

Spring 2018

# Wooster Magazine: Spring 2018

Caitlin Paynich

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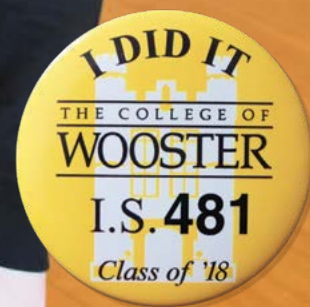
# Wooster

SPRING 2018

## Building on Curiosity



Learn what inspired the Independent Studies of the Class of 2018.



## Looking Forward

This year has been an exciting one! Thanks to the marvelous generosity of our alumni, parents, and friends, the Wooster's Promise campaign is coming to a successful conclusion, providing the support needed to keep our promise of a superb education—in which every student learns broadly, creates new knowledge, and prepares for a life of consequence—for generations to come.

As we bring this campaign to a close, we are also planning for the future. In a world changing fast, what will it mean to realize Wooster's Promise in the coming decades? We have begun a strategic planning process to answer that question, taking stock of where we are, where we want to go, and the principles by which we will navigate.

Our historic strengths—Independent Study and close work with excellent faculty—will always be a part of what makes a Wooster education powerful and distinctive, but we have tremendous new strengths as well. APEX, our center for advising, planning and experiential learning, provides strong connections between students' academic lives and internships, entrepreneurship, study away,

career planning, and experiential learning. Our Center for Diversity and Inclusion supports international and historically underrepresented students and also engages all students in learning from those whose experiences and identities are different from their own. Many of our faculty have engaged powerful new modes of teaching and scholarship, and new fields of inquiry are growing that connect across traditional disciplines. The digital humanities connect students to texts, objects, and modes of analysis in ways that would have been impossible even five years ago. Our life science facilities have undergone a transformation. And our community is dramatically more international and diverse than ever before.

Our context is changing, too. Our students are digital natives, growing up in a world where connection across distance is easier—and connection in person is harder—than ever before. They are immersed in a torrent of data from which it is challenging to make meaning. Some mistakenly believe that because technology is so important, engagement with the arts and humanities is irrelevant to the futures that they will build. All are concerned that their education prepares them well for the lives they will lead after college and are determined to do work that matters.

Our strategic plan will build from our strengths—both old and new—so that we can realize our mission for future Wooster students in this rapidly changing context. Those Scots will learn broadly and deeply, bring their learning into action, participate in a vibrant, equitable, and inclusive campus life, and graduate ready to make a difference. I look forward very much to discussing the developing plan with alumni this summer and fall, and to hearing your thoughts as we chart our course for the years ahead.

SARAH R. BOLTON  
*President*



Wooster magazine: Reaching 29,000 alumni and friends

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WOOSTER

A MAGAZINE  
FOR ALUMNI &  
FRIENDS OF  
THE COLLEGE  
OF WOOSTER

## Features

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Read about some of the questions and discoveries inspiring students in their Independent Studies this year.

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Alumna Judy Strand '78 creates systems to support an inclusive society in Portland, Oregon.



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### On the Cover:

Justine Walker '18 combined her passions for physics and dance in an Independent Study that addresses the question "What's it like to dance on Mars?" With the help of her advisors and experts on campus, Walker developed a harness and counterweight allowing Rachel Lau '19 to experience simulated lunar and Mars gravities while performing dance movements.

Photos: Matt Dilyard



Share your thoughts about what you read in *Wooster* magazine. Send letters to Caitlin Paynich, editor, *Wooster*, 1189 Beall Ave., Wooster, Ohio, 44691 or [cpaynich@wooster.edu](mailto:cpaynich@wooster.edu).

## On Board the “Wooster Connection”

When I opened the Fall 2017 issue, I was immediately interested in the article “A Matter of Truth”—and then completely surprised by the photo of Mike Householder on the J.W. Westcott. I recognized that boat’s name instantly. I worked on a lake freighter during the summers of 1965 and 1966—and the J.W. Westcott II was a vital link to my friends and family.

I immediately started digging into my own records. I found the photos first. Then I found the photography notebooks that told me which summer the photos were taken. And then I read my diary for the summer of 1965. (I’ve been keeping a diary for more than sixty years, but I have only transcribed the first few years onto the computer so far, which meant I couldn’t just search on “mail boat” and find the date instantly.)

This photo is from July 26, 1965. We were down-bound from Duluth with a mixed load of grain and iron ore for Lorain, Ashtabula, and Buffalo. According to my diary, that bucket coming aboard contained twelve letters for me. In addition to my parents and four siblings (five out of those six family members went to Wooster), I was exchanging letters that summer with many Wooster friends—including Enikő Babos ’66, Po Criswell ’66, Dorothy Davis ’67, Carol Ewing ’66, Bob Gray, Ron Hill ’67, Helen Self, Eve Stevens ’67, and Janie Wright ’66.

For at least two summers, that little mail boat was the “Wooster connection” on the Detroit River. Thanks for bringing back the memories of the freighter and the mail boat—and of all those good friends.

WALT HOPKINS ’66  
KINROSS, SCOTLAND

### From the Editor

Like us, Mike Householder, was delighted to hear from Walt and make yet another Wooster connection via the J.W. Westcott II. According to Housholder’s story published in the fall by *USA Today* and the *Seattle Times*, the Westcott delivers mail to Great Lakes freighters on the Detroit River. You can find the full story by searching “Detroit company in charge of floating zip code” at [usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com).



Left: Student improv group, “Don’t Throw Shoes” performs in Kauke Arch during I.S. Symposium. Right: A warm spring day inspires students to find sunny places to study. What were your favorite spots to study and read on campus?



## Books! *Recently published by alumni*



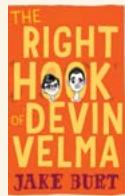
**Terence Barrett '71**  
*Given in Full Measure...  
 Cradling Grenades*  
 CreateSpace Independent  
 Publishing Platform, 2017



**Elise Geither '89**  
*The Deer*  
 Black Rose Writing, 2017



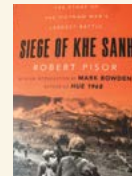
**Michael McCormack '80**  
*Born Fanatic*  
 2018



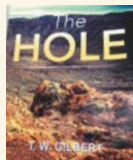
**Jake Burt '00**  
*Greetings from Witness  
 Protection! and The Right  
 Hook of Devin Velma*  
 Feiwe! & Friends, 2017, 2018



**Karelynn Gerber Ayayo '96**  
*Thinking about Adoption*  
 Cascade Books, 2017



**Robert Pisor '61**  
*Siege of Khe Sanh: The  
 Story of the Vietnam War's  
 Largest Battle*  
 W.W. Norton & Company, 2018



**Thomas Gilbert '73**  
*The Hole*  
 AuthorHouse, 2017



**Adam Rose '96**  
 and Charles Toefield  
*Playground: Attack of  
 the Gurgle Bots*  
 Markosia Enterprises Ltd., 2018



**TeQuion Brookins '12**  
*The Guide to Balancing Chaos  
 & Career: Volume I*  
 CreateSpace Independent  
 Publishing Platform, 2017



**James Hudnut-Beumler '80**  
*Strangers and Friends at  
 the Welcome Table*  
 UNC Press, 2018



**John Shields '64**  
*SW, the novel*  
 Lulu, 2016



**Lisa Dordal '86**  
*Mosaic of the Dark*  
 Black Lawrence Press, 2018



**Dave Mahood '84**  
*One Green Deed Spawns  
 Another*  
 Olive Designs, 2017



**April Vince '96**  
*Mushook*  
 CreateSpace Independent  
 Publishing Platform, 2017

New book to share? Email [cpaynich@wooster.edu](mailto:cpaynich@wooster.edu).



## Galpin sit-in engages diversity and inclusion



**O**n Jan. 24, about 350 Wooster students walked out of class at 11:40 a.m. and gathered on the steps of Kauke Hall to express their concern over a range of issues related to diversity and equity on campus. After some preliminary remarks on the steps, about 250 of the students, led by a piper—because this is Wooster, after all—moved on to Galpin Hall where they began a sit-in and released a detailed list of demands. The remaining students went to Lowry Center, to deliver the same demands at the offices of residence life and student activities.

Following hours of constructive dialogue with President Sarah Bolton and other members of the College's administration, the sit-in ended just before 10 p.m. Bolton called the conversations "extremely productive," and affirmed that everyone involved shared the same goal, "taking concrete and effective action to make Wooster a better, more welcoming, and more equitable place."

"The conversations were wide-ranging," Bolton said in a follow-up email to campus. "Several of the initiatives proposed in the students' demands had also been part of the College's Diversity,

Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan, which was developed with students, staff, faculty, and the board of trustees last year. In those cases, we discussed with students the actions that are already underway and ways to ensure that they are as effective as possible in improving student experience. Other concerns raised by the students were not addressed in that plan, and so we considered new approaches as well."

Some of the other concerns that are being addressed as a result of the sit-in include:

**Resources:** The College committed an additional \$20,000 to support the work of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion this spring and will review CDI's resource needs for next year. Campus Council and SGA are also reviewing their budget guidelines to better support related programming.

**Education and training:** The college will strengthen its education in cultural competency, including sexuality and gender inclusion, for all students as part of orientation and other first-year activities, and provide additional training for student leaders. (Similar training initiatives for staff and faculty are already underway as part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.)

**Discrimination and bias-related harassment:** The College will clarify, simplify, and make more accessible the mechanisms for reporting allegations of discrimination and bias-related harassment and the processes by which the College addresses them.

**Storage and Translation:** The College will work on ways for parents and families who don't read English to access crucial information on the Wooster website, and to enable consistent and affordable summer storage for international students and others who need it.

Bolton closed her email by reaffirming that the College "must be a place where all students can live, learn, and thrive," and thanking the students for coming together and "put[ting] so much time, care, and thought into finding ways to reach that central goal."

### Learn more.

Read the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan online.  
<https://goo.gl/xsCWrf>

Alumni Weekend Honorees (left to right): Steve '68 and Janet '75 Graff; Edith and the late Edward '61 Andrew, Andrew Family Foundation; Brittany Harris '13 (photos provided by honorees)



## Scholars on the Road Inspires Conversations and Connections

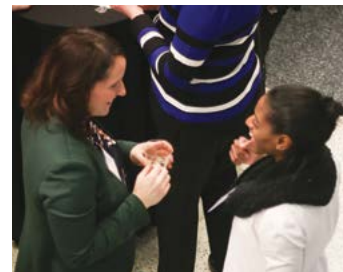
Ancestry and social identity, gender gaps in political interest, sustainable agriculture, and the timelessness of a Wooster education are just a few of the topics drawing Wooster alumni and friends across the country together for the new event series, Scholars on the Road.

Tom McArthur, assistant vice president for alumni and parent engagement, says alumni themselves inspired the program. "Through an alumni attitude survey completed last fall, alumni shared their interest in hearing more from Wooster faculty. The diversity of research being done at Wooster is phenomenal, and our faculty are one of our greatest resources," he said. "Their presentations inspire thought-provoking discussions that also bring together faculty, alumni, parents, and friends."

Some of the presenters included Jenni Griffin, dean of APEX, and deans Scott Brown and Brian Karazsia, who shared information about the educational experiences Wooster students are having today. Others focused on faculty research and hot topics. In Washington, D.C. this March, Angie Bos, associate professor of political science at Wooster discussed her research into how girls and boys see politics differently.

"It was fascinating to learn how early on girls can be socialized to be less interested in politics than boys are," said Barry Eisenberg '85. "She compared it to the inroads being made in STEM to interest girls in science and math topics in recent years and recommended similar efforts be made in the political sphere." Eisenberg also enjoyed visiting with alumni he knew and didn't know and seeing Bos connect with some of her former students. "Whether it is I.S. or another tradition, Wooster alumni from different decades can always find commonalities about their experiences as students. That professor-student connection has been a hallmark of a Wooster education for alumni of all ages for many years," he said.

The Scholars on the Road series is just getting started. This fall the series will continue with a presentation from Professor Olivia Navarro-Farr in Denver, Colorado. Featured in the winter issue of *Wooster*, Navarro-Farr will share more about her experiences in Guatemala exploring a major Maya archaeological site. Look for more information about upcoming events online at [woosteralumni.org](http://woosteralumni.org).



Photos: Sally Ladtrach

## Honoring Outstanding Alumni

The College of Wooster Alumni Association will honor outstanding alumni and volunteers during the annual meeting on Saturday, June 9. "We're excited to recognize alumni who have made an impact not only on their alma mater but also in their own communities and in their professions," said Tom McArthur, assistant vice president for alumni and parent engagement.

The award recipients include Steve '68 and Janet '75 Graff who will receive the John D. McKee Alumni Volunteer Award, the Andrew Family Foundation for the Sara L. Patton Stewardship Award, Brittany Harris '13 who receives the Outstanding Young Alumni Award, and two Distinguished Alumni Award recipients: Richard Kerr '68 and David Douglas '71. Look for more information about this year's Distinguished Alumni Award recipients in this issue.





# Distinguished Alumni



## Richard Kerr '68

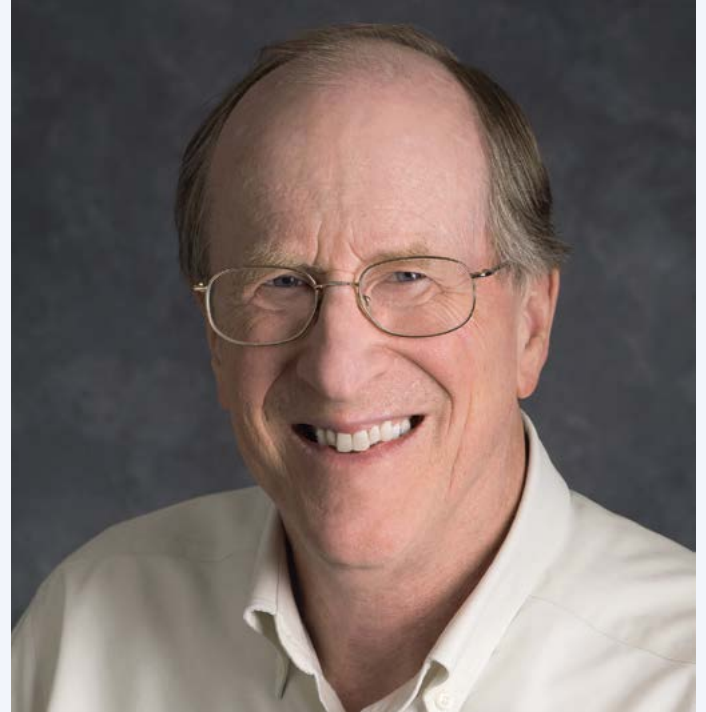
Like many Wooster students today, Richard Kerr '68 came to campus with a major—physics—and a career—meteorologist—in mind, but like many Wooster students today, his experiences here led to a different major and an unexpected but rewarding career.

Staying focused in the sciences, Kerr decided to major in chemistry and for his Independent Study, he synthesized an organic compound. His goal was to reproduce a compound another student had synthesized a couple years prior, though in the previous year it couldn't be duplicated. In his literature search he discovered a new approach that created the same result. "It smelled like the original sample. Everything in organics smells like something," said Kerr. "Having that organic product appear before my eyes was a memorable experience for me."

Cultivating his interest in chemistry, Kerr took a seminar while at Wooster about oceanography taught by a visiting faculty member with a specialty in marine chemistry that inspired him to complete a Ph.D. in oceanography. As he completed his dissertation on the organics of seawater, he realized a career in academic research didn't interest him that much and again he shifted his approach. He learned about a position with *Science* magazine.

"It turned out to be my dream job. It allowed me to inquire into all the latest news about earth science and learn about new ideas," said Kerr. As a science reporter he would interview scientists and researchers about the latest findings. "What I'm most proud of would be getting the big stories sooner than everybody else and getting them right," he said. For example, what killed the dinosaurs was a hot topic throughout the 1980s. "It was a controversial and provocative idea from the start whether it was a 10-km asteroid that hit Earth, erupting volcanos, and different versions of those ideas. It was tricky to navigate for a reporter, and you had to follow it closely to get it right."

As a writer for *Science* for 37 years, he was recognized for "getting it right," receiving numerous awards for quality and



achievement in journalism from the American Meteorological Society, American Geophysical Union, American Geological Institute, Division for Planetary Sciences, the Geological Society of America and others. Throughout the years, "What keeps you going are the continuing stories like what killed the dinosaurs, global warming, or planetary science discoveries," he said. "My Wooster experience drove me in the direction I wound up going. I was blissfully unaware of what was happening to me at the time, but happy it led to such a delightful outcome."

## *Distinguished Alumni Awards*

Recognized for their professional achievements, service to the community, and service to Wooster, Richard Kerr '68 and David Douglas '71 will lead



More than 700 alumni are registered to attend Alumni Weekend June 7-10, 2018. Class years ending in "3" and "8" will be celebrating reunions, and we are expecting alumni from the Class of 1943 through the Class of 2013.



## David Douglas '71

David Douglas '71 came to Wooster in 1967, a time when issues with the war in Vietnam and public protests permeated the campus climate. "It was hard to be on campus in the late 1960s and not get caught up in the times," he said. While at Wooster, Douglas quickly became involved in many social justice related issues, serving as an editor of *The Wooster Voice* and being elected to the new Campus Council in 1969. He took an active role in determining his educational experience. Though originally interested in politics and history, he found his best fit majoring in religion. "The professors in the department were universally outstanding. You were allowed and encouraged to develop your own approach to what you wanted to study." When it came time to choose an Independent Study, the challenges of the time inspired him to take a deeper look at the idea of hope. "People were discouraged by the injustice in society, and I wanted to look at what hope, particularly in a religious context, meant for our generation and in history," he said.

After Wooster and a year working in rural Appalachia with Presbyterian youth groups, Douglas completed his law degree in 1975 at the University of Colorado and served as an environmental lawyer. Continuing the passion for activism and writing that he developed at Wooster, he began writing for national magazines about environmental issues, with an emphasis on encouraging religious groups to become more active in wilderness preservation and environmental protection. He published three books, *Wilderness Sojourn: Notes in the Desert Silence*, *Letters of Faith*, and *Pilgrims in the Kingdom: Travels in Christian Britain*, co-written with his wife, Deborah.



Continuing to advocate for issues that are important to him, Douglas developed an interest in and started writing about international water issues focusing on the health problems caused by contaminated drinking water in developing countries. "It's hard to believe the odds a hospital or clinic in a developing country has clean water are less than 50 percent," he said. "Focusing on water has been tremendously important to me and allowed me to work with wonderful people in this country and abroad." In 1986, he started Waterlines, a non-profit organization providing funding and technical support for over 1,000 drinking-water projects in rural communities and schools in Latin America and Africa. Between 2005 and 2018 he led three time-limited, Washington, D.C.-based advocacy projects—Water Advocates, Advocates for Development Assistance and, most recently, Global Water 2020—designed to increase public and private American support for international drinking-water programs and U.S. foreign aid focused on poverty reduction and global health.



the Parade of Classes along with other honorees at Alumni Weekend. Nominate a Fighting Scot in your network: [woosteralumni.org/nominate](http://woosteralumni.org/nominate).



# Retirements



## Geraldine "Gerry" Barnes *Custodial Services*

For 32 years, Geraldine Barnes or Gerry as she's known to her students and colleagues has cleaned her way through the majority of the buildings on campus. Serving as a custodian primarily in the dorms isn't always a glamorous job, particularly during I.S. week, she joked, but she has found advantages over the years.

"Cleaning isn't always the best thing, especially the messes, but communicating with students is my reward. That's why I like working here," said Barnes. "The students always say nice things to us. You can actually tell when they're not having a good day. They want you to say hi to them because I'm sure they miss home," she said. At Christmas time, she and her coworkers give students cards to wish them luck on their exams. "It helps to tell them, 'You can do this. You studied all year for this,'" she said. "I try to give words of encouragement."

She remembers helping some students learn to do their laundry and dealing with messy bathrooms, broken glass, empty



## Nancy Grace *Virginia Myers Professor of English*

When she first came to The College of Wooster in 1987, Nancy Grace, started a multi-year contract as a generalist in the English department and then moved into a tenure-track position, serving as the director of the writing center and teaching journalism, a position she held for 15 years. In her 32 years at Wooster she's been on the forefront of the creation of the program in writing and other key initiatives that became an important part of the Wooster experience. From 2012 to 2015, she directed the Center for Diversity and Global Engagement (now the Center for Diversity and Inclusion) and in that role created the current Safe Zone ally training program on campus, leading to the Office of Sexuality and Gender Inclusion. She was part of the team that developed the social justice dialogues and volunteer efforts now celebrated on Martin Luther King Day at the College.

beer bottles, or fire extinguishers that have been let off. "Students know they've made a mess, but they know who cleans it up. They're willing to step out of the box and say that they appreciate their custodians very much." She remembers one group of students even asking her to join them in the celebration before asking for the tools to clean up after themselves.

One alumna, Barnes recalls, even confirmed that she was still on campus before returning for her reunion. "I got to see her in Holden when she came back. It was rewarding to know a student actually sent a letter and wanted to know if I was still working here on campus." Barnes recognizes that this type of recognition doesn't happen everywhere. "I've worked in many factories, and it's about production and a fast pace. There were no rewards there. You just feel part of the community and the campus at Wooster. I feel like I'm taking part in their education," she said.

Along with retirees, staff marking anniversaries were recognized this spring including Joyce Heitger, copy center supervisor and I.S. printing expert, celebrating 40 years at the College.



Though she's enjoyed the challenges and creativity found in her administrative work she also enjoyed her time teaching in English and in women's, gender, and sexuality studies, serving as chair of both departments a number of times. She's grateful for her time teaching news writing and editing and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and she's had the opportunity to bring her own research on Beat Generation writers like Jack Kerouac and other literature from the mid-20th century into the classroom. "What I enjoy most is seeing those points of connection with my own research and scholarship," said Grace, winner of two Choice Top 100 book awards, one for *Breaking the Rule of Cool: Interviewing and Reading Beat Women Writers* (co-edited with Ronna C. Johnson) and one for *Jack Kerouac and the Literary Imagination*. "Beat writing has historically been denigrated for its iconoclastic subject matter, but its powerful poetry, fiction, and life writing have been highly influential, not only in American literary history but around the globe. Being able to bring more attention to those writers is something that I feel proud of."

Throughout her time at Wooster, Grace found the freedom to teach what she wanted liberating and encouraging, and she's appreciated the relationships and friendships she's established with colleagues and students. "The benefits of being a part of the faculty are tremendous. I've had the support to pursue the kind of research I want without question and with financial, moral, and intellectual support as well. The institution has made it possible for me to do things I never even imagined I would."



### **Maria Teresa Micaela Prendergast** **Associate Professor of English**

For Maria Teresa Prendergast, spending two years away from Wooster helped her realize what Wooster had to offer. She spent five years as a visiting professor at Wooster before leaving for a tenure-track position at Grinnell College for two years, and then came back to Wooster and later a tenure-track position in the English department.

"I loved the students at Grinnell, but I'd gotten used to whatever you want to call a Wooster student. I missed that presence," she said. But what is different about Wooster students? "I think they have more diversity in their areas of interest. They're easier to talk to, chat with, and take out to celebrate I.S." She's found working with students on I.S. often gives her the opportunity to learn alongside them, particularly when they are combining majors or studying areas outside her field. "They give me my outside-of-class reading list for the year," she said including topics like wine and rhetoric, the Game of

Thrones novels, LGBT literature written for teens, and 20th century black women writers, just to name a few.

As a specialist in Renaissance literature, Prendergast had the opportunity to create a Renaissance curriculum and develop new classes including Renaissance fantasies and one inspired by her students called "Renaissance Bromance" about how male friendships in Renaissance literature were always based on rivalry. Some of the works taught in these classes featured Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife, and class discussions of these works inspired Prendergast's current, and third, book project on writings by and about Catherine of Aragon from 1500-1625.

Taking part in a number of groups that help build community on campus, Prendergast partnered with other faculty and staff to form the group Diversions, which brought together faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds to share experiences. Growing up on the east coast with the Cuban culture



# Retirements

of her mother's family, she admits it took a while to "learn the cultural language at Wooster," and she appreciates the increased diversity in the last ten years.

Becoming a part of the community included participating in Research Boot Camp, a group of faculty that meets to share work in progress and to work on their scholarship and research in the same setting. "I look forward to moments when I can encounter colleagues from all different disciplines," she said. "It's often where we see different areas of interest and research overlap, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, that we are inspired to learn from and collaborate with each other."

## Dale Seeds Professor of Theatre



First starting in 1983, Dale Seeds initially intended to stay in his position at The College of Wooster for two to three years. He wanted to work in production design professionally and later had a job offer in Minneapolis but again decided to remain. "I think what kept me here is that the College lets you reinvent

yourself and more than once," said Seeds. "I was able to move away from the notion of professional theatre into more scholarly activities and particularly things dealing with social justice. I reinvented myself numerous times, and if I'd been at a large university I wouldn't have been able to do that."

As a production designer, Seeds specializes in the art of reinvention. He "creates the physical world for the play to live in," he explained, and after tearing the set down after each show, he and his team start again with a blank slate. Because of the collaborative nature of theater, Seeds has enjoyed working with colleagues, staff, and students across campus tackling some tough issues. "Once we get into production the boundaries between student, faculty, and staff become blurry. We're all part of a team trying to tell a story." Many of those stories addressed social problems. "Doing the things that raise questions gives theatre and dance a greater sense of purpose. It's not just art for money," he said. "It's thought provoking."

While many of the classes Seeds taught at Wooster focused on different areas of production design, theatre literature, and research methods, he also took an interest in Native American performance and indigenous film offering classes in areas students don't often get to explore. He recalls one student who created a special major in Native American studies. "She was of Cherokee decent and created an I.S. about Cherokee storytelling by talking with tribal elders in North Carolina," he said. "She was able to create her own direction and identity based on what Wooster encouraged her to do. She recently came back to speak to my Native American performance class. It's nice to see that long arc of people's careers."

Seeds finds this experience holds true for many of his students. "Every I.S. has a success story," he added. "It's gratifying and

rewarding to see students that are going to go farther than you ever did." As he thinks about retirement, Seeds intends to reinvent himself again. In addition to some freelance work, he hopes to find more time for hobbies like the guitar, cycling, and volunteering at a national park.

## Honoring Retiring Faculty and Staff

The following faculty and staff also retired from The College of Wooster in the 2017-18 academic year.

### Faculty

**Mary Addis**, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Spanish

**Barb Burnell**, Howard Lowry Endowed Professor of Economics

**Gary Gillund**, Associate Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience

### Staff

**Linda M. Studer**, Campus Dining

**Bonnie Edwards**, Bookstore

**David Yoha**, Power Plant

**Janet O. Gallander**, Transportation

**Timothy J. Covert**, Custodial Services

**Gail A. Miller**, Custodial Services

**Lynn Downes**, Custodial Services

**Robert Shipley**, Information Planning

Special events were held at the end of the spring semester to honor retiring faculty and staff for their dedicated service to The College of Wooster.

# Building on Curiosity

Writing by John Hopkins, Hugh Howard, and Caitlin Paynich  
Photography by Matt Dilyard

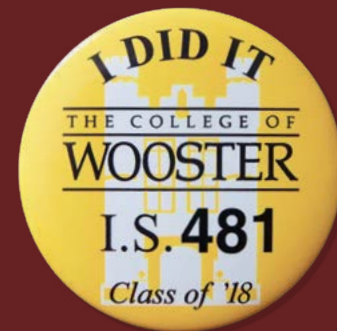


Photo: Missy Schen

Seniors at The College of Wooster completing their Independent Studies thrive on the curiosity that inspires them to ask questions about the ideas that capture their interest. As faculty mentor students through the process of honing that curiosity into a fully developed original research project, it is that intense desire to investigate and understand something new about their field that motivates them. Read about some of the questions driving students this year and the discoveries they made not only in their disciplines but about the research process.

## Independent Study 2018

What's it like to dance on Mars?

Which genes are most important to the process of bone healing and regeneration?

How are e-commerce sites like Amazon affecting local retailers?

What is the cultural significance of Chinese food in America?

Justine Walker



I.S. 2018

### *Dancing Our Way to the Cosmos:*

A study in how extraterrestrial travel will change the mechanics of dance

### *Majors:*

Physics and Theatre and Dance

### *Mentors:*

John Lindner, Professor of Physics and Kim Tritt, Professor of Theatre and Dance

Kathlyn MacDonald '20 (top right) and Rachel Lau '19 (right) experimented with dance movements at alternative gravities for Walker's study. Top right: Professor Lindner steadies the harness as Walker consults with MacDonald.

# *Dancing on Mars*

While the balance between STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) majors and arts majors may continue to shift as long as Earth remains the third planet from the sun, Wooster's Justine Walker is challenging the minds of both scientists and artists to think outside Earth's gravity. In an Independent Study that seems to have been waiting for just the right student, Walker, majoring in both physics and dance, is giving dancers the opportunity to experience what it would be like to dance on Mars and on the moon.

Walker first came to Wooster from Yorktown Heights, New York, as a mathematics and physics major but quickly discovered that advanced mathematics wasn't the right fit for her. Though she had never taken a dance class, she landed in two theatre and dance classes her sophomore year and realized a passion for post-modern dance. "It takes all the rules set by modern dancers and says goodbye. We can just go back to the basics of human movement." Equipped with two schools of thought—physics and dance—Walker and her advisors created a research project that truly combines both disciplines. "Both my advisors constantly bring different viewpoints to the project. We're giving dancers an opportunity to experience actually moving in various lower gravities," said Walker. "Choreographers have looked at lower gravity, but no one's looked at the actual physics of how dance movements change at lower gravities."

But why is this difference in gravity significant? John Lindner, Walker's

advisor and professor of physics said, "We're used to Earth's gravity, but it is really ferocious." He and Justine explained: "On Earth we all experience the force of gravity pulling us down at a rate of 22 mph per second per second. If you fell off the top of a building you'd be going 22 mph, after 2 seconds you'd be going 44 mph, and 3 seconds you'd be going 66 mph." Lindner pointed out that 66 mph is highway speed. "You really accelerate rapidly which is why heights are so dangerous."

Walker, Linder, and Kim Tritt, Walker's dance advisor worked closely with Mike Schafer, technical director for the theatre department to rig up a system with a harness and weights in the Ebert Art Center. "By attaching the dancers to a harness, we're able to simulate different levels of gravity by placing different amounts of mass on the other side of the pulley system," said Walker. From there, they can experience 70 percent Earth's gravity, 40 percent which is approximately Mars gravity, and 20 percent or lunar gravity. "It can be a lot for them to be at 40 percent gravity," she explained, "so we decided that 70 percent is a good half way point to get them used to the feeling."

Walker particularly enjoyed seeing how the different levels of gravity affect the dancers, two of her fellow Wooster students who acted as paid participants in the experiment through the Copeland Fund for Independent Study. At lower gravity, they're "lighter on their feet, able to do higher jumps, and more turns," said Walker. "We see how the movement

*“By attaching the dancers to a harness, we’re able to simulate different levels of gravity by placing different amounts of mass on the other side of the pulley system.”*

– Justine Walker

vocabulary that they know on Earth varies in these gravities.”

“How would that change choreography? How would that change dance?” asks Tritt, professor of theatre and dance, who worked with Walker to choreograph movements for the dancers to perform for the experiment. Looking at not only quantitative but also qualitative data, Walker constantly asked the dancers about how they were feeling at the different gravities. “When they reach Mars gravity, all of a sudden it’s like something just lights up on their face. The lightness brings out something in people, and I love to watch that,” she said.

Having tested the harness herself, Walker said, “Nothing beats that feeling of reduced gravity. That’s part of why astronauts always want to go back into space.” With the launch of SpaceX’s Falcon Heavy rocket, a commercial vehicle tested this February with the potential to one day take people to Mars, Walker says, “Space exploration and space everyday living is on the horizon for the next hundred years or so. It’s important for people to start thinking away from Earth and about how we can do creative things in different places.”

While becoming an astronaut and extending her experiment to space itself would be a dream come true for Walker, her immediate plan is to return to her home outside New York City where she’d be interested in completing a work study program with a dance studio or working for a nonprofit that supports her passions for STEM education or the arts. She sees her I.S. as an example of why these two communities need to come

together. “People on both sides tend to stereotype STEM and the arts communities, and they’re pushing each other apart,” she said. “Both sides need to come together in order for the world to progress and have a brighter future. If they actually combined their ways of thinking, we’d be able to do some amazing things.”





Harry Todd



I.S. 2018

*Toward A Metagraphic Theory:*

Examining the reflexive graphic novels of Daniel Clowes

*Major:*

English

*Mentor:*

Debra Shostak, Mildred Foss Thompson Professor of English Language and Literature

# Exploring Metagraphic

What are you going to do for your I.S.? It's the question every rising Wooster senior faces, and a lot rides on the answer. It has to be a topic of some significance, of course, engaging enough to work on for almost seven months, and sufficiently well-defined that it can be completed in that time. If you are a student with multiple interests, that needle can be even harder to thread. Harry Todd, an English major and film studies minor, found the perfect bridge between the two in a close reading and analysis of the graphic novels of Daniel Clowes.

"I've always been interested in the visual storytelling of films," Todd says, "and I grew up reading alternative comics." Back home last summer after a semester-long program in Denmark focused on film and art, he happened to pick up a copy of *Patience*, a graphic novel by Daniel Clowes. He read it, and immediately went back to the library for more. The main character in the next novel he checked out, *David Boring*, wants to be a film maker. Todd was hooked.

Clowes is an important figure in the graphic novel world—his best-known work, *Ghost World*, was made into a film starring the 17-year-old Scarlett Johansson in 2001 and nominated for an Oscar—but not much scholarship has been done on him, or indeed on the entire medium of graphic novels. Todd decided to focus on a metafictional analysis of Clowes' work.

Metafiction is fiction that is self-aware

and comments on itself. Just as the actors in a play or film will "break the fourth wall"—think Frank Underwood in *House of Cards* suddenly turning toward the camera and offering the viewer an aside on the action—metafiction draws the reader in to think more deeply about the work on multiple levels.

"Clowes' graphic novels are aware and actively comment on what a graphic novel is or should be," Todd says. "He plays games with the reader, referencing other works of his that the characters in the novel would have no understanding of, blending elements of his own autobiography with the role of any father character. Visually, he's much more subtle than other graphic novelists in how he both works within the conventions of 1950s- and 1960s-style comics, and then self-consciously breaks them."

While the term metafiction is of relatively recent coinage, notes Professor Debra Shostak, Todd's I.S. mentor, the concept itself "has a long and honorable tradition" from *Tristram Shandy* and Joyce's *Ulysses*, to Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and the short fiction of Donald Barthelme.

"A lot of Todd's interest in the graphic novel form comes from the way he has learned to think about narrative form in film," Shostak says. The graphic novel medium "is really exploding. It's been a real education for me to be thinking about the form with him."

Through his detailed analysis of both words and images, Todd reveals the

# Dimensions

multiple layers of Clowes' work, and a more active role for the reader. "Conventional wisdom suggests that all power is in the hands of the author, the creator of a work of fiction," he says, "and at times, that certainly seems so. But sometimes the power shifts to the reader who recognizes the metafictional elements. Becoming aware of those elements empowers the reader to understand the form and medium on a deeper level."

**"Conventional wisdom suggests that all power is in the hands of the author, the creator of a work of fiction, and at times, that certainly seems so. But sometimes the power shifts to the reader who recognizes the metafictional elements."**

—Harry Todd



## Hannah Sexton



I.S. 2018

### *Bad to the Bone or Good for Healing?*

Investigating the effects of target gene overexpression on bone formation

**Major:**  
Biology

**Mentor:**  
Dean Fraga, Professor of Biology

Right: Sexton celebrates turning in her I.S. with her parents. Far right: Sexton in the lab at the University of Michigan last summer (photo provided by Sexton)

# Bad to the Bone?

Hannah Sexton knew from the moment she arrived at Wooster as a first-generation college student and aspiring biology major that she wanted to do some sort of research involving bones. “It’s such a dynamic system,” she says, “when you think about how much it does for us on a daily basis, and how devastating bone loss or injury can be to your everyday functioning.” Moreover, bones “are not the stable structure we think of, they’re constantly wearing away and renewing themselves.”

So, when her mother forwarded her a Facebook post about Kurt Hankenson, a researcher at Michigan State University whose lab had been awarded a \$1.7 million Department of Defense grant to investigate ways to improve the healing process for fractured bones, Sexton emailed him to ask about summer research opportunities. One of the post-docs in Hankenson’s lab, Daniel Youngstrom, agreed to take her on, and Sexton spent the summer after her sophomore year helping to do cell cultures, assisting with anesthesia during mouse surgeries, and developing “a mini-project” of her own. It involved using small interfering RNA (siRNA) to down regulate the expression of specific genes in a cell type, then growing the cells and evaluating how they responded to the disruption of the expression of those genes.

“I wanted to see, if you reduce the expression of this gene in a bone cell, does it revert to something else? The goal

is to identify the genes that are most important to the process of bone healing and regeneration,” Sexton said. “When I was about to leave [the lab] at the end of the summer, I said, ‘So, Dan, can I come back next year and do my I.S. research here?’”

The answer was yes, although in the interim, the entire lab moved from Michigan State to the medical school at the University of Michigan, where Hankenson is now a professor of orthopedic surgery, and Youngstrom a research fellow.

Fast forward to the spring of 2017. Professor Dean Fraga, Sexton’s advisor for both junior and senior I.S., set up a conference call with Hankenson and Youngstrom to work out the goals and objectives for the research and data collection she would do that summer, which would form the basis for her I.S. Sexton worked in the lab in Ann Arbor from the beginning of June until two days before she was due back at Wooster to begin her senior year.



“The goal is to identify the genes that are most important to the process of bone healing and regeneration.”

—Hannah Sexton

Fraga says that Sexton returned to campus with “tons of data analysis to do of both real time PCR data and captured images,” and they quickly settled into the familiar I.S. routine of weekly meetings to discuss the work in progress, plan out next steps, and ultimately write up the results. “Hannah writes very well, and she always came to those meetings well prepared,” Fraga says. “I learned a lot about bone development.”

Much of her analysis for her senior I.S. focused on the impact of over-expressing a particular gene—adding more of it to a bone cell—which complements the work being done at Michigan on the impact of deleting or knocking it out. She confirmed that the gene plays a key role in the differentiation of cells into osteoblast (i.e. bone) cells and also seems to be important in the proliferation of those cells and thereby in the process of inducing bone reformation.

Sexton’s mom and dad drove down from Michigan to see her turn in her I.S., and claim button number three, on Feb. 19. Next stop after graduation is medical school—she somehow found time to take the MCAT in between finishing junior I.S. and heading back to the lab in Michigan last summer— to become an orthopedic surgeon.



Brandon Bell



I.S. 2018

*Geologists With Borders:*  
American scientific and cultural interaction with Japan and Europe after the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake

*Majors:*  
Geology and History

*Mentors:*  
Alex Crawford, Visiting Assistant Professor of Geology and Margaret Wee Siang Ng, Assistant Professor of History

Top right: Bell completed some of his research at University of California, Berkeley Earth Sciences Library through Copeland Funding that allowed him to travel to the city of the historic disaster.

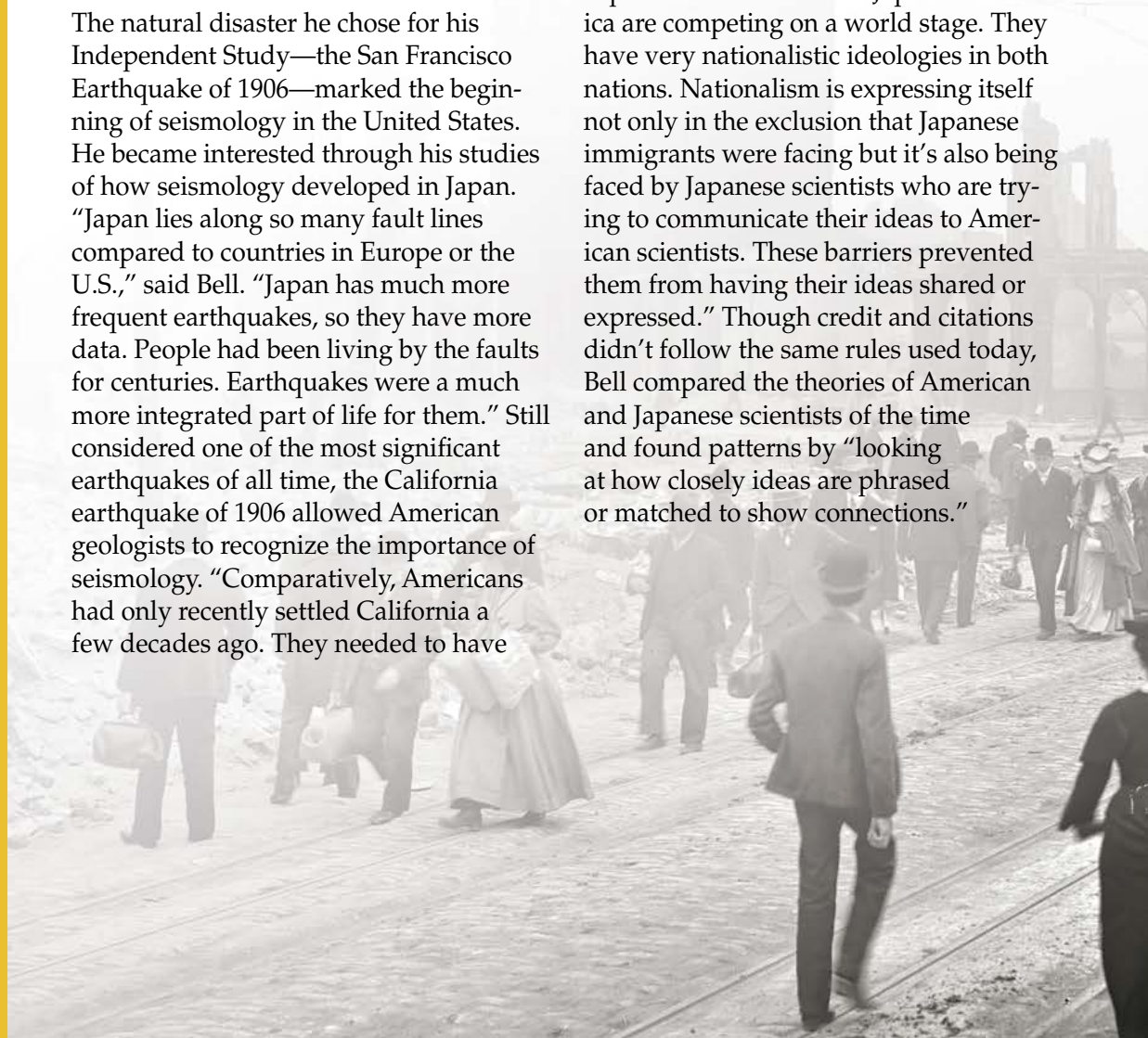
# Geological Innovation Across Barriers

Brandon Bell first realized he could combine his interests in history and geology through a summer research project studying the 1969 flood in Wayne County. “I tied geology, the layout of the land, and topography to its effects on people and their memories of the flood. I realized that I could combine geology and history by looking at a moment where they came together like a natural disaster or major geological event.”

The natural disaster he chose for his Independent Study—the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906—marked the beginning of seismology in the United States. He became interested through his studies of how seismology developed in Japan. “Japan lies along so many fault lines compared to countries in Europe or the U.S.,” said Bell. “Japan has much more frequent earthquakes, so they have more data. People had been living by the faults for centuries. Earthquakes were a much more integrated part of life for them.” Still considered one of the most significant earthquakes of all time, the California earthquake of 1906 allowed American geologists to recognize the importance of seismology. “Comparatively, Americans had only recently settled California a few decades ago. They needed to have

a system of seismology to explain why earthquakes were happening and looked back at what Japan and other countries in Europe had done. They stood on top of those existing concepts and built their own.”

Bell found that the Japanese scientists who came to California to study the earthquake faced the same struggles and persecutions that Japanese immigrants and residents experienced at the time. “Japan and America are competing on a world stage. They have very nationalistic ideologies in both nations. Nationalism is expressing itself not only in the exclusion that Japanese immigrants were facing but it’s also being faced by Japanese scientists who are trying to communicate their ideas to American scientists. These barriers prevented them from having their ideas shared or expressed.” Though credit and citations didn’t follow the same rules used today, Bell compared the theories of American and Japanese scientists of the time and found patterns by “looking at how closely ideas are phrased or matched to show connections.”



“I realized that I could combine geology and history by looking at a moment where they came together like a natural disaster or major geological event.”

—Brandon Bell



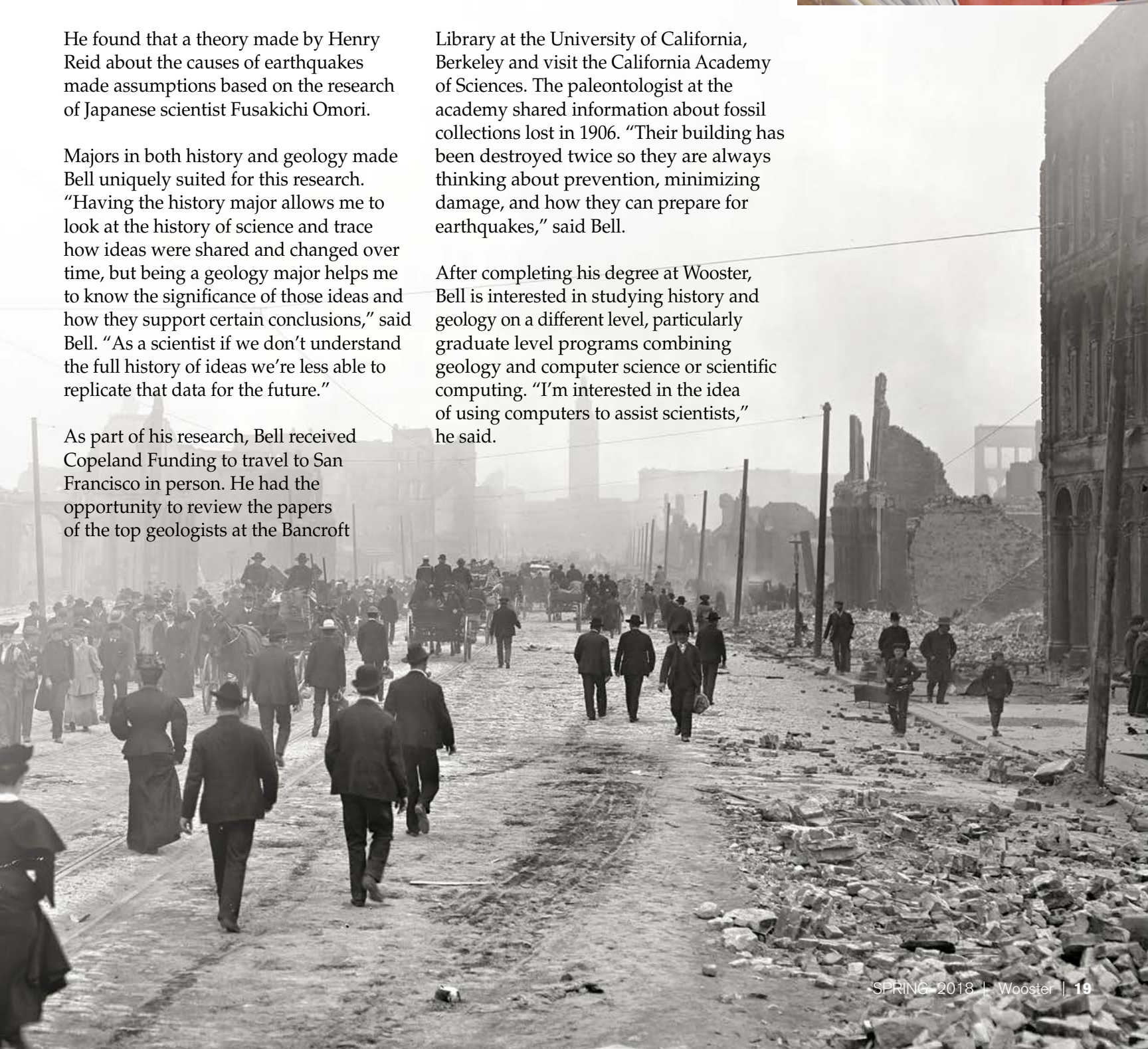
He found that a theory made by Henry Reid about the causes of earthquakes made assumptions based on the research of Japanese scientist Fusakichi Omori.

Majors in both history and geology made Bell uniquely suited for this research. “Having the history major allows me to look at the history of science and trace how ideas were shared and changed over time, but being a geology major helps me to know the significance of those ideas and how they support certain conclusions,” said Bell. “As a scientist if we don’t understand the full history of ideas we’re less able to replicate that data for the future.”

As part of his research, Bell received Copeland Funding to travel to San Francisco in person. He had the opportunity to review the papers of the top geologists at the Bancroft

Library at the University of California, Berkeley and visit the California Academy of Sciences. The paleontologist at the academy shared information about fossil collections lost in 1906. “Their building has been destroyed twice so they are always thinking about prevention, minimizing damage, and how they can prepare for earthquakes,” said Bell.

After completing his degree at Wooster, Bell is interested in studying history and geology on a different level, particularly graduate level programs combining geology and computer science or scientific computing. “I’m interested in the idea of using computers to assist scientists,” he said.



Meg Itoh



I.S. 2018

### *What is Chinese Food?*

Americanized Chinese dishes as heritage food and bridging identities

### *Majors:*

Communications Studies and Chinese

### *Mentors:*

Ahmet Atay, Associate Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and Ziyang You, Assistant Professor of Chinese

# 中国菜是什么？

Translation: What is Chinese Food?

Meg Itoh spent the fall semester of her junior year in a Mandarin language-immersion program at Peking University in Beijing, during which she was able to travel to Sichuan, Chengdu, Guilin, and other parts of the country as well. "Having the opportunity to try different regional cuisines opened my eyes to the food culture of China," she said, "and opened my mind to thinking of food beyond something we simply consume every day."

Back in Wooster for the spring semester, she happened to go out with a friend to a local Asian restaurant, and the contrast was striking. It was the kind of place that offers not just a meal, but an "experience" with food prepared by cooks who provide a running commentary as they toss knives in the air and squirt sake into diners' mouths.

"It felt not just like a performance, but a circus act," Itoh said. She began to think about the place of Chinese food in America, its common perception as a fast, easy, cheap takeout alternative, and whether that perception reinforces a devaluation of Chinese labor in the U.S. How, she wondered, did Chinese restaurant workers, many of them immigrants, craft their identities in a new land through the food

they prepare and serve? The seed of an I.S. was planted.

She knew that the food served in most Chinese restaurants in the U.S. is heavily Americanized: blander and less spicy, with more fat, salt, and sugar than traditional Chinese cooking. Did having to cater to American tastes, rather than serving more authentic dishes, feel to those restaurant workers like a weakening of their Chinese identity?

"My assumption going in was that they would see both themselves and their food as undervalued in the American restaurant industry," Itoh said. To test that assumption, she arranged interviews with seven workers at four restaurants: three in Cleveland, one in Columbus. Six had immigrated to the U.S. with their families as children, one was born here.

She discovered a reality that was more complex than her initial assumptions, starting with the fact that every restaurant had two menus: the standard one filled with Americanized dishes, and a second for their Chinese patrons (or anyone else who knew to ask for it) with more authentic options. You might find the same item—kung pao chicken, for example—



At the right are screen shots from Itoh's documentary about her project. See the full video at <https://youtu.be/38z1U0xGjYQ>.

“I want to give a voice and a face to these historically marginalized people.” —Meg Itoh

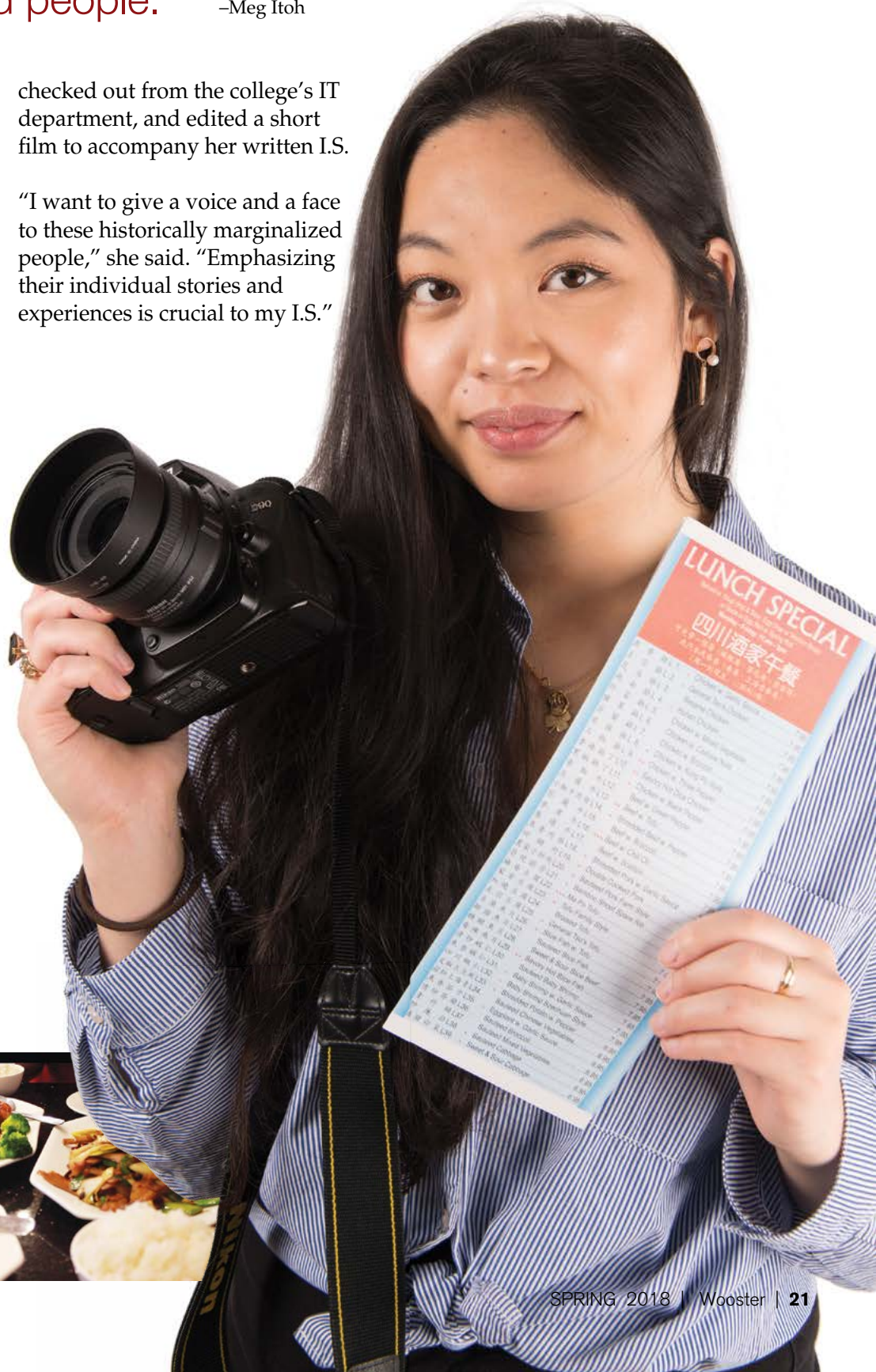
on both menus, but prepared using two very different recipes.

“Chinese menus for Chinese customers is a mode through which restaurants maintain their cultural identity in the United States,” Itoh observed, while still catering to the American palate on the public menu in order to succeed commercially. And while those she interviewed said their parents had faced discrimination and perceived their own labor as being devalued because of where they worked, they see both the perception of, and appetite for, Chinese food in America changing. They discussed how their customers are more open to trying new things—including suggestions from the Chinese menu—and took pride in the fact that more authentic Chinese food, as well as various Asian fusion cuisine, is selling now among a wider clientele. “It’s on the rise,” one restaurant worker told her. “You’ll see more and more places selling that, and able to charge higher prices.”

Itoh recorded all her interviews, along with b-roll of the restaurant interiors and the foods she ordered, including side-by-side comparisons of the same dish from the two menus, with a Canon DSLR

checked out from the college’s IT department, and edited a short film to accompany her written I.S.

“I want to give a voice and a face to these historically marginalized people,” she said. “Emphasizing their individual stories and experiences is crucial to my I.S.”







I.S. 2018

**Mass Melanin Movement:**

Black women's perceptions of body images and beauty ideals through analysis of reality television

**Major:**

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

**Mentor:**

Helis Sikk, Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

# Taking CONTROL

When Meonyez Goodwin decided to study the portrayals of black women in the media and how it impacts the way black women see themselves, she expected to find a strong connection. Instead, as she took control of her research process during her senior year, she found that the students she interviewed at Wooster don't subscribe to stereotypes.

Goodwin's inspiration for her Independent Study began with a sophomore communication class about gender, race, and the media. She was struck by how black women were always portrayed in TV and films in similar roles like servants or caretakers. "It was the first time I'd really reflected on my own experience as an active viewer. The historical representations of black women—the mammy, the jezebel, the sapphire—are still present in today's world. As a viewer we have the choice to take in those images and accept them or reject them." Goodwin referenced Kerry Washington's character on ABC's *Scandal* as an example of a black woman being

portrayed as a jezebel. Though she's a woman who is a lawyer and a leader, "You forget everything else she's doing because of her relationship with the president," said Goodwin. "It's hard to remember what she's capable of because her identity has been placed as the mistress."

Goodwin's research included interviews with black women on campus between the ages of 18 and 22. She incorporated theories from black writers and women's narratives including bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, and Patricia Hill Collins. With the popularity of Bravo's *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*, she expected the show would interest many of her peers. In the interviews, the answers the women gave surprised and encouraged her.

"It was my first time having the director role. I created and asked the questions for the interviews," said Goodwin. "Having control over the project was really important. I'm so used to having an assignment to follow. I had the whole year to do what I wanted and to talk to the people I wanted to talk to. That part was very freeing for me." Her questions included: "How do you perceive yourself? Do you get validation from men, women, your peers? How do you take in those images as they come into your life from ads, magazines, and TV?"



Right: Goodwin and some of the women she interviewed about how their perceptions are influenced by their peers, reality TV, and other media.

Surprisingly, she found that the students she interviewed didn't watch reality TV anymore. "They stopped because the images they portray of black women that look like them are so detrimental. They're always fighting, being disruptive

*“It was my first time having the director role. I created and asked the questions for the interviews.”* – Meonyez Goodwin

in restaurants, or displaying a hostile attitude. Show them succeeding in business, accomplishing a goal, or having a family,” Goodwin challenged. “I love that the women I interviewed have made their own definitions of beauty. They don’t listen to the media. Hearing them define themselves in a day and age where media and technology have such an influence is so inspiring for me. It shows there are still innovative, creative women out there who want to do their own thing.”

Going through the process of planning, conducting, and analyzing the interviews for her I.S. gave Goodwin a better impression of where she sees herself in the future. “I love it. I can definitely see myself interviewing, writing, and doing different ‘I.S.s’ in the future,” she said. In her immediate future she’s looking forward to a position in New Orleans, Louisiana, with Teach for America: “I can be the director of my classroom and help the students choose different studies or books that they may not have looked at before.”



Jack Marousek



I.S. 2018

*Alexa, Where's the Nearest Store?*

The relevance of brick and mortar retail in the age of e-commerce

**Major:**

Business Economics

**Mentor:**

Jim Burnell, Professor of Economics

Marousek stands at the site of a former Kmart that's closed its doors.

# E-Commerce Effect

Notice the empty storefronts popping up more and more frequently at your local mall or entire plazas becoming vacant? In various parts of northeast Ohio, Jack Marousek has, and he came up with a reasonable hypothesis to explain this trend: “e-commerce is reducing the demand for brick and mortar stores, which increases market area and reduces the number of shopping centers.”

Consumers, with just a few clicks or swipes on any device, can purchase most any good within the comfort of their home, and with the advent of localized distribution centers, Amazon and others can even deliver said purchase within hours to their doorstep. Thus, it's plausible to assume that these e-retailers are making a significant impact on the traditional way of shopping.

What Marousek—an executive board

member of the College's Jenny Investment Club and four-year letter-winner with the Fighting Scots' football team—found in his research actually suggests slowing down that thought process. Following a study of economic literature on a similar topic from 20 years ago—Walmart's impact on “mom and pop” stores—he developed models, utilizing market area theory and threshold theory. These equations, for example, help determine how the small city of Wooster can support three Subways, Marousek explained. “It starts to make sense when you look at this theory and how it's applied in the real world,” he said.

Marousek's models, which focused on the Cleveland and Akron metropolitan areas, attempted to determine if e-commerce became a significant influencer of retail real estate, in terms of “how many stores should be in a zip code as a function of the population and demand,” two variables traditionally used to



make those decisions. Surprisingly, the models, which tested whether the variables were less effective in explaining retail presence in 2015 than in 2012, did not reveal a “significant difference.”

While Marousek believes retailers are rethinking their strategies to incorporate technology, there remains a strong desire from enough consumers to make in-person purchases. “Ultimately, the result of my study is good news for physical real estate, as it doesn’t provide evidence that e-commerce is having an adverse effect,” he summed up.

Not yet anyway. One factor that Marousek warns very well may have affected the outcome was the available data, as his models were only able to compare 2012 and 2015 statistics from the U.S. census, and he thinks “this project would be way easier five years from now. Many of the problems with physical real estate have just recently come to the forefront.”

Marousek will likely be on the frontline of this developing topic. As an intern in real estate commercial lending at Key Bank in Dallas last summer, he got a first-hand account of how such difficult decisions are made. “The banks hesitate to lend towards retail real estate. It’s really tough to tell who’s going to succeed with competition from e-commerce,” he said. Impressed by his work during the internship, Key Bank offered Marousek an opportunity to begin in its management training program, which he intends to do starting this July.

**“The banks hesitate to lend towards retail real estate. It’s really tough to tell who’s going to succeed with competition from e-commerce”**

—Jack Marousek



I.S. 2018

*Adoption Across Cultures*

A comparative analysis of adoption attitudes between the United States and Honduras

*Major:*  
Sociology

*Mentor:*  
Olivia Navarro Farr, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Latin American Studies

# Understanding Cultural

I don't know if I'm the right person to do this research. I'm just really passionate about it," said Sidney Irias, a sociology major from Honduras studying how different factors affect the way people in her home country perceive adoption. As she thought about how to focus her I.S., she realized she'd never met someone in Honduras who was adopted. "It's not thought of in the same way," she said. "People don't think about bringing someone into their home who is not their blood."

With this realization and the support of Copeland Funding, Irias created a 15-question, multiple-choice survey and gathered data in private residences and in public settings in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Working with her advisor, Professor Olivia Navarro-Farr, Irias wrote the survey first in English for the Human Subjects Research Committee and then translated it to Spanish for the participants, keeping

in mind cultural differences particularly with questions about income level and religious background. She then asked focused questions about key factors including age, gender, religion, income, and education to reveal significant data about the participants' perceptions. "I never thought I would do a quantitative analysis, but it makes sense. It helps everything to be organized," said Irias. Though the political unrest in Honduras affected her data collection, nearly 100 people completed her survey and were eager to share their opinions on the subject. "People were very engaged with the survey and very vocal when they returned their answers to me," she said. The factor that showed the most significance in her analysis was education: "Those with a bachelor's, master's, or high school degree were more likely to have a positive attitude about adoption," she explained.

Top right: Irias personally collected responses to her survey in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.



# Perspectives

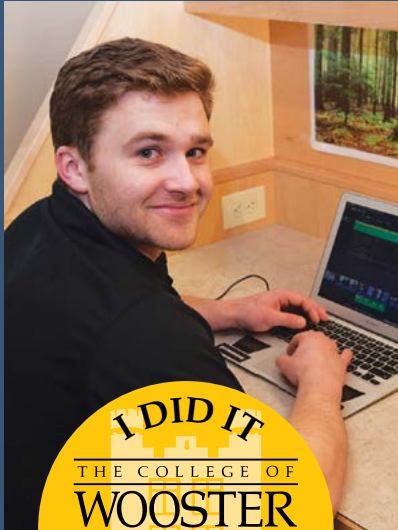
But not every factor revealed a significant difference. “If I could do this research again, I would do it for like three years,” said Irias. “I would explore how race is divided in Honduras and how it could be used as a sample to compare with U.S. data. Here, there are very specific groups, but what does it mean to be white in Honduras?” Her project stirred a passion for research and discovery. “I love doing research. You think you have everything figured out, but there’s always more to learn. It’s so important to do research on other countries,” she said. “It helps you to access and understand different cultures and perspectives. It broadens your mind and helps you to be a better scholar and a better person, too.”

*“It’s so important to do research on other countries. It helps you to access and understand different cultures and perspectives. It broadens your mind and helps you to be a better scholar and a better person too.”*

— Sidney Irias



## Jack Gilio



I.S. 2018

### *Brooklyn: A Toxic Tour.*

Using a five-part environmental inspection to advocate for environmental justice

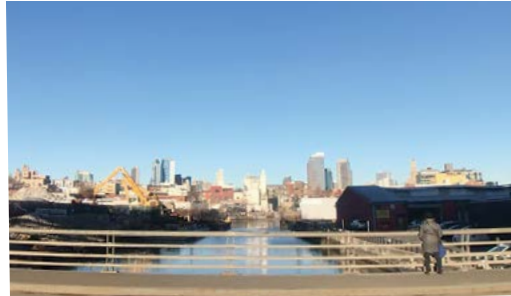
### *Major:*

Communication Studies

### *Mentor:*

Denise Bostdorff, Professor of Communication

Above are stills from Gilio's documentary that shows a closer look at a toxic tour site in Brooklyn.



# Environmental Injustice

Of the various social justice movements taking place, one that tends to get overlooked, or at least receives less media attention than others, is environmental justice. Jack Gilio is trying to change that, having made a documentary film of a toxic tour as part of his Independent Study.

As a youngster in New Canaan, Connecticut, Gilio enjoyed going on hikes and taking advantage of his surrounding environment, but he grew to realize that many others don't have such an opportunity. Not only that, those from marginalized populations are often exposed to environmental waste, which impacts their livelihood.

"It is a fact that minority communities are disproportionately exposed to pollution, waste runoff, radioactive burials, oil spills, etc.," he stated. "Why do these always happen to occur in these neighborhoods, or in rural or urban environments where minority communities are surrounding them? How can these big industrial companies constantly mishandle their waste?"

Gilio, majoring in communication studies with a minor in English, and a captain on

the lacrosse team, set out to learn more and paired it with his other passion—filmmaking. First, he discovered toxic tours, which are non-commercial tours in locales that highlight communities facing contamination, and to Gilio's surprise, one such tour, "Environmental Justice in Gowanus," is just a short train ride from his suburban home.

In Brooklyn, there's an area called Sunset Park, where higher levels of cancer, lung disease, and heart and respiratory issues have been reported and even teenagers are reaching puberty faster than their peers. "This is a real thing. People are potentially almost dying from this. I have to do something about this," Gilio thought.

During winter break, Gilio, armed simply with an iPhone 7, Gizmo camera stabilizer, and lens kit as his video camera, took the train in daily and saw "this complete other side of Brooklyn," quickly scouting out some ideal shots for his documentary. "There's just this expanse of companies that have completely taken over the residential areas, and then there's this intersection and the other side is all industry. That's why these things happen because they're so close together. Around 3 or 4, when the children are leaving school, I look



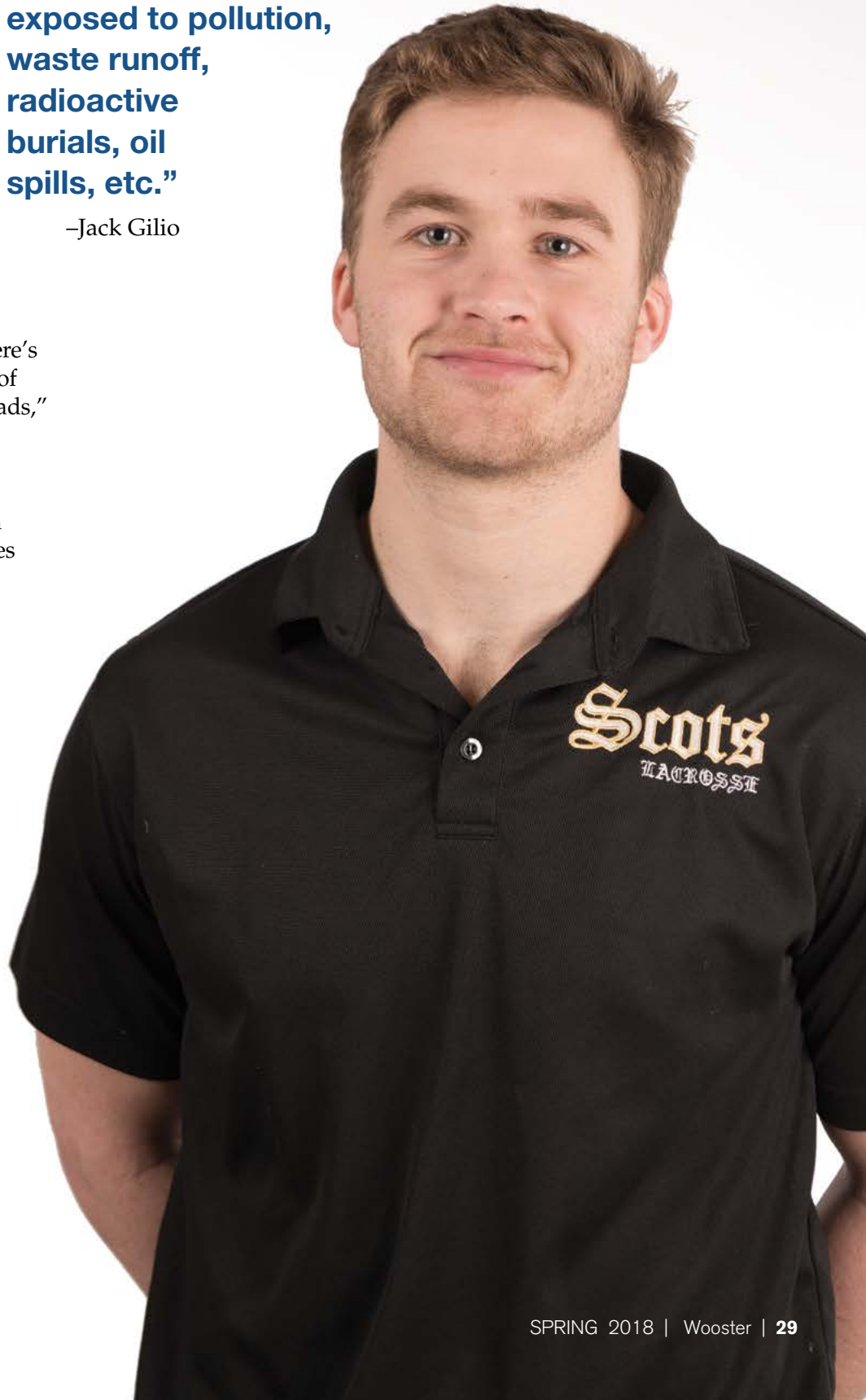
**“It is a fact that minority communities are disproportionately exposed to pollution, waste runoff, radioactive burials, oil spills, etc.”**

—Jack Gilio

over just a block, two blocks to the left, and there’s a completely shut down intersection because of radioactive decay that’s rising up under the roads,” he described in one vivid example.

A self-taught filmmaker and editor, Gilio has produced a scholarly visual documentary of a toxic tour, and he hopes like-minded advocates will showcase it to further the cause. He has identified 10 Brooklyn-area, grass-roots environmental groups that the film might be useful to, and he’ll be entering it into film festivals and amateur film contests. “Anything to raise awareness,” says Gilio, who plans to further explore his love for film and storytelling in Vancouver—a popular film-making spot—after graduation.

One key to garnering more attention for this movement, which he clearly lays out in the project, is “to change public perception first of what the environment is by defining the term simply as ‘the place where we live, work, and play,’ not this beautiful imagery of a large piece of untouched land,” he said. “There need to be films that focus on rural environments, urban environments that have an inherently-connected human relationship to them.” If Gilio can successfully accomplish that goal, then he believes environmental justice will follow.





A typical day at work for Judy (Applegate) Strand '78, chief executive officer of Metropolitan Family Service in Portland, Oregon, is about building systems that support members of the community who struggle from a lack of resources, inequity and social isolation. The day could include partnering with community leaders and state officials to maximize social service impact as well as visiting the sites of programs designed to build an

world," said Strand. "When you're in the field of social work, the academics help, they give you the theory base, the history of the field, and some tools and skills, but the true work is on the ground. Having the ability to go to Portland and be part of the urban quarter was transformational for me."

Working with Friendly House Senior Service Center,

## All Aboard! Constructing a Platform

Writing by Caitlin Paynich

inclusive society. When she's on the phone or in a meeting in her office, she often looks at a picture she keeps on her desk of Ray Day—a man she credits with helping to inspire her current career and one of the founders of the urban studies major at The College of Wooster.

"When I look at the photo I remember how Dr. Day used to say, 'What we do is we help others help themselves.'" Strand said. "The teaching and mentorship I had from him informed everything else I learned after it."

During her junior year at Wooster, Strand, along with 10-12 classmates traveled to Portland for their urban quarter, a field experience dimension of the urban studies and sociology program developed by Day and his colleagues in 1968 that allowed students to spend time off campus living and working in urban locations across the country. Day had come to Wooster as professor of sociology in 1966, after 20 years of experience in urban church and social welfare work. In 1955, *Life* magazine featured an article about his work as former director of the Beacon House and the VISTA program in Chicago. The connections and contacts he forged with social agencies, churches, and organizations throughout the U.S. acted as pathways for Wooster students to practical, real-world experience in urban settings.

"Dr. Day was unique in his ability to establish a national network of hosts. My urban quarter opened the door to learning and growth that could only happen in the real

an organization that continues to serve older adults in Portland today, Strand had her first casework experience as an undergraduate supporting older adults who were isolated and needed assistance. She remembers working closely with an older man to maintain his independence despite his health issues and other conflicts. "He kept his entire life savings under his bed. One day he was found unconscious and transported to the hospital," said Strand. After he woke up, "He was livid because his life savings was at home unprotected. I learned that lesson you learn in social work which is that you have to honor the self determination of your clients," Strand said, explaining that she wheeled him home 20 blocks in his wheel chair and bought him some butter brickle ice cream. "I needed to support him and regain his trust, so he wouldn't close us out at a time in his life when he needed us the most. The experience taught me what it was like to help others in a way that was first and foremost respectful of their individual choices."

Strand says she's always been interested in supporting and helping others. "Ever since I was a child, I wanted everyone to be included," she said. "I was the one who played with the children who were shunned on the playground. It bothered me when people were left out." Today, she sees herself and her colleagues as ambassadors who bring people together through the work of organizations like Metropolitan Family Service. "When we do this, everybody gets a chance to meet their potential and people often exceed their wildest dreams. When we don't include

A young child with a nose ring is the central focus of the background image, being held by two hands. In the foreground, a woman in a black dress is speaking at a podium. The scene is set at a formal event.

# of Equality

## Alumna Judy Strand '78 Creates Systems to Support an Inclusive Society

Strand presents at "A Gathering of Good 2017"  
an annual benefit for Metropolitan Family Service.  
Photos provided by Metropolitan Family Service

everybody, we're missing something," she said. "It is a sad reality that many people are excluded because of wealth disparity, ageism, racism, and other forms of injustice in our society which is why repairing those gaps by providing a platform for equal access to services, resources, and viable avenues for personal advancement is so important."

After she completed her urban quarter, Strand spent an additional three months during the summer living and working in Portland before returning to Wooster. Her Independent Study compared and analyzed centralized and decentralized social service delivery systems. Initially, she expected to immediately complete a master's in social work, but after her urban quarter experience, she decided to spend more time in the field. "I then understood how powerful it was to work in a community and see the clients. I understood how the practice of social work builds upon the power of understanding people's needs, strengths and challenges through the lens of that person's experience," she said. "I knew I wanted to get an MSW, but I wanted to get more experience before choosing a specialty, and I don't think I would have done that without the experience from urban quarter." After spending five years working in New Jersey and also in Wooster for social service agencies in mental health, child protective services, and older adult services, she purposefully chose a master's program at Portland State University. "I wanted to come back here where I had been so inspired," she said, and when she received her degree, it was Day, then residing on the West Coast, who hooded her during the ceremony.

Her inspiration to further her experience in Portland led her to a position at Mt. Hood Mental Health Center (now Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare) where her concern about disparities for older adults heightened. "Society segments out older adults in a very unfortunate way, particularly in mental health," said Strand. At the time she realized that although mental health issues are prevalent among older adults, only 3.5 percent of the organization's clients were older adults. Addressing the gap in the system, she helped develop a mental health service for older adults. "The Gatekeeper Program, originally developed in Spokane, Washington, trains mail carriers, garbage collectors, bankers and others directly interacting with older people day-to-day to notice signs of possible distress and refer

a response team. A multi-disciplinary team from aging, health, and mental health fields also worked collaboratively to intervene and assist many older adults with symptoms previously not noticed or not fully understood," she said. "The amazing thing to me is that the multi-disciplinary teams proliferated and grew from the one pilot program our team developed, to the four teams functioning today."

Today, as CEO at Metropolitan Family Service, a position she has held for six years after first joining the organization as chief operating officer, Strand steers an organization driven by a mission to "help people overcome the limitations of poverty, inequity and social isolation." She is excited about being able to grow the

success of already thriving programs in early childhood education and youth

**"It's inspiring. At this level of leadership, the connection with other**

– Judy Strand '78

success, economic well-being, and health and wellness. In 2017, Strand also became a fellow of the Oregon American Leadership Forum after being nominated by the community's United Way. A national program, the forum brings leaders around the state together to learn how to work across differences. "It's inspiring," said Strand. "At this level of leadership, the connection with other leaders builds a wider impact. It's remarkable to see what can happen when a strong group of dedicated professionals, united in a service to their community, blaze pathways for social change."

Strand has a passion for initiatives that become drivers of success in the community, whether through supporting literacy, narrowing the achievement gap for youth from communities of color, engaging older adults as volunteers, or allowing families to get a foothold on driving their own future. She sees building these pathways and opportunities creating a platform for equal access. "We can create something that's much more equitable in our community than it ever was before," she said, "so that the idea of equality has a chance to move from a concept to reality."



leaders builds a wider impact.”



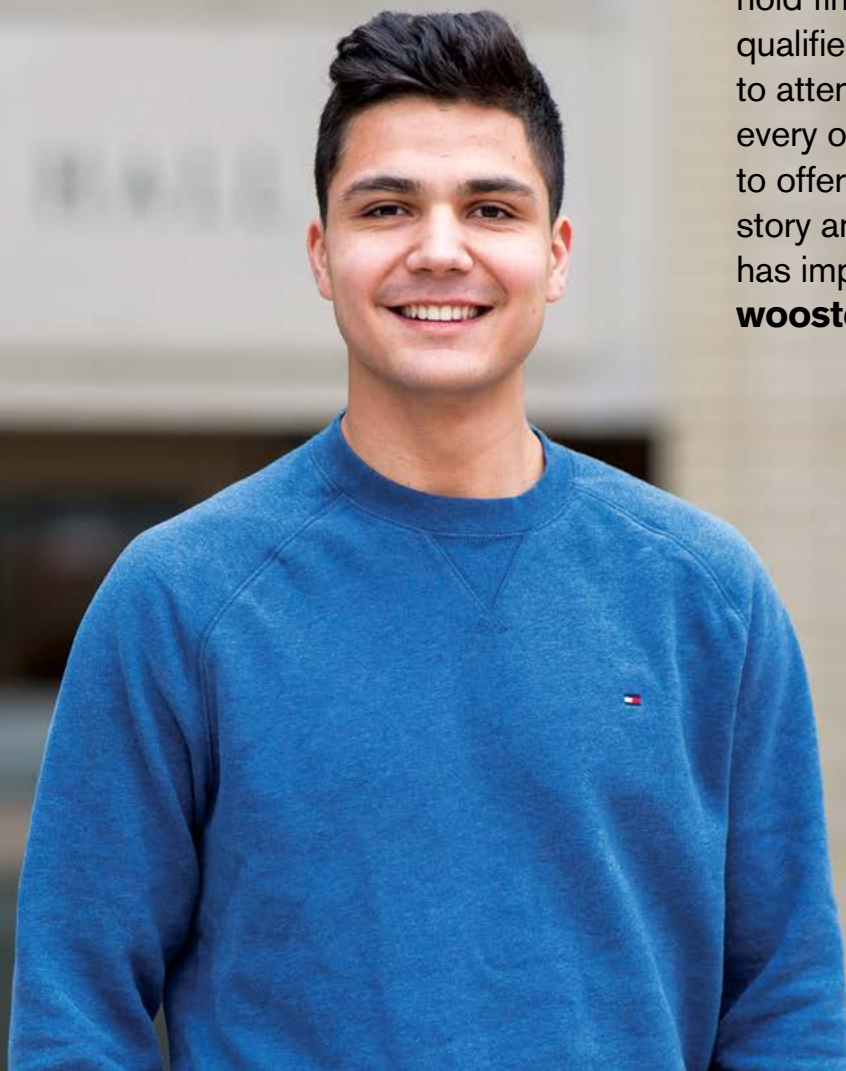
Clockwise from top: Strand visits with staff and clients who are part of MFS Community School; Ray Day, emeritus professor of sociology; Strand plays with some of her organization's youngest clients during a visit to an early learning and parent engagement program.

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*“Financial aid has allowed me to come to The College of Wooster. To me, Wooster has opened many doors of opportunities.”*

– Paulo Nunes '20, biochemistry and molecular biology major



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## *In Closing*

### **Senior Research Symposium 2018**

Born and raised in Hanoi, Vietnam, Vy Vu acted as a leader on campus, advocating for respectful relationships, international students, and students of color. Her senior Independent Study explored “the concept of love as a powerful force that drives people to engage in justice dialogues and organize social movements” through critical analysis, a collection of fiction and poetry, and her artwork. Displayed in The College of Wooster Art Museum during the Senior Research Symposium, the installation examines the racial tension in America through historical and current events and further portrays historical social movements.



**Vy Vu** *Cosmopolitan Love: Contextualizing  
and Reimagining Race in America*  
*Majors: English and Studio Art*

*Mentors: Anthony Tognazzini, Visiting Assistant  
Professor of English and Bridget Milligan,  
Associate Professor of Art & Art History*