of town saying, 'I'm coming through; do you need any water delivered to you?'

... Rebecca was quiet for a few minutes, then she continued: "We got our water tested from one of the companies that was doing the testing in the homes, and it said the chemical was not detectable. I kept waiting for there to be something, some signal that would let me drop this feeling of discomfort, but everything that I thought might give me that feeling didn't. So we got the water tested, and even though the results came back 'undetectable,' we had learned that detectability is only at a certain level. There's already a lot in the media about the CDC [Centers for Disease Control] level, what they said was safe, but where did that information come from? There was controversy about that, too. Then we learned that although they were testing for this one particular chemical, the actual leak had involved a mix of different chemicals, not all of which could be tested for. And no one—not the CDC, not the chemical companies, not independent scientists—knew whether the mixed chemicals might have different health effects than the individual chemicals. So I thought I'd feel better after the water was tested, but I really didn't feel better about using the water."

... We'd been through all of the questions on my list, and I told her that we were nearly finished. I did want to ask one question again, though: "Has this crisis made you think about this place differently? Do you feel differently about living here?"

She answered this time: "It really is disappointing that in the capital city of the state that I was born in and grew up in and always thought I wanted to live in forever that I've ended up feeling unsafe."

Rebecca's story sets the stage for the kind of story we hope to convey about the Elk River spill and its aftermath. We want to emphasize at the outset that we do not claim to tell the whole story. But we do intend to bring the reader persuasively close to the scenes and subject matter even while acknowledging that what we have produced is not the story but rather a thoughtfully curated collection of stories. . . . Recognizing that no story is ever complete, our hope is that what we present here will help readers gain a stronger sense of what this experience was like for us and how it has changed us. . . .

We also tell these stories in a particular way. This is, in many ways, an ethnography, a specific research method and literary genre that has among its main goals to describe the on-the-ground experience of an event or place. As writers of ethnography, we concern ourselves with layered histories in careful contextualization and offer some insights beyond the immediate particulars of the local; we suggest possible links for ourselves and others to trace to places both near and far. This particular ethnography is rooted in the oral histories of citizens who were—and in many ways, still are—on the receiving end of the water crisis, rather than on the agendas, perspectives, and experiences of governmental and company officials, which have been covered extensively in a number of other outlets. Because this book is a collaborative ethnography written by a variety of academic- and community-situated authors, it has two very specific audiences: academics who read ethnography (e.g., faculty and students interested in, say, disaster studies) and a local audience of West Virginians who experienced and who are trying to come to terms with the January 2014 chemical spill and its ensuing water crisis. In a more general sense, this ethnography is also directed at a book-reading general public who might be interested in the particulars of this event as well as it how might relate to larger issues of disaster and its aftermath.

This book has been collaboratively conceptualized, researched, and



Josh Mills (top) and Emily Mayes (below), graduate students and project team members share their perspectives on the water crisis with other team members. (Pictures from the Graduate Humanities Program archives courtesy of Wesley A. Kuemmel.)



written by people across various positions in both academe and the local communities: readers will encounter a range of voices in these pages as compelling and different ways of speaking to both personal and shared experiences and concerns. In a four-year period, more than fifty people, most of whom directly experienced the crisis, contributed to and helped to write this book. Participants—ethnographers, interviewers, interviewees, academics, community activists, and other contributors and collaborators—range in age from young adult to long retired. Voices of administrators, artists, chemical engineers, faculty, and farmers are included, as well as those of homemakers, lawyers, service workers, students, physicians, teachers, and more. They came from the working, middle, and upper classes. Some came from families who lived in this area before statehood; some only recently arrived.

We describe exactly how all of these people came together in chapters 1 and 3; for now, suffice it to say that, as in many collaborative projects, it has been an organic and emergent process. . . .

Readers will encounter everything here from folksy aphorisms to academic theory, from personal soul-searching to comparative analysis. The overall book narrative generally moves from a description of the specific context leading up to the spill, then to how it might be understood more generally, back to the particular experience of the spill itself, and finally dealing with its aftermath. It explores the range of emotional, existential, and activist responses that rose to the spill, but it also presents a bird's-eye analysis of how this event and its aftermath share qualities with disasters elsewhere and reflects on where we are now. Although there is a general pattern in how the stories are arranged, we want to emphasize that the text itself does not progress in a traditional fashion or unfold in a smoothly narrative way. Human experience is rarely a complete, neatly packaged thing, and this book in many ways deliberately reflects this partiality. Again, the stories here present experiences of this event from a range of perspectives. Our goal is for readers to come away with a sense of how different people experienced—and were changed by—the 2014 Elk River chemical spill and its ensuing water crisis. If that is your goal as well, we recommend that you approach this book with an openness to the broad range of people and experiences that make up our many and different communities.

. . . We hope that this book will connect with larger conversations into growing regional, national, and global concerns about the human necessity of regular access to clean, safe water.

(More excerpts from interviews will follow in the Fall 2020 Graduate Humanities.)

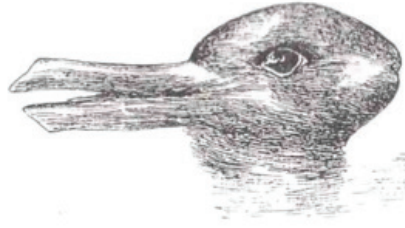
# Shifts in Perspective: The Workings of the Duck/Rabbit Metaphor

Excerpts from work produced for the seminar,  
"Philosophy's Practices and Engagements—American Pragmatism."

Dr. Gayle Ormiston (Instructor):

The duck/rabbit, in my mind, is a metaphor for philosophical inquiries, emphasizing aspect recognition, as opposed to aspect blindness. With the recognition of certain aspects, the entire picture I'm viewing or the story being told takes on a different appearance. There is an image of rabbit there, where there once was the image of a duck. *Philo-sophia* has been translated traditionally as 'the love of wisdom.' This love, this will to immerse oneself in an ancient dialogue regarding the nature, purpose, and results of philosophy's practices and engagements, is articulated historically as "an unbridled desire to know the unknown." The "desire to know" is just that, a desire, a passion driven by an apparent play between an openness and concealment of the known and the unknown, including the self-examination of one's critical beliefs, and the habit of

## Introducing the Duck/Rabbit Metaphor



the seeing the world ... a duck or a rabbit or a continual shifting between the two.

Dr. Calisa Pierce (Student): The duck/rabbit metaphor challenged me to examine my assumptions and biases.

I see a rabbit; others see a duck—both images are there; both equally valid and true. My first thought was my struggle to understand some components of different political perspectives. I try very hard to examine my own biases and assumptions, and I try to give my composition and humanities students tools and encouragement to do the same. Sometimes seeing a truth is a matter of shifting one's perspective. Why can't religion be that way, too? Why must one religious tradition be labeled the only true religion, when religions spring from all kinds of different cultures and are suited to what a particular culture needs and values?

The following excerpts were arranged as dialogical segments to illustrate how inquiry unfolded in one student's thinking over the course of the semester. The segments alternate between a student's musings, included in her final paper, and the instructor's reflections on philosophy's practices and engagements. Laid out in this way, an almost organic call-and-response infrastructure emerges; the design of the seminar invites these possibilities when students are encouraged to explore personal stories.

**Pierce:** The very personal topic I struggle with is what to do about religious belief. It's in the back of my mind a lot, and it has been, really, since I was a teenager. The habit of believing in a caring God has helped my mind quiet my emotions. But I have many questions: Does truth exist? Does God exist? Does God take a personal interest in individuals? If so, why does God allow people to suffer? Why does God allow evil to exist?

**Ormiston:** Dr. Lassiter asked me to teach a philosophy seminar that would mesh with the interests of students who would benefit directly from an immersion in the "practical" aspects of philosophic inquiry and dialogue. It was intended to help students begin to understand how to engage complex texts and respond to seemingly insuperable questions in light of certain pragmatic principles. Self-reflection or, as a Socratic maxim would have it, self-examination would be the key by which a dialogue with "pragmatism," and its permutations, would turn.

**Pierce:** And really, why do God's people, of most cultures and belief systems, de-value women, and why is God usually conceptualized as a male? I know that religions are also cultural, and I wonder if one particular religion is really the "correct" one, or if all have equal merit. How do I choose which religion to follow? Or are all religious beliefs mere self-deception? I would very much like to answer some of these questions, to believe that my deceased loved ones live on with God and that I will be with them again, someday. And I would like to believe that life has a purpose.

**Ormiston:** An unbridled desire to know the unknown is part of philosophic aspirations from the ancients to those of the philosophers and scientists of the 13<sup>th</sup> century humanities renaissance. They bore the intellectual structures of the humanities' universities of Krakow, Perugia, Cambridge, Paris, Oxford, Heidelberg, Vienna, Prague—and the 21<sup>st</sup> century universities charged by State Boards to provide

public higher education efficiently, effectively. These universities, through their legacies and the efforts of their permanent and itinerant faculties, have carried forward the responsibilities of conveying the questions stimulating that desire through the dissemination of philosophic texts addressing various aspects of the human condition.

**Pierce:** Another kind of evidence for God's existence is along the lines of Kant's categorical imperative or Jung's collective unconscious or even Yeats' *spiritus mundi*. The great majority of people seem to hold consistent ideas of ethical behavior across multiple cultures. The Transcendentalists accepted these ideas, along with the magnificence of the natural world, as evidence of God's existence. Humans have always wondered about God—where do we get this concept that God, a creator and omniscient being, exists? Certainly, behavior and beliefs are enculturated, but belief in God seems to be common in all cultures.

**NEXT PAGE**

**Ormiston:** Let me reiterate an earlier point: 'Philosophy is the love of wisdom' is an existential statement... reminding one that the desires guiding philosophic inquiry reside at the most fundamental levels of human inquiry and existence.

**Pierce:** Kant asks, first: What can we know? My evidence for God's existence includes these components: the beauty and complexity of life on earth, as well as physical laws and processes in the universe; the human longing for God and gravitation toward belief in him; and beliefs about ethics and morality that most people hold in common.

But these elements are not enough to prove that God exists; they are at best a flimsy framework of evidence toward believing in an entity that is unprovable. If philosophers and great thinkers of the past could not settle the questions I have, then how can I expect to find a definitive answer? I cannot. Soren Kierkegaard speaks my own thoughts when he claims, "If there were no eternal consciousness in a man ... if a bottomless void never satiated lay hidden beneath all—what then would life be but despair?"

I have not chosen despair, despite my own disappointments of faith. Instead, I have chosen, at the least, J.R.R. Tolkien's "willing suspension of disbelief"—that is, a conscious decision to suspend disbelief, as readers do when they read fantasy novels such as *Lord of the Rings*. I must suspend my disbelief because I need to believe in God's existence.

**Ormiston:** This seminar focuses on American pragmatism, with Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) as its representative, was intended to show that the practical, the pragmatic, the "doable" are clear signs of an approach to philosophic issues that emphasizes effects, results, consequences—a hallmark of American pragmatism.

**Pierce:** Kant's second question is: What should we do? The answer to this question lies with Peirce's notion of acting "as if." Peirce explains, "Full belief is willingness to act upon the proposition in vital crises." This is how I have lived my life since my sister's death shook me to the core in 1978 and over many years afterwards, how I have lived since my daughter died in 2004, though I remain

a broken person with tenuous faith. I have acted as if God, a loving and caring God, exists. I have acted as if that God placed in my being moral principles on which to base my actions. I will soldier on and continue to act this way, despite my doubts.

**Ormiston:** Peirce set the stage for a re-thinking of philosophy's practices and engagements. He accepted certain principles of mathematics and science as guidelines for philosophic inquiry: The First Rule of Logic is "in order to learn you must desire to learn and in so desiring not to be satisfied with what you are already inclined to think... Do not block the way of inquiry!"

remain myself, dwelling somehow with a loving God and with those I love. I will hope for a loving God supporting me and helping me in this physical life here on this world, comforting me in my sorrows, and strengthening me in my struggles. I will hope for everything. I will "act as if" I believe everything.

.....  
Dr. Calisa Pierce is the chair of English and Humanities at BridgeValley Community College, and also teaches grant writing for Marshall's M.A. in Leadership Studies program. She is learning to be adventurous: she recently completed a family hiking trip to the top of Mt. LeConte in the Great Smoky Mountains,



(L-R) Students Dr. Calisa Pierce and Tyler Lucas with Instructor, Dr. Gayle Ormiston

**Pierce:** So, if I commit to acting as if I have faith, then besides ethical behavior, what religious practices should I commit to? What belief system do I embrace? What version of God will I believe in? Scott Pratt's notion of the Logic of Place appeals to me as a possible answer to this barrier to faith. According to Pratt, in *Native Pragmatism*, Native American prophets understood that God created different religions for different cultures, tied to particular places (polygenesis). I have wondered many times if polygenesis is the answer, long before I knew of Pratt or the Logic of Place or the word polygenesis. Perhaps God has expressed his/her nature to different cultures in a way that has been most appropriate for each.

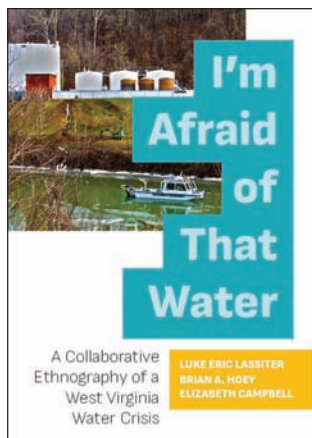
With this resolution, I ask myself Kant's third question, what can I hope? That question is the hardest to address and act upon with faith. I will hope for a continuing existence after I die physically in this world. I will hope to

and traveled with her husband on their Harley to 48 states and six Canadian provinces so far—with Alaska and Saskatchewan on the agenda for this summer. In the future—who knows? Studying the humanities has ignited or reignited her interest in many areas: blogging, travel writing, photography, backpacking, canoeing, gardening ... are just the beginning.

Dr. Gayle L. Ormiston is Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Marshall University. He previously served Marshall as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs from 2008 to 2018. Prior to his appointment as Provost at Marshall, he held administrative and faculty appointments at Kent State University, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and Denison University. He enjoys performing and listening to all styles and forms of music, traveling, visiting art museums, studying artists' lives, and reading.



Graduate College South Charleston  
Graduate Humanities Program  
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive  
South Charleston WV 25303-1600  
[marshall.edu/humn](http://marshall.edu/humn)



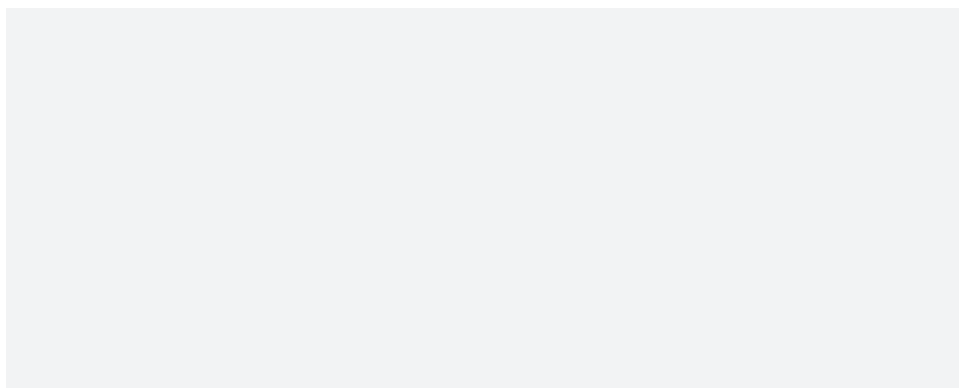
Book cover image and quotes used with permission from West Virginia University Press

“A unique, moving, and highly readable account of community reactions to a technological disaster. Authors weave together powerful and highly personal narratives that reveal the tensions of coping with ongoing environmental uncertainty. With a novel, collaborative approach, they make meaningful connections between the experiences of local residents and the systems and institutions that produce and perpetuate disasters and their aftermaths. Readers of all stripes will find it as enlightening as it is poignant.”

~ Melissa Checker, coeditor of *Sustainability in the Global City: Myth and Practice*

“A great example of a multiauthored and intersubjective ethnography of toxic suffering, this book is a model for future disaster ethnographies.”

~ Peter Little, Rhode Island College



## Summer 2020 SEMINARS • May 18 - August 7, 2020

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

**REGISTRATION AVAILABLE May 15**

### **CULS 600 Selected Topics: The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, 100 Years: The Long Struggle for Women's Equality (Renate Pore)**

**Summer 1: W, 5-8 p.m.**

August 18, 2020, marks the 100-year anniversary of ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. This is a major event in American history and a milestone in the national aspiration for the equal right of every individual to participate in a democratic society. In light of this event, this course will examine the evolution of equal rights for women from the revolutionary period to modern times. It will feature the more than 70-year struggle for the vote from Seneca Falls to passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the women and men who led the fight. It will analyze the women's rights movement in terms of class and gender and promote an understanding of the dynamics of social movements.

*Dr. Renate Pore received a PhD in history from West Virginia University in 1977. Her publications include A Conflict of Interest: Women in German Social Democracy and Toward the Second Decade: The Impact of the Women's Movement on American Institutions. Dr. Pore was a leader in starting the Women's Study Program and the Council for Women's Concerns at WVU. She was a feminist activist in the 1970s lobbying Congress to extend the deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment.*

### **HUMN 600 Introduction to Study in the Humanities (Lassiter)**

**Summer 1: W, 5-8 p.m.**

Core course acquaints students with problems of historical knowledge, changes in the interpretation of history, nature of historical forces, and methods of historical research.

### **HUMN 650 Selected Topics - Independent Studies arranged between instructor and student**

**(contact Program 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 (Lassiter)**

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