



Graduate Humanities

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

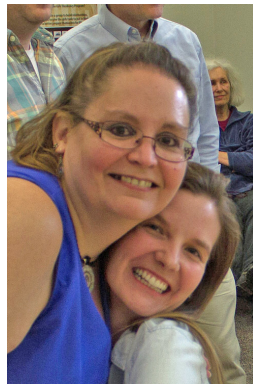
Graduate Humanities Program
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Everyone has a story

For this issue, we looked closely at our *Our Graduates* found on our website (<http://www.marshall.edu/graduatehumanities/about/our-alumni/>) and harvested some intriguing information. Starting with the visual on page 2, we tell a story of what attracts our students to the program and the areas in which they work, along with quotes from five graduates in diverse work settings. From all the graduates' comments, we identified key qualities of the program that help us understand what's constant, regardless of changing seasons. Following the visual, we selected brief passages from two final projects and one thesis—a glimpse of the range of interests of our graduates. We're hope you enjoy reading what we've discovered as much as we have.

— Trish Hatfield ('08), Program Assistant



Students Rhonda Marrone and Ashley Dennison celebrate after their presentations at the Activist Exhibit Opening.

Reflection by near graduate, Rhonda Marrone

Choice, along with confidence, are two very important things that I have gained while working on my master's degree.

When I first began taking Humanities classes my mind was much more constricted, I thought more lineally, one directionally. The classes the Graduate Humanities Program offers are multi- or inter-disciplinary, they encompass many different areas of study—culture, history, literature, writing, art, archaeology and more.

Studying these courses has opened my mind to a different kind of world and different choices that I did not know were out there.

I learned to write as an undergraduate, of course, but have honed the skill in the master's classes. In the spring of 2016 I was confident enough to apply for an editor internship with The Borgen Project, a nonprofit out of Seattle, Washington. The Borgen Project works to combat

world poverty and hunger. They have a magazine and blog. I was accepted into the internship, completed it, and am now a feature writer.

With the Masters in Humanities I have grown in independence; I have been given more choices in my future; I have been given the confidence to choose. A degree in the Humanities has not put me into a box where I have to stay and not ever get out. A degree in the Humanities equals freedom, ability, confidence and choice. ■

Rhonda will be graduating in 2017. Her graduate project involves working with Michael Tierney on the West Virginia Activists Archives and she is helping to organize a local branch of the national nonprofit RESULTS, which works to end poverty and hunger on the national level. She is also becoming licensed to teach English and Spanish in West Virginia middle and high schools.

Congratulations to Recent Graduates

Emily Mayes '16

Major Emphasis: Literary and Cultural Studies
Project Title: "Her Name Was Appalachia."

Josh Mills '16

Major Emphasis: Cultural and Historical Studies
Project Title: "Lithic Analysis of Projectile Points from the Greg White Collection at Heritage Farm Village and Museum."

David Fisher '16

Major Emphasis: Cultural and Literary Studies

Excerpts from ***College Choices About More Than Money*** by Richard Guarasci, President of Wagner College in Staten Island, NY. *Charleston Gazette-Mail*, Wednesday, May 11, 2016

According to a 2015 survey of business leaders by the Association of American Colleges and Universities . . .

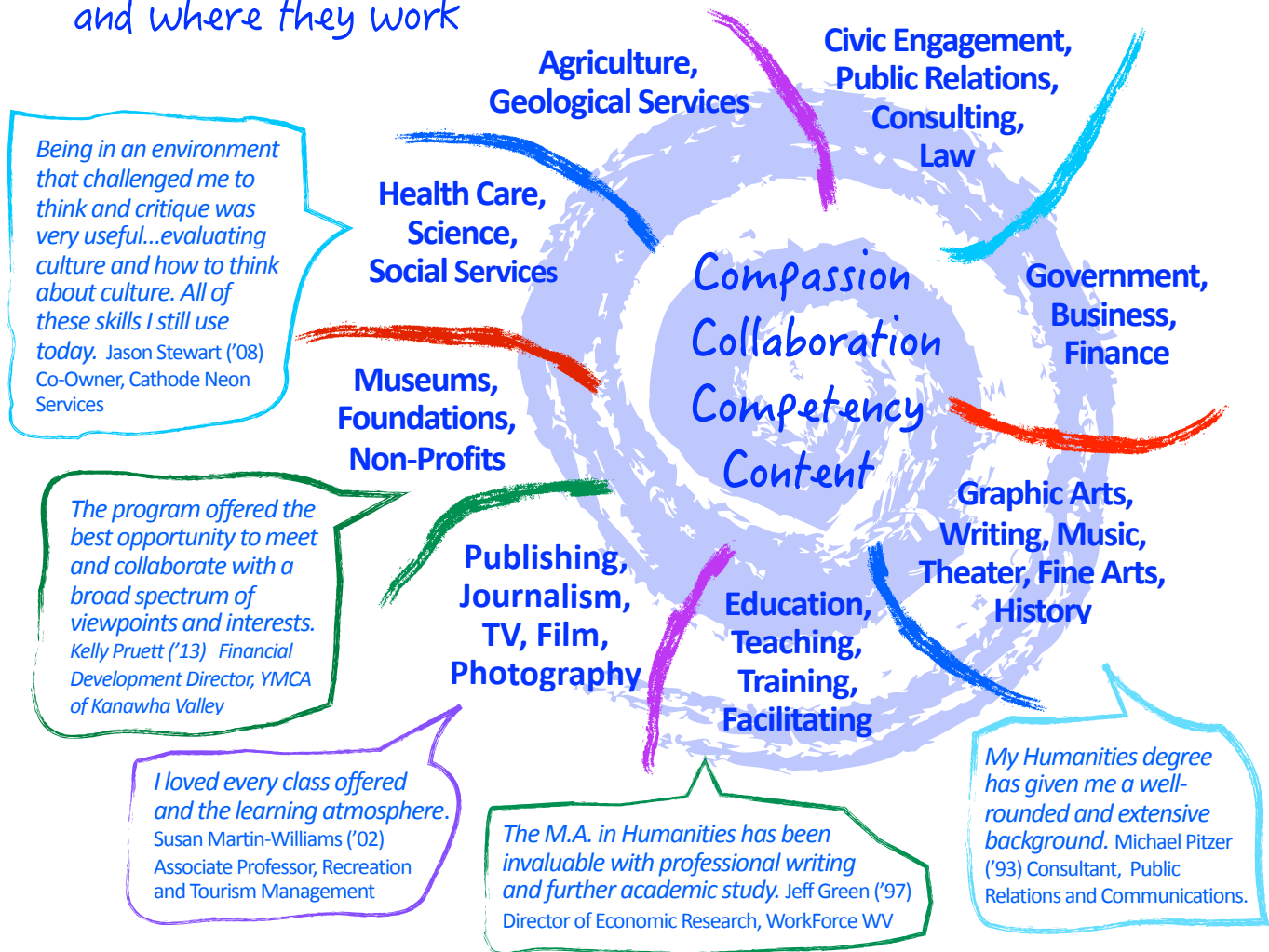
- Nearly all employers (91%) agree that for career success, "a candidate's demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly and solve complex problems is more important than his or her undergraduate major."
- Nearly all employers (96%) agree that "all college students should have experiences that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own."

Getting the most bang for the buck from a college experience is extremely important. But there's more to calculate than numbers and dollar signs – one should take into account the ways that the college will shape the student as a professional, a community member and a human being.

Although Guarasci's comments are directed towards undergraduates, we consider them equally applicable to graduate programs.

MU Graduate Humanities Program

What attracts our students
and where they work



Four Qualities of the Program

Compassion. Everyone brings a different life perspective and level of expertise to our program. We value openness and dialogue.

Collaboration. In addition to shared learning among faculty and students in the classroom, community research projects and partnerships advance our tradition of outreach and civic engagement.

Competency. We require graduate level reading, discussion, research, writing, and presentations. Carefully selected instructors who value the program's unique approach enrich it with their own peer-recognized expertise and love of subject matter.

Content. Historical, cultural, and literary studies, together with multiple art-based disciplines, are the foundation of our diverse offerings.

Passages from Final Projects and Thesis

Major Focus: Cultural Studies

Project: *Perceptions of Muslim Women in America, Specifically West Virginia*

by Jeanette Ahangardezfooli ('10)
(Passages from pages 15-16, 29-30.)

"My husband was brought up in the Islamic faith, yet since his arrival to the United States more than thirty years ago, he has not been a practicing Muslim. We were married in the Lutheran Church....

"My viewpoints and perceptions regarding this topic have come a long way since the early 1980s. Some of these changes occurred through discussions with my husband, some through

Through my own personal journey, I have realized the veil in any form is a symbolic message on numerous levels.

observations of my mother-in-law and sister-in-law when they visited us from Iran, and most recently, through my Graduate courses and information I compiled for my project. The reason why women veil is multi-layered, rational isn't always what we perceive it to be, and in areas where freedom of choice is available, the number of Muslim women who decide to veil is ever more increasing.

"I have discovered through various conversations and texts, that the veiling process in today's societies has a new wind blowing through its sail and it is slowly enabling us to guide the boat of understanding. This direction is not coming from the past male-orientated bourgeoisie society, at least not in all areas: instead, it originates in education—women who have witnessed and been involved in many different personal voyages, and are now spreading their experiences and knowledge through many different vessels of learning.

"For the wearer it symbolizes a commitment she has made to herself and to God, while at the same time symbolizing respect for herself, her family, and to God.

"During my interview with Tabitha, she smiled broadly when she mentioned how the veil is also a symbol of solidarity. 'Sometimes when you're out, and other sisters see you, they smile and joyfully say, "As-sallamu alaikum!" (Hello! How are you?) This symbol of solidarity has also been noted in a 2003 article by D. Cole and S. Ahmadi. In Western societies, the majority of Muslim women wear the veil proudly. This, however, is not true in all cultures around the world. The intent of this paper though, is not aimed at viewing the process on a global scale—it is centered on perceptions of the veil, post September 11th in the United States, particularly in West Virginia.

"Cyra Dumitru, a nationally published poet, expresses her viewpoint in the following poem: *A Western Woman Puts On a Burka* ...'As your burka dries, the world, might soften, sound as if it's taking place a few streets away, leaving you free from stares / at your cleavage and smeared lipstick. You can smirk, scowl, hum softly without reproach—entertain you own thoughts within this striding / curtain, this private theater. Here you can become the secret—the offstage woman carrying the pearl handled dagger, the leather book of potions, / the key to the attic library, the missing slipper, the answer to the question: who do you say I am?'"

Jeanette works for the Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Revenue Division for the State of West Virginia. She also teaches Humanities and English at Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College and Humanities and World Religions at Strayer University.

On a survey she wrote: "[I value] the support from all my professors. Classes were always filled with interesting and stimulating discussions, with thought-provoking material. Their classes took me way out of my comfort zone, and I grew leaps and bounds because of that. I am very proud to say I'm a graduate of the Humanities Program from Marshall University Graduate College (MUGC). I would not be teaching and enriching my

life, and hopefully lives of my students, if were not for the leadership I found at MUGC. I can never thank Eric, Beth, Dr. Simone, and Andu Meharie enough for their guidance and support."

Major Focus: Cultural Studies / Appalachian Studies

Project: *Glenwood Inventory Project* by Ashley F. Clark ('10) (Passages from pages 1-2)

"'How married are you to the idea of a thesis?' Though my jaw may not have dropped open, I was suppressing fifty different emotions at that moment. Dr. Lassiter had no idea what I had been praying and thinking about earlier that morning.

"I had no clue what I was going to do for a thesis. What subject did I love enough to spend that much time on studying? Or more importantly, what subject did I mind not wanting to see for a few months (or years) after the thesis was finished?

"With those ten little words strung together, a new possibility was laid in front of me. Updating the inventory of Glenwood House? Would I like to help reorganize the history of this house—the

Being a part of Glenwood Historic Foundation's work gave me the opportunity to walk where these people walked, see history intimately revealed before my eyes—a history buff's dream.

house that I had studied while working on the traveling exhibit just a few short semesters before?

"It was a tempting proposition. I loved history. I also had a natural curiosity that would aid me in looking for the unknown histories of pieces throughout the house. I would get to play *History Detectives* and *Antiques Roadshow*? The fact that the project involved West Virginia history provided an even greater

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American Astral Type Table Lamp (Electrified)

Physical Description: Shaft is fluted pillar on steeped marble base; glass chimney; frosted and etched 10" diameter bulbous shade rests on fluid reservoir from which depend crystal prism pendants.

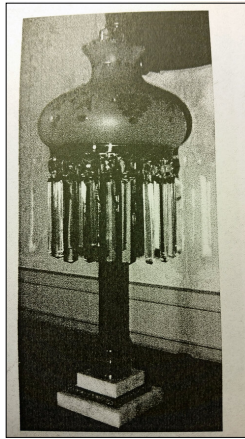
Decorative Motif: Glass shade with floral/fruit motif; egg-and-dart and acanthus motifs around marble base.

Measurements: H: 27

Historical Facts: Date: c. 1840

Good condition.

Additional Notation: Burning fluid lamp converted to electrical.



Sample of Inventory: Glenwood / Quarrier Estate Front Hallway

incentive. As a native West Virginian, I longed to see firsthand the remnants of the families whose influence stretched beyond the borders of our state all the way into the White House.

"The project ended up being different than what I expected—but just as valuable as I had hoped it would be. I was able to be up close to one of the historic gems of West Virginia; one of our greatest kept secrets. I studied furniture that had been carted over the mountains from Richmond almost two hundred years ago, my eyes swept over books that were printed before the century in which I was born.

"Though the project proved more difficult in places than I had anticipated, I enjoyed being a part of a task that would help teach the value of West Virginia history to future students.

"All these dreams, ghosts, and possibilities reside at a not-too-large brick home tucked behind the trees on the West Side of Charleston.

"How married was I to the idea of a thesis? I was now completely detached from it."

Ashley completed a 2nd Masters in Education and since 2014, has been teaching eighth grade at Andrew Jackson Middle School in Charleston, West Virginia.

She wrote in a survey: "The Marshall Humanities Program revitalized my faith in education. Yes, I realize that sounds cliché. Overly romanticized. But it's completely true. I was in a program where people weren't concerned with the competitiveness of academia—they were concerned with me and my goals. I have never felt more encouraged in my academic pursuits. I also met a diverse

group of people. Vastly intelligent. A well-traveled bartender with a love for Dostoyevsky. A computer-savvy servicewoman. A PR rep. Teachers, students, parents, retail workers.

"I grew so much in my understanding of the diverse human experience through listening to others tell their life stories. All coming together for the same goal. Much like the humanities them-selves. I learned about the importance of connections across the disciplines. How it's less important for your writing to sound smart than it is for it to be written clearly.

"I am currently employed at a local historic house because of connections I made through the program. If I hadn't gotten my MA in Humanities, I definitely would not be where I am now. I would not have regained my faith in the educational process and would not have continued. I can't make the decision for you, nor would I say it is for everyone. But it is a learning experience that has forever changed my life."

Major Focus: 20th Century Art

Thesis: The Development of Welded Sculpture

by Harold K. Edwards, Jr. ('82)

(Passages from pages i, v, vii - viii, 71-72)

"During the twentieth century, the emphasis of sculpture has shifted from studies of the human figure and animals to forms which reflect contemporary themes and ideas rather than familiar shapes. This shift not only involves the subject matter and its treatment but, just as importantly, concerns itself with the development of new materials and

processes. No longer is the sculptor tied to the traditional materials of terra cotta, wood, stone, and bronze. Now the artist has available a countless number of materials such as plastics, neon lighting, glass, found objects, and steel. The development of welded steel as a sculptural media is the subject of this thesis.

"A mark of any age is that it reflects the age in which it was done. ...With the advent of modern welding for joining materials, the sculptor has been able to break the most basic of the rules of sculpture production. No longer is the artist tied to the ideas of subtracting from the mass, be it wood or stone. Nor is he bound to the additive concept as it is used in terra cotta works and in the first step of bronze casting. Welding allows the artist to construct rather than use these traditional methods of sculpture.

"This survey will be divided into five chapters. Each chapter will concern itself with a particular sculptor whose main medium during his career was or is welded steel. Through these chapters and artists, this writer will attempt to trace the development of welded steel sculpture.

I probably made a mistake in completing the sculptural work before the written portion of this thesis. Because of this, though, I found my experiences and methods of problem-solving were closely related to those of the artists discussed in this thesis.

"Gonzalez was the artist who saw the possibilities of using welding in sculpture, based on his experiences as a welder in a factory that had constructed tanks for World War I. ...The second chapter will deal with David Smith's life and work. Smith, who also had experience as an industrial welder, more than anyone else, developed welded steel into a mature medium. The next two chapters will deal with Anthony Caro and Donald Judd respectively. These artists, who are still working, are identified as being leading components in various styles of sculpture.

"My own experience with welding began at an early age. My father, trained

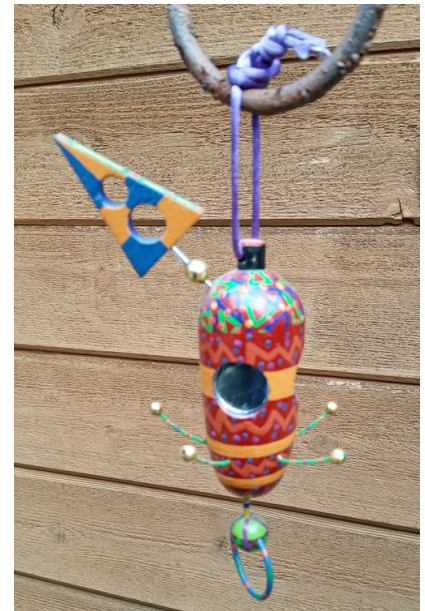
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as a welder in the army during the Korean War, has spent most of his working life as a welder. ...He bought a used welder for his own use when I was twelve. It was on this machine that I gained my first hands-on experience, with my father as my teacher. ...Much like David Smith, I only saw this as a summer job to provide money for college. ...At the age of twenty-six (the same age that Smith executed his first welded sculpture), I realized some of the possibilities of steel."

On a phone call, Harold reminded me he was one of the earliest graduates of the program and in his thesis he gave special thanks to "a former member of the faculty of the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies, Dr. Suzanne Sorrells. It was Dr. Sorrells who changed my goal from the simple pursuit of a masters degree to that of wanting to and enjoying doing research."

Back in 2013, during the work of updating our graduate data base, Program Assistant, Trish Hatfield ('08), was visiting The Art Store and came upon a small hanging sculpture that she liked and purchased for her home office. It wasn't until a couple of years later that she connected the artist with the graduate student and realized she daily enjoys one of Harold's creations.

Harold is retired from 40 years of teaching art related classes in high schools (WV) and universities (OH and VA). Now, art is his sole pursuit. His sculptures, drawings, and paintings can be seen and purchased at The Art Store in Charleston, West Virginia. Photos of his work can be seen online at http://www.theartstorewv.com/artist/Harold_Edwards/works/#!2162 (Accessed 1 October 2016).



Enamel, wood, metal, plexiglass
9 x 3 x 3 in.

Spring 2017 Seminars

See www.marshall.edu/humn for more information, including seminar classroom assignments.

A&S 600: SelTP: Belonging: Folklore and the Ties that Bind Us (Campbell) W, 7 – 9:50 PM. In this era of globalization, folklore—the traditional arts, knowledge, and practices that cultural groups and communities preserve, adapt, and pass on—is as present and important as it has ever been. Folklore has always shaped and reflected the identities of cultural groups; today, as Martha Sims and Martine Stephens write, folklore “helps us to form and express identity in the midst of an always complex, sometimes confusing social context, in which our sense of who we are is frequently questioned and challenged.” In this class, participants will explore and document how American folklore helps to form, express, and connect our many identities.

Dr. Beth Campbell is an Associate Professor in the College of Education and Professional Development. She coordinates the ESL Program, and teaches qualitative research and writing, and educational foundations. Originally trained as a folklorist and ethnographer, Beth has worked with public history, humanities, and arts organizations to produce museum exhibits, local history projects, and arts and culture programs. Her research interests include collaborative research and writing, community-university partnerships, and oral history. She is especially interested in how collaborative research can work—through shared agency, shared commitment, and shared humanity—to make and remake those who engage it.

CULS 611: Appalachian Studies: Themes & Voices (Pleska) M, 7-9:50 PM. This interdisciplinary course orients students to the significant issues and research in Appalachian studies. Important political, social, and cultural issues will be considered. Research areas are introduced.

ADVANCED REGISTRATION AVAILABLE

Currently enrolled: November 7 - November 18, 2016

New Admits and Readmits: November 21, 2016

Cat 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.

HUMN 605: Western Traditions & Contemporary Cultures (Eric Lassiter) T, 7 – 9:50 PM Using primary materials from different cultural periods, as well as contemporary critical analyses, this core course explores epistemo-logical questions that underlie conflicts between cultures.

Dr. Eric Lassiter, director of the Graduate Humanities Program and professor of humanities and anthropology, has authored and edited several books involving community-based oral history and ethnography. His latest book, Doing Ethnography Today, co-authored with Elizabeth Campbell, explores the complexities of doing collaborative ethnography in dynamic and shifting fieldwork sites.

HUMN 650: Selected Topics as independent study 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 with Program Director. A pro-seminar required of all Humanities degree students who are beginning their thesis or final project.



Graduate Humanities

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

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Campus Graduate Humanities Program 600H
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Check out our Appalachian Studies
Graduate Certificate

*Appalachia, as experienced culturally by its residents,
is what this Appalachian Studies Certificate helps bring to life.*

Marshall University
Graduate Humanities Program



Appalachian Studies Graduate Certificate

Interdisciplinary Perspectives
Research Opportunities
Experienced Faculty

The Humanities Program is a Member
of the Association of Graduate Liberal
Studies Programs



Daybreak at New River Gorge from Grandview Rim Trail.
MELVIN HARTLEY, Courtesy Photo