

Two ASPECT doctoral students, Leigh KcKagen and Shelby Ward, presented papers at “Narrating International Relations: Exploring Narrative as Concept and Method,” a workshop sponsored by the British International Studies Association and held at the University of Hamburg in Germany, August 26–27. McKagen presented “Writing Imperial Futures: Domination Narratives in Science Fiction Television,” and Ward presented “Mapping as Narrative: Sri Lankan Tourist Maps as a Story of Neocolonial International Relations.”


The Department of Communication was the recipient of a $100,000 pledge from alumnus Will Stewart to create an endowed scholarship to support students in the department’s sports media and analytics program. Stewart is the found of TechSideline.com, a website devoted to Virginia Tech athletics. Sports Media and Analytics was approved as a degree option in Multimedia Journalism in 2017.
Nicholas Copeland, Sociology, was awarded a Core Fulbright Scholar Program grant to study sustainable food programs in Guatemala. The University of San Carlos in Guatemala City serves as his Fulbright host institution, and he works as a consultant for FUNDEBASE, a nongovernmental organization that promotes sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty in the region. Copeland has expanded his research into a multiyear project, which includes collaborations with colleagues in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Natasha Cox, a doctoral student in Human Development and Family Science, received the 2018 Jessie Bernard Outstanding Research Proposal from a Feminist Perspective Award for her dissertation proposal, “Becoming a Black Man: A Qualitative Examination of Identity Management, Sense of Belonging, and Informal Support Systems of Black Transmen.” The competitive award is sponsored by the Feminism and Family Studies section of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR); it includes a cash prize, a plaque, conference registration funding, travel allowance, and complimentary books. Cox will present her research findings at the 2019 NCFR Annual Conference.

Megan Dolbin-MacNab, Human Development and Family Science, was elected by the Gerontological Society of America as a Fellow in its Behavioral and Social Sciences Section. Fellows are nominated by peers for work advancing the study of aging through research, administration, and teaching. MacNab’s research focuses on grandparents who have to raise their grandchildren because of the impact of the opioid addiction epidemic. She will be recognized as a new Fellow at the society’s 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting in Boston in November.


Matthew Gabriele, Professor of Religion and Culture, has been appointed Chair of the Department of Religion and Culture. Gabriele co-edited Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages (Oxon, United Kingdom, and New York, New York: Routledge, 2018), with James Palmer. His individual contribution to the volume was “This Time. Maybe This Time. Biblical Commentary, Monastic Historiography, and Lost Cause-ism at the Turn of the First Millennium,” pp. 183–203.
Nick Gowen, a master’s student in Counselor Education, published “Vocational Wellness in Older Adulthood: Research and Practice” on August 1 in Career Convergence, an online web magazine published by the National Career Development Association.


Ariel Gunn, a senior majoring in German and Industrial and Systems Engineering, was selected as a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) 2018-2019 Young Ambassador; she is one of 33 undergraduates in North America chosen for this honor. Young Ambassadors have studied or interned recently in Germany and are interested in promoting study in Germany at their home universities and colleges. Gunn, who spent the 2016–2017 academic year at the Karlsruhe Institut für Technologie, is the sixth Virginia Tech student to be selected to participate in this program; Virginia Tech has had continuous participation since 2011.

James Hawdon, Sociology and Director of the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention, was awarded $170,000 over three years from the National Science Foundation for “ATD: Forecasting Threats Due to Polarization Using Patio-Temporal Topic Flows.” Shyam Ranganathan, Statistics, serves as Principal Investigator, with Hawdon, Peter Hauck, and Scotland Leman as co-Principal Investigators. The project is aligned with the Integrated Security Destination Area.


The Center for Humanities celebrated its official launch on August 31 at The Inn at Virginia Tech. The center, directed by Sylvester Johnson, Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture and Assistant Vice Provost for the Humanities, serves to elevate the presence and profile of humanities disciplines across the university. It will provide programs that support faculty fellowships, departmental grants, and events in the humanities and is committed to building on collaborations across the university.


The composition “The Book of Strange Positions” and several rock arrangements for two violins by Eric Lyon, School of Performing Arts, were performed by String Noise as part of the “Artists at Noguchi/Bang on a Can” series in New York City on August 12.

Richard Masters, School of Performing Arts, served from June 13 to July 22 as associate head coach for the Pittsburgh Festival Opera, where he coached young singers and mainstage artists, played rehearsals, and performed in the orchestra for productions of Wagner’s Das Rheingold and Richard Strauss’s Arabella. In addition, Masters was invited to be part of the faculty at the Druid City Opera Workshop at the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa May 16–24 and to serve as music director for the Blacksburg Summer Arts Festival Production of Fiorello! from July 23 to August 11.

ASPECT doctoral student Leigh McKagen published “‘To Boldly Go!’ Adventure and Empire in Star Trek” on the “Imperial and Global Forum” on June 14 as part of a roundtable on Science Fiction and Imperial History.


The compositions of Charles Nichols, School of Performing Arts, were presented in three venues in August. On August 9 he performed his compositions Anselmo and What Bends, for electric violin, interactive computer music, and processed video, in collaboration with video artists Jay Bruns/noway and Zach Duer, and presented a workshop on composing for spatial
audio at the Audio Engineering Society International Conference on Spatial Reproduction, through the 5.1.4-channel immersive audio system in the 100th Anniversary Hall of Tokyo Denki University in Tokyo, Japan. At the same conference, his *Shakespeare’s Garden*, for processed environmental sounds, recited poetry, and video of the art installation, a collaboration with directors **Amanda Nelson** and **Natasha Staley** and lighting designer **John Ambrosone**, School of Performing Arts, was played continually through the 22.2-channel immersive audio system in Studio B of Tokyo University of the Arts on August 8 and 9. Nichols’ composition *Beyond the Dark*, for computer music and video of the Dense Space art installation, a collaboration with architect Paola Zellner Bassett, was also played continually at the International Computer Music Conference, on the Lotte Facade jumbotron in Daegu, Korea, August 6–10.

**Ashley Reichelmann**, Sociology, was awarded an NSF RAPID Grant of $50,000 to study the impact of a newly developed large-scale memorial. Through a survey of the residents of the surrounding community, the project focuses on understanding how this memorial to victims of past collective violence affects individuals socially, emotionally, and politically as well as impacts interactions between group members at the individual and the community level. Nationally, the results provide the opportunity to determine the role and use of memorialization in intergroup relations. Co-principal investigators are Sociology faculty members **James Hawdon**, Director of the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention, and **John Ryan**, department chair.


**Karen Roberto**, University Distinguished Professor of Human Development and Family Science and Director of the Institute for Society, Culture and Environment, published *Community Resources for Older Adults: Programs and Services in an Era of Change*, fifth edition (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2019), with Robbyn Wacker. Roberto and Wacker also received the 2018 Cornerstone Author award from Sage, which honors first-rate scholarship, quality writing, and lasting impact of the work.


Natasha Staley, School of Performing Arts, served as Voice and Text Director for the summer productions of William Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the New Swan Shakespeare Festival in Irvine, California; public performances took place July 13 through September 1.


Janell Watson, Professor of French, was appointed Chair of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures.


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