

HISTORY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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Goshen College Offers New Political Studies and Pre-Law Minors

BY SETH A. MILLER '15

GC's History and Political Science Department has expanded academic opportunities for students by launching two minors, one in Political Studies and another in Pre-Law, starting with the 2014-2015 academic year. Department chair and professor of history Jan Bender Shetler explained that the new programs are a direct response to requests from prospective students, as well as current students, who have expressed interest in these fields.

The History Department previously offered a pre-law track that include courses to prepare students for law school and other legal careers, but the new minor takes the program up a notch and formalizes it for student transcripts. The Political Studies minor builds on GC's political science tradition developed under long-time professor Lee Roy Berry, and now continuing with professors Long Tran and Dave Ostergren.

The two minors are interdisciplinary in nature and draw on expertise across campus. The Political Studies minor combines political science classes with courses that emphasize political analysis and policy from other departments such as Sociology, History, and Peace Justice and Conflict Studies.

The Pre-Law minor also emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach, including logic, problem solving, constructing arguments, good writing, speaking and reading skills, and knowledge of the legal system. Course options include Media Law and Ethics, Critical Theory and Practice, Mediation Process, and Social Psychology, as well as other courses from Business, Communication, Economics, English, Math, Philosophy, Peace Justice and Conflict Studies, Psychology, and Social Work.

Adding these two minors is part of a larger transformation of the Goshen curriculum. Bender Shetler noted that professors are thinking more deliberately about how to prepare students for

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Steven P. Miller '99



Abigail Trollinger '04

Life after Goshen College: Reflections through Research and Writing

BY SETH A. MILLER '15

"What are you going to do after you graduate?" is a question that many history majors (or any liberal arts majors!) often receive. The skills and dispositions fostered by the study of history allow GC alumni to pursue a wide range of vocations. Some have continued their schooling through graduate study, which opens paths to careers in research, writing, editing, and teaching.

Steven P. Miller ('99) and Abigail Trollinger ('04) chose such paths, and recently offered reflections about what the field of research and writing has been like for them.

Miller, who earned a Ph.D. in history at Vanderbilt University and teaches at Webster University and Washington University in Saint Louis, recently published his second book, *The Age of Evangelicalism: America's Born Again Years* (Oxford University Press, 2014). A historian of U.S. political culture, American religion, and the American South, Miller's interests converge in his study of Billy Graham, who was the subject of his first book, *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (University

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of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). In both his books, Miller writes from, perhaps, a controversial viewpoint combining religion and politics. However, Miller argues that such a perspective “accurately reflects the everyday blending of those spheres in recent American life – and in all of American history, for that matter!”

Trollinger recently completed her Ph.D in American history at Northwestern University and is now teaching at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin. Instead of attending graduate school immediately after finishing at Goshen College, she spent two years in Mennonite Voluntary Service exploring the non-profit public policy sector as a career field. Discovering that the “world of quick assessment and action” was not for her, she realized she “wanted the space to fully examine the people who came before us, their wants, motivations and beliefs.”

The two historians mention different personal benefits they receive from the pursuit of research and writing. “Research and writing are not always fun, but they are rewarding,” notes Miller. “There is a lot of pleasure in the cycle of encountering historical sources, asking questions about them, making connections, and then at last crafting a new story.” He added, “What attracts me to history writing is the constructive tension between creativity and empiricism. All writing is a creative process, but history is a discipline that forces you to stay grounded. You can’t make up facts, but you can give them new meaning.”

Trollinger appreciates the way research offers a glimpse into the past, and often through a very personal lens. She investigated Depression-era social workers in Chicago who reconfigured local welfare policies before the advent of federal relief and unemployment insurance. “My recent research allowed me to look at case records and correspondence from the 1930’s, documents that were never intended for an audience. Thus, it was both thrilling and a privilege, to see people’s thoughts, almost unfiltered.”

Both have a great appreciation for how Goshen College prepared them for graduate school and a career in this field.

“My time at Goshen really set me up for graduate school and a career in history,” says Trollinger. “At the most basic level, my professors instilled in me a love of history.” She now teaches her own version of Steve Nolt’s class on immigration and ethnicity, a class that captivated her and confirmed her love for history. Her most practical experience came in writing her senior thesis over the course of two semesters. “In our first semester Jan [Bender Shetler] introduced us to the concept and study of historiography, which was crucial in graduate school. And in the second semester John [Roth] taught us how to turn research into good historical writing.”

Miller, who double-majored in history and English at GC, believes he wrote much more as an undergraduate than did his graduate school peers who came from other institutions, even those from what are often considered elite schools. He also reflected upon the connection between the study of history and the Mennonite tradition at Goshen. “I chose GC in part because of its rich tradition in history. I was not disappointed. A historian that I know recently wrote something to the effect that Mennonites have done history better than most other small religious groups. If this is true, Goshen College is a major reason why.”

Local and Global History Featured in Class of 2014 Senior Theses

Five history majors completed senior theses during the spring 2014 History Senior Seminar. As always, thesis research was based on extensive primary source investigation and resulted in projects that demonstrated substantial scholarly work. This year’s students and thesis titles:

Rafael Correa (Ligonier, Ind.), “Mexican Immigrant Success in Northern Indiana: What Obstacles Have Mexican Immigrants Faced in the United States?”

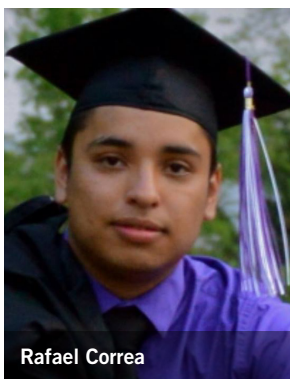
Nathan Geiser (Indianapolis), “Anabaptist in Ohio, Communist in Spain: Making Sense of the Mennonite Heritage of a Spanish Civil War Veteran, Carl Geiser (1910-2009)”

Rachel K. Jantzi (Scottsbluff, Neb.), “The Agricultural Impact of PAX in Tsakones, Greece following the Greek Civil War”

Kaitlyn D. Rock (Tippecanoe, Ind.), “Making it Happen: How a Women’s Club Brought the Community Together to Build the Bourbon, Indiana, Public Library, 1928-1941”

Jacob S. Yoder (Wellman, Iowa), “Aligning Ideals with Institutional Structures: International Voluntary Services and the Transformative Power of People-to-People Development in Vietnam, 1957-1971”

The Class of 2014 also included four students with minors or interdisciplinary concentrations in history: **James P. Miller**, Greencastle, Pa.; **Gabby Piña**, Edinburg, Tex.; **Vasti M. Rosado-Tsigie**, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico; and **Sandrine Uwase Sandrali**, Kigali, Rwanda.



Rafael Correa

Law Office Internship Promotes College Success

BY RAFAEL CORREA '14

During the spring of his senior year, history major Rafael Correa put his research and writing skills to work with an internship through the Merino Law Firm, P.C., which

serves clients across northern Indiana. Not only did Correa receive invaluable real-world experience, but he ended up receiving a job offer at the end of his internship.

Attorney Felipe Merino was planning to launch a new organization, the César Chavez Youth Leadership Academy, as a community academy to help young Latino high school students prepare for and graduate from college. He offered me an internship with a focus on helping get the academy started. I have always loved helping people, and as a first-generation college student I want to help other students succeed.

I began my work with several days of planning and orientation, working closely with Mr. Merino. Once we had all of the details written down, Mr. Merino turned a lot of the details over to me. I had to make flyers, create brochures, and develop applications and even contracts, as well as a lot of small details that I never thought of until I started into the project, such as getting formal permission from people to use their names and photos in promotional materials. I developed a better sense of how much work actually goes into creating something like the academy since I had to revise and edit everything multiple times to make it perfect.

Because the academy is going to be a nonprofit we had to prepare many documents in order to file with the IRS. Nonprofit status will allow the academy to receive certain types of funding. I worked on getting the papers in order as much as I could and Mr. Merino completed other portions. I learned a lot about nonprofits through this experience.

I'm excited to be able to continue to work with the organization as it develops. I also had the opportunity to talk with Mr. Merino about the possibility of attending law school. We talked about the process of applying, different career paths within law, and even which schools I might consider. I'm very grateful for the relationship I developed with him.

My internship helped me grow a lot academically. I learned new skills, became familiar with the world of nonprofits and the work also opened the door for me to consider law as a future career. In the end, my goal is to help Latino students in Elkhart County accomplish their dreams and have the support they need to

complete college, as I did, and develop successful lives. Studying history taught me to be a critical thinker, researcher, and better writer. My history degree has opened doors for me and now it is up to me to decide which path I will follow.

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today's career paths that demand concrete knowledge and skills, as well as interdisciplinary creativity that can flex with a changing job market and be relevant for future jobs that do not yet exist.

Outside the classroom, history major Jacob Martin ('15) of Colorado Springs leads the student Pre-Law Club for those interested in going to Law School. Martin has invited community members and alumni to share their experiences. One example is Goshen City Court Judge, Gretchen Hess Lund. She shared valuable insights about what it takes to be a lawyer, what life is like in the field and in law school. Says Martin, "This club has been a lot of fun for me. We've had a number of lawyers come in to talk about what they do, and I'm always amazed by how interesting their work is." Lund also teaches a Business Law class at GC and connects students to various opportunities.

Student and Recent Alumni Prizes, Publications, and Presentations

Anna Showalter ('10) published "'We Want to Tell with Singing': The Music of Martyrs," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 37 (April 2014): 47-54. Showalter is a theology student at Duke Divinity School where she seeks to integrate her interests in music and history with her faith. In 2012 she received a master's degree in piano performance from the University of South Florida.

Mara Weaver ('13) received third place in the 2013 Anabaptist Research Paper Competition through the Sider Institute at Messiah College for her essay "Congregation and Community: How Dual Conference Affiliation and Mennonite Identity Defined Local Outreach and Witness at the Mennonite Church of Normal, 1971-2002."

Four GC history alumni contributed chapters to the recently-published book *A History of Mennonite Youth Ministry, 1885-2005*, edited by GC Campus Pastor Bob Yoder. **Jonny Gerig Meyer** ('08) wrote "A Program, an Organization, and a Movement: The Life of Churchwide Mennonite Youth Fellowship, 1948-68"; **Matt Harms** ('09), "Short-term Work for Long-term Change: An Early History of SWAP, DOOR, and Group Venture"; **Josh Hertzler** ('11), "The Mennonite Camping

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Movement and Its Role in Youth Ministry”; and **Anna Showalter** (’10), “The Mennonite Young People’s Conference Movement, 1919-23.”

Jacob Yoder (’14) presented his research on the work on International Voluntary Service in Vietnam during the Vietnam War at the 16th annual Goshen College Student Academic Symposium, April 5. He also presented his work at the 9th annual Chicagoland Christian College History Conference, hosted at Goshen College on April 12. The conference drew participants from various colleges in our region.

Some Recent History Alumni Activities

Rebecca Allen (’04) is completing a master’s degree in Public Health/Health Promotion at Portland State University, Portland, Ore., where she is involved with a National Institutes of Health study on the effects of pesticides on farmworkers.

Jackson Beck (’13) is enrolled in the historic preservation program at the University of Georgia. The program combines an M.A. in conservation and management of historic resources with a dual degree track in law.

Jeremy Bernstein (’99) has worked for various political campaigns and citizen advocacy groups. He currently heads the Indiana chapter of Americans for Democratic Action, the grassroots public policy organization founded by Eleanor Roosevelt.

Matt Donat (’11) teaches social studies at Clinton Christian School, Goshen, Ind.

Jonny Gerig Meyer (’08) is co-founder of OddBird, a web application developer.

Christa Graber Kauffman (’11) is a social studies teacher at Goshen Middle School.

David Harnish (’12) is teaching history at Flanagan-Cornell High School, Flanagan, Ill.

David Jost (’11) teaches English as a New Language to students from around the world in Eastern Mennonite University’s intensive English program.

Tim Kennel (’00) has been working for the U.S. Census Bureau for over a decade and in 2013 completed a Ph.D. in survey methodology at the University of Maryland.

Mark Massey (’10) is beginning a master’s degree program in European Union Policy Studies, based in Florence, Italy, through James Madison University.

Elizabeth Miller (’06) works for the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism, based at Goshen College. She completed a master’s degree at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in 2014 and has written a history of Mennonites in Colombia which will be published in Spanish likely next year.

Samita Thapa (’13) has been working at the Refugee Services Division of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Arlington, Va.

Mara Weaver (’13) completed a year of voluntary service through Mennonite Central Committee’s Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program, working with the migration and economic justice programs of Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City.

Landon Yoder (’04) is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Geography, Indiana University-Bloomington where he is researching “how different social, economic, institutional, and ecological factors in agroecosystems can foster or discourage multifunctional agricultural and agroecological approaches.” From 2009-2013 he was an editor at the Environmental Law Institute, Washington, D.C.

Scholarship Recipients



The 2014-2015 Willard and Verna Smith U.S. History Scholarship has been awarded to **Grace Boehm** (Kansas City, Kans.). This summer, Boehm is combining her interests in history and environmental science with an internship at GC’s Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, Wolf Lake, Ind., where she is researching Merry Lea’s origins and its program development across three decades.



The Oswin and David Gerber Scholarship in Mennonite Studies for 2014-2015 has been awarded to **Liz Wittrig** (Hopedale, Ill.). Wittrig is participating in GC’s Maple Scholars summer research program, assisting history professor John D. Roth

with a project on the history of Mennonite World Conference and the global Mennonite peace witness since 1950.

Boehm, Wittrig, and nineteen other students will spend the fall semester in Sichuan Province, China with GC’s distinctive Study-Service Term program.

The generosity of the Smith and Gerber families has been very helpful to many Goshen College students. The History Department welcomes donations to the Smith and Gerber scholarship endowments.