Welcome to the first issue of The Gould Gazette! In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Gould Center regularly published a newsletter (then called *Happenings in the Humanities*), but the practice seems to have been abandoned for at least the last decade. As we start the 2020s, we thought we’d resume the practice, and we hope to publish the Gazette at least once a year. We certainly have a lot to report!

It was a busy fall semester for the Gould Center. We started several new initiatives, including our Humanities Labs (see page 6) — one supervised by Professor Rima Basu on “Great Expectations” and one supervised by Professor Kevin Moffett on “Imagining Los Angeles.” We supported a bunch of students working on research, including five students working one-on-one with individual professors, and a larger group working on a project about “Understanding Fake News About North Korea” with Professor Mike Izbicki (see page 13). We hosted our second annual Humanities Halloween (see page 12) and our first ever Humanities Case Competition (see page 10).

We also continue to support excursions to art, music, and other cultural events in the greater LA area. We supported a student trip to the Red Nation International Film Festival, organized by Professor Sarah Sarzynski. We sent 30 students to a performance at the Music Center of George Balanchine’s Jewels, performed by the Mariinsky Ballet. This trip was co-sponsored by the Keck Center, and student demand for tickets far exceeded our supply. This coming spring, in partnership with the Salvatori Center, we will send 20 students to a performance of the play “What the Constitution Means to Me” at the Mark Taper Forum.

As always, we sponsored several Ath programs in the fall semester. Kiese Laymon, author of the memoir *Heavy*, gave a compelling presentation in early November that asked audience members to think seriously about issues of race. Michele Moody-Adams, the Joseph Straus Professor of Political Philosophy and Legal Theory at Columbia University, spoke on “How Imagination Creates Space for Social Change,” one of two keynote addresses for the Gould-sponsored conference on Imagination and Social Change (see page 9). We were also pleased to be able to co-sponsor the visit by Tara Westover, the author of *Educated*, who spoke to a packed house and kicked off this year’s Ath programming in early September.

This year we continued our collaboration with the Poetry Center Board of Advisors

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Russell K. Pitzer Professor of Philosophy
Claremont McKenna College

Gould Center Associate Director
Esther Chung Kim

Assistant to the Directors
Janna Shwaiko
What engendered your passion for Religious Studies/the humanities?

My passion for religious studies stems from the fact that religion can be a source for understanding most cultures. It often represents not only a nation’s values and moral views but also what matters to them, more broadly. It affects how individuals behave, how they live, and how they interact with the world at large. Regarding the humanities, I believe that trying to understand the people of the world, in general, requires consideration of the humanities. It is one of the few academic areas that allows for expansive intellectual exploration. A lot of other disciplines provide a narrow or specific way to learn technical things, but the humanities pushes you to understand the world in a way that is not limited to exact boundaries. Society’s largest dilemmas are not simple problems and sometimes they have no simple solution. Because of the topics that the humanities encompass, it transcends particular times and cultures. People who study the humanities, as a result, really get the broad education necessary to understand the world around them in its complexity.

What Gould projects interest/inspire you the most?

I am excited to be planning the summer sponsored internships because I know that internships are really popular amongst CMC students. I feel like internships, here, are typically considered the way to build your resume, get job experience, or taste a variety of different jobs. The sponsored internship opportunities through Gould are a specifically good way to demonstrate what can be done with a humanities degree and to explore the many jobs that humanities’ skills can provide. Humanities students get a lot of pressure to not major in the humanities because people think that the disciplines are not marketable, so I am pretty inspired by the quantity and quality of sponsored internships that I’ve found thus far. The process of locating these internships, also, has affirmed that organizations are really interested in well qualified CMC students within the humanities.

Before working at Gould, what was the most unusual or interesting job/experience you’ve ever had?

The most interesting job that I had before teaching was a job where, as part of a team, I travelled around the country interviewing Korean American youth. We went to a lot of places that I had never even heard of and I got to see diverse ethnic communities throughout the nation. Even though I was only talking to one ethnic group there was a lot of variation. Korean Americans in the South, for example, mixed Korean traditions with Southern hospitality. The trip forced me to reflect on the different ways that the US is set up culturally, socially, and economically. It was particularly eye opening because as an American I had assumed that people around the nation in a similar subculture would have comparable experiences but even through the lens of a subset, I came to realize how big and diverse the country is. Different pockets within different regions also changed depending on their socioeconomic status. Areas with a lot of interracial marriages added an additional component. I made me realize that no individual demographic is monolithic.

How would you describe yourself, especially in relation to your professional life/work?

I am currently a professor and have been for the last twelve years. I would say that it really fits me and my personality. I like the rhythm—
the interactions which range from meetings with college students to professors that are scholars in my field. Through this, I am required to keep talking to different audiences which pushes me to be a better communicator both professionally and in my everyday life. Some people think that once you are a university professor you become mainly focused on being an expert in a particular subject but, in reality, you have to adapt your expression of knowledge to a range of people which makes professorship a process of consistent learning. I have really enjoyed having great colleagues and interacting with people in fields that are different, but also related to my own. In general, I am interested in a lot of different things so having access to so many people that are passionate about sharing information is fun. I like the flexibility of the life schedule. Professors at the 5Cs often talk about self-care and while teaching is demanding, there is great potential for balance. I also really like the idea of being a lifelong learner. When you’re in a college setting, you have to keep learning and CMC, specifically, makes it an easy place to continue growing because they value research and teaching and try to support faculty in both.

What is on your wish list for the legacy of the Gould Center?

I hope that the Gould Center continues to think about how the humanities works within the greater world. The humanities disciplines allow students to critically analyze content and interrogate how information gets passed into the world. I hope the Gould becomes a hub on campus, for people to connect with ideas and with one another. It is one of the only centers that is the research hub for five disciplines and majors which allows for a creative interdisciplinary approach which will become more important as time goes on. I hope that the Gould Center will have a legacy of integration of the humanities in the real world, intellectual discourse and creative expression, and helpful interdisciplinary discussions for collaborative problem-solving. In these ways, the Gould Center will continue to support humanities students and faculty.
The Gould Center’s Student Advisory Board is a group of seven CMC students representing all class years who share enthusiasm about promoting engagement with the humanities on campus. The group meets regularly with the Gould’s student managers to brainstorm and get feedback on ideas for the Center’s programming. Each student has chosen some initiatives to work on carrying out over the course of the year.

This fall, Henry Schulz ’22 worked on a collaboration with the Salvatori Center which culminated in the production of a research poster titled, “Hamlet and Hamburgers: Shakespeare’s Influence on Formative Figures in American History.” Sophie Grossman CM ’23 has taken over running the Gould’s Social Media. The whole board is engaged in a variety of up-and-coming initiatives: among them, an art print exchange which will involve soliciting and giving away student artwork, increased programming aimed at exposing first year students to opportunities in the humanities, and a video series for our social media which will feature humanities faculty.

The board also plays a vital role in the Center’s series of ongoing programming—Faculty Chats and the Humanities at Work series—by bringing in new ideas and helping plan and run events. Faculty Chats
take place monthly in the Gould Center and create a casual setting for students to engage in conversation with a humanities professor over breakfast. Humanities at Work encompasses all of the Center’s programming related to careers and other opportunities outside of college, which includes skill workshops geared toward humanities majors and creating opportunities for alumnae, parents, and students to speak about their experiences working in humanities-related fields. In the fall, our Board member David Black P’19 kicked off this series with a discussion of the publishing industry.

Colloquium of the Literature Department, organized by Professor Henri Cole. This fall we sponsored an event featuring Forest Gander, a Pulitzer Prize winning poet. This spring we have just sponsored an event featuring former Poet Laureate Robert Haas and Brenda Hillman.

As part of our ongoing efforts to support and recognize faculty scholarship in the humanities, this fall we hosted receptions honoring recent publications by two professors. In October we celebrated the publication of two books edited by Professor Robert Faggen, former Director of the Gould Center. These books, published by the Gould Center, commemorate the public works of art on CMC’s campus by Ellsworth Kelly and Chris Burden. In December we celebrated the publication of *Herbs and Roots: A History of Chinese Doctors in the American Medical Marketplace* by Tamara Venit Shelton. In discussing this book, her second, Professor Venit Shelton told attendees about the archival and investigatory work that went into fleshing out the previously untold story of Chinese medicine in the US.

I have the pleasure and privilege of working with an exceptional group of students at the Gould Center. This fall we re-instituted the long-dormant practice of having a Gould Center Student Advisory Board, and this year we have a group of seven active and engaged students working on a whole host of different humanities-related initiatives of their own design. Some are working on a faculty video series, some have been organizing faculty chats, some have collaborated with the Salvatori Center on a project linking Shakespeare and various figures from American History. And much more. You can read more about the Student Advisory Board on page 4. The Student Advisory Board is led by the Gould Center’s three student managers—Allie Gould ’20, Grace Kelleher ’20, and Nirel MitchellJones ’20. These three students have played a central role in everything happening at the Center, and they are also responsible for having produced a great deal of the content in this Gazette. My deepest gratitude goes out to them for all the work they do.

I was also delighted to welcome Professor Esther Chung-Kim to the Gould Center team this past semester. Esther is serving a two-year term as Associate Director, and in this role she is supervising the Creative Works Fellowship program (see page 3) and our Summer Internship Program. You can read an interview with her on page 2.

There’s much more I could report, but this should give a good sense of what we’ve been up to of late. You can read much more in the pages that follow. And if course if you have any questions about the work of the Center, please feel to get in touch.

Until our next issue!

Amy Kind

Director, Gould Center for Humanistic Studies

Russell K. Pitzer Professor of Philosophy

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### The 2019-2020 Advisory Board

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<td>’23</td>
<td>Cognitive Science &amp; Economics</td>
<td>Fort Collins, Colorado</td>
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<td>Abby Gilliland</td>
<td>’21</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>Sophie Grossman</td>
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<td>Rachel Keady</td>
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<td>Jake Leischner</td>
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<td>Amanda Mell</td>
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<td>Henry Schulz</td>
<td>’22</td>
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<td>New York, New York</td>
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Great Expectations
Professor Rima Basu

Prof. Basu: First, Prof. Basu will be writing a research paper on the relationship of doxastic influence between parents and children that explores the shape of the epistemic responsibilities we have towards one another. Second, she will create a paper for the APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies called “What Is It Like to Be a Philosopher of Asian Descent?”

Ajitha Anand ’22 and Gayle Lee ’20: Ajitha and Gayle are both each individually exploring the theme of the lab through a collection of essays reflecting on identity and expectations.

Katherine Almendarez ’22: Katherine is exploring the Central American immigrant experience through the medium of art and poetry in order to deliver a message that uplifts the Central American community.

Raj Bhutoria ’22 and Jefferson Chang ’22: In a project titled "Asian-American Family Expectations Across Generations: Comparison and Contrast" Raj and Jefferson plan to conduct interviews with immigrant families to explore how the life expectations held by Asian-Americans parents differ from the expectations imposed on children; and how their children view these expectations in response—impacting their relationship with their parents, their life goals, and their own expectations for their future children.

Sophie Grossman ’23: Sophie is creating a video series titled “People of the 5C’s” that interviews groups of students across the colleges and asks them to reflect on polarizing topics that shape both their community and their self-identity.

Sabrina Hartono ’21: Sabrina is interested in the traditional stories and texts that were meant to be “how-to” manuals of proper conduct—as a person, according to one’s gender, place in the social hierarchy and in the family, and many more. In her first project, “Battle Hymn of the Boar and the Ox” Sabrina plans to present an art piece jigsaw collection that explores the roles or duties that children are expected to have in building the family, and how much children’s actions should be accountable to their parents. In her second project, Sabrina plans to update the “The Admonition Scrolls of the Instructress to the Court Ladies (女史箴圖)” to reflect on the ways that one is expected to “behave” in the modern era.

Anne Jang ’21: Anne plans to conduct a series of interviews and discussions with her immigrant parents to write a reflection on whether or not it is fair for parents to have expectations for their children and to what extent and how those expectations have impacted the formation of her identity.

Nirel Jones-Mitchell ’20: In “69°: An Exploration of American Conventional and Unconventional Intimate Bonds,” Nirel is using philosophical and psychological texts related to capitalism and love in order to create a scrapbook collection of poems, essays, and collages that aim to illuminate how she has crafted her identity as an intimate being.

Jack Stern ’23: In an extended research paper Jack intends to explore the question of how love changes the expectations of relationships and
how love could be the primary source of value that underlies important questions in morality.

**Tiffany Teng ’21:** Tiffany is interested in exploring the influence of pre-college expectations on how much freshmen students in college achieve their academic and social goals. To do this, she plans to interview several freshmen to see how they compare to nationwide trends with regard to these expectations.

**Imagining Los Angeles**  
**Professor Kevin Moffett**

**Prof. Moffett:** Prof. Moffett is currently working on a novel-length meditation related to memory, childhood, and aging in the Inland Empire, called City of Trees.

**Axel Ahdritz ’22:** Axel will focus on constructing a genealogy of the new “spiritual consumerism” in L.A., excavating the religious groups, immigrant communities, and artists that have formed a secular, new-age spirituality, as well as the companies that have sold it.

**Mariela Centeno ’23:** Mariela will interview Los Angeles residents that have been affected by gentrification as well as gentrification experts in order to create a list of techniques in which both parties can end up content about creating a brighter future related to the city’s housing crisis.

**Nate Coffin ’22, Miles Bernhard ’21, and Ahnaf Taha ’22:** The goal of Nate, Miles, and Ahnaf’s project is to understand how Los Angeles’ hip-hop culture establishes new generations of leaders for the city’s youth. Additionally, they will analyze how hip-hop has, and will continue to, captivate and motivate the people of Los Angeles.

**David Gushue ’22:** Last semester, David researched various literary works involving the neighborhoods of Los Angeles. He honed in on the different characteristics that each author assigned to the individual areas. Now, he aims to write his own collection of short stories that include the zeitgeist of Los Angeles neighborhoods during different time periods--highlighting, specifically, the theme of isolationism in such a large city.

**Alex Karasinski ’22:** Alex is researching how Los Angeles has shaped the rise of street fashion, exploring how people’s perceptions of the city reflect on the expression of style, and—ultimately—determining the present-day defining characteristics of an ‘LA brand’.

**Hunter Kettering ’20:** Hunter is investigating the emerging LA artist scene, specifically looking at who the artists are, their approach to art (including medium choice, style characteristics, etc.), how they feel about working in LA, and how the evolving art gallery's business models are influencing their practices. Collectively, he hopes to shed light on the identity of LA as it pertains to the city's artistic heritage and future.

**Amanda Mell ’20:** Amanda is studying the ways in which aspiring screenwriters fit into the schema of Los Angeles and how their personal qualities as well as the influence of their communities have intersected in a way that ultimately culminated in the decision to follow a creative career path.

**Rachel Podl ’22:** Rachel will be examining the special education system in Los Angeles by interviewing directors of various schools and programs for children and teens with developmental disabilities. She plans to inquire about what innovative programs organizations are providing to children with disabilities, as well as what gaps lie within the special education system in Los Angeles and whether or not they are unique to the city.

**Reilly Scott ’22:** Reilly decided to look into climate change action in LA which, currently, has a Green New Deal including ambitious goals like electrifying the city 100% by 2030. To accomplish their goals, the LA government has partnered with a wide array of businesses and nonprofits and she, in her project, plans to highlight the work of her favorite partners.
SPRING HIGHLIGHTS AT THE ATH

February 10, 2020

Nikole Hannah-Jones
Golo Mann Lecture
“How and Why Public Schools are (Still) Divided by Race”

Nikole Hannah-Jones, a New York Times investigative journalist, MacArthur Award recipient, and lead-writer for The 1619 Project, has written extensively on the history of racism, school re-segregation, and the disarray of hundreds of desegregation orders. Her deeply personal account, which became the basis of a New York Times feature piece, of her own experience as a parent in New York City's public school system shows that school segregation is not an isolated phenomenon but rather a defining factor of most cities across the country.

April 7, 2020

MacArthur Fellow Saidiya Hartman
Quinones Lecture
“An Evening with Saidiya Hartman”


April 22, 2020

Thomas Cahill
Lerner Lecture
“Judeo-Christian Roots of Moral Responsibility in American Politics”

Thomas Cahill, celebrated author many books on “hinge moments in history,” is best known for taking on a broad scope of complex history and distilling it into an accessible, illuminating and entertaining narrative. His lively, engaging writing animates cultures that existed up to five millennia ago, revealing the lives of his principal characters with insight and joy. He writes history, not in its usual terms of war and atrocity, but by inviting his audience into an ancient world to commune with some of the most influential people who ever lived and to understand their contribution to the our world.
The Gould Center hosted a conference on Imagination and Social Change from September 26-28th. Several different speakers, as well as CMC students and professors, were in attendance. At the Athenaeum the opening night, Michelle Moody-Adams (Columbia University) gave one of the conference’s two keynote addresses, titled: “How Imagination Creates Space for Progress.” The other keynote, on “White Imaginaries and the Problem of Political Loss,” was given by Juliet Hooker (Brown University). As a student, I was able to attend several of the conference’s talks. The subject matter was particularly relevant and exciting to me as I was enrolled in Professor Kind’s advanced philosophy seminar on imagination this fall. My classmates and I were already familiar with the work of some of the speakers and had some general background on the subject area.

I really enjoyed the broad range of talks that were delivered under this umbrella of imagination and social change. For example, Lisa Liang and Brianna Morseth of the Dharma Realm Buddhist University gave a talk titled: “Contemplative Imaginations and Pro-social Practices,” where they discussed the important role of the imagination in the cultivation of the brahmavihara, which involves practices such as love, kindness, compassion, and empathy. One of my favorite talks of the conference was “Memorials and Memories,” given by Shen-yi Liao. He argued that memorials (particularly those which reference more negative parts of history) can restrict our imaginations negatively and concluded with a call to action: “to imagine differently, we need to remake our world.” In addition to these thought-provoking talks, I also enjoyed some of the less formal aspects of the conference, like being able to have lunch with the speakers and chatting with them on coffee breaks. I loved getting to hear a bit about their teaching experiences and their paths to academia in addition to learning more about their work.
On November 16th, The Gould Center ran its first Humanities Case Competition. Six teams of four spent the day competing for the first place prize of $2000. The teams, comprised of mostly humanities majors, were charged with figuring out what to do about hateful, vile, or unproductive comments in online forums—a pervasive issue that has led to some newspapers electing to get rid of their online comment sections altogether. The case was adapted from one authored by Bailey Sebastian & Scott R. Stroud, Ph.D. of U.T. Austin (www.mediaethicsinitiative.org).

The teams worked to create ten minute proposals, which were followed by short Q&A sessions with the judges. The competition was judged by Glen Hastings, tech industry professional; Sarah Roberts, Assistant Professor of Information Studies, UCLA; Andrew Schroeder, Associate Professor of Philosophy, CMC; and Amy Savagian ’99, member of the Gould Center Board of Advisors.

Andrea Amaya ’20, a Philosophy and Economics Dual Major, said she signed up for the competition because she thought it filled a gap; while case competitions are relatively common at CMC, she felt they were almost always geared toward STEM students.

“I just thought that it was really interesting that there was a competition for something that was solely humanities oriented,” said Amaya.

Amaya’s team, which consisted of herself, Laleh Ahmad ’20 (History), Bryan Carlen ’20 (Philosophy, Politics, and Economics), and Dina Rosin ’20 (Philosophy and Public Affairs) won the first place prize. Their proposal involved creating a third party company which would vet individual users on a given online forum by having them complete a mandatory education program and then undergo a careful comment-monitoring period. Once a user is vetted, they would be able to mark other comments as hateful. If an organization purchased the company’s services, they would receive an accreditation, which would hopefully draw more thoughtful users to the organization. A second place prize of $500 was awarded to the team of Sklyer Sallick ‘21, Sarah Chen ’22, Maxwell Knowles ‘20, and Harrison Schreiber ‘22.

Amaya said she enjoyed the opportunity the competition provided to dive deep and spend “pretty much a whole day devoted to a single problem.” In addition, she valued the experience of working on a team of students with different humanistic focuses because it allowed them “to really approach the problem in different ways which [was] really helpful for the team and team dynamic as a whole.” The Gould Center felt the first competition was a success and hopes to now run it annually.

The winning team: Andrea Amaya ’20, Laleh Ahmad ’20, Bryan Carlen ’20, and Dina Rosin ’20
Jim Burgess graduated CMC in 1984 with a BA in Philosophy and Political Science. He went on to pursue a JD, graduating from USC in 1990. Burgess is a partner at the Sheppard Mullin law firm in Los Angeles. Jim and his wife Elizabeth (CMC '85) have four daughters. His youngest daughter Clare is a senior at CMC. Jim joined the Gould Center Board of Advisors in Fall 2019. He’s also a presidential history buff - ask him for a fun fact next time you chat!

Tell me about your time at CMC and what drew you to study the humanities.

My time at CMC was very special for a lot of reasons; for me, it was the first time I was away from home on my own for longer than a weekend, I developed some of the closest friendships of my life. CMC was different than anything else I had experienced before. I found the subject matter and the depth of my studies very stimulating. I enjoyed my time at CMC, but I struggled significantly in the beginning. I was not very well prepared for college. I struggled and was even on academic probation after my first semester. Being told I might have to leave the school felt like staring into an abyss – it was quite a wakeup call. I realized I had to re-learn how to study, how to write, and how to think critically. CMC honed my intellectual skills in a way that wouldn’t have been the case had I gone somewhere else. After my terrible start, I set a very high goal to graduate with a 3.0. During the last semester of my senior year, I barely obtained a 3.0 cumulative GPA. That was a small victory but it meant a lot. I am who I am today largely because of my CMC experience. I met my closest friends there and I met my wife there, so those four years are very special to me.

What drew you to study philosophy and political science?

Government and philosophy were both natural fits for me. I thought I was going to be a history major, but I didn’t end up doing that because I did not like my first history class. Ironically, that class was my highest grade my first semester. Since I was 10 years old I’ve watched every presidential convention and debate. Politics was big in my family and it is something that has always interested me, so the political science part of my major was an easy call. I was surprised by how much I was drawn to philosophy; frankly, I had never considered it as a major before college. The class that was my second to lowest grade freshman year was Introduction to Philosophy with Professor Roth. It was a class I loved but it didn’t love me. Still, I wanted to study much more of it even though it was difficult for me; I wasn’t taking those classes for the grades, I was taking it for the subject matter. I think largely because of my Catholic upbringing, some of the ideas in philosophy - especially moral philosophy - felt familiar – so I felt myself surprisingly drawn to study philosophy.

Was there a mentor or professor at CMC that had an especially profound impact on your time here?

Yes, there were several – Jim Nichols had a big influence on me. I took a lot of political philosophy
classes from him and he read my thesis. He did a lot of work on Plato’s Gorgias, which I think should be mandatory reading for any lawyer because it addresses the issue of ethics and advocacy and whether we have the obligation to do what is persuasive or to do what is good. I think that’s an interesting challenge for anyone in the legal profession. John Roth, of course, was also very influential. I had him my very first semester, in Intro to Philosophy, which as I said was very challenging. I was in over my head. Then I had him again during my last semester in my Senior Seminar in Philosophy, and I did really well in that class, which was very affirming for me. Professor Roth got to see the good and the bad. And Professor Davis - I will always have a soft spot for him because my wife Elizabeth and I met in one of his classes. His book “Encountering Evil” was very influential and is still being used in class today. Those are the three that really stick out in my mind – who I was guided by, and who helped me develop my writing and my thinking.

Did you know when you were at CMC that you wanted to pursue a legal career, or did that come later?

Actually it came earlier. Growing up I didn’t like bullies and I found myself always being the one advocating for other people. In fact, I was a better advocate for other people than I was for myself.

So in high school, I remember telling people “I think I want to become a lawyer”. And then that first semester of college happened – and that was debilitating. At that point I just wanted to graduate; I didn’t know if law school was going to be a possibility with my grades. I put on hold the dream of becoming a lawyer. I moved back to Washington D.C. after graduation and worked on Capitol Hill for a couple years. Pretty much everyone around me was either a lawyer or was going to law school, and a lot of my friends from CMC were also in law school. So I like to joke that it was peer pressure that got me back into it, but really it was that I had gotten my confidence back. I studied very, very hard for the LSAT and fortunately ended up doing very well – for the first time ever on a standardized test. I ended up getting into the George Washington University night program, which was very difficult, and then transferred to USC where I graduated near the top of my class. I was certainly very well prepared for law school by my time at CMC.

What drew you to litigation?

I knew I wanted to be in litigation over transactional law because I like advocacy. And as it turns out, litigation is much more consistent with my personality. Transactional lawyers have to eliminate chaos – they have to anticipate every contingency that could happen and create a document that will reduce risk for their client. In litigation, there’s really no way to control chaos; you’ve got chaos and a lot of other variables you can’t control. And you have to be able to get into all that chaos and make sense of it and use it to your advantage. I find that really interesting.

How do you envision the humanities growing and impacting the CMC community in the upcoming years, and how do you hope the Gould can best take on this vision?

Where I think I’ve benefited most from studying philosophy and the humanities is by gaining insight into human nature and human behavior. Two major things I got out of my time at CMC were learning how to think critically and write concisely. I love that the Gould Center promotes effective writing, and I’d love to help with any kind of programming that promotes critical thinking and writing. I love what Amy Kind is putting forward about “Imagination”; I think that is critically important not only in business but in coming up with a vision for the future. I also bring some ideological diversity to the Board, and I think that is going to be important to make sure that we have a good dialogue and that everyone’s views are represented. Having diversity of all kinds on the Board is important to make sure different points of view are represented and that the students at CMC get the benefit of that. In short, I believe in Amy Kind’s vision and I hope to do whatever I can to further it.
Understanding “Fake News” About North Korea is a research project jointly sponsored this academic year by the Gould Center and the Keck Center. Broadly speaking, this project, which is supervised by Professor Michael Izbicki, is looking into research regarding algorithms, fake news, and disinformation in conjunction with a larger research project being pursued by Professor Izbicki: developing a fake news algorithm to address North Korea disinformation. Altogether, ten students have been hired as data labelers and three students have been hired as RAs – two in ethics and one in international relations.

The two ethics RAs, Mia Prine ’20 and Sarah Chen ’22, are focused on determining the ethical questions surrounding both the distribution of and particular actions against fake news. Last semester, they learned about what constitutes fake news and the impact of differing perspectives related to fake news in order to get a clear background of the situation. Presently, they have been working on defining and separating the broadly-used term of “fake news” into different categories, aided by How Propaganda Works by Jason Stanley.

While “fake news” has been at the forefront of national attention, propaganda, for instance, differs from disinformation or misinformation. Some fake news is maliciously intended, while others come about from errors in translation. Their final deliverable will be a paper presented at either an AI or computer science conference.
Samy and Zane are CMC seniors who love connecting with people and exploring new ideas. This summer, we had an incredible experience creating “The Laymen” podcast with funding from the Gould Center. The idea for the podcast was: “two college kids who know no things, talking to people who know some things, so that they can learn a few things.” The experience was filled with learning new skills, meeting new and interesting people, and the occasional heartbreak.

For starters, we had to figure an entire system of equipment in a field neither of us had any experience working in. We consulted those around us who knew about the subject, and ultimately, amassed a wealth of sound design knowledge. “Check the levels” was a phrase that became as common as “how is the weather?” Additionally, while editing, you have to be careful not to alter the meaning or intent of what people say. This consists of a balancing act between making a concise and sharp episode, and highlighting raw material.

Now, what we did learn about admin? Be annoying! If people don’t answer their email the first time: write, write again! We learned it’s very hard to get funding as green college kids with no experience. What’s the most important thing we learned? There is nothing more powerful on a podcast then being your authentic self.

Now, how about the great people we met and reconnected with? First of all, no two stories have the same lessons to offer. Every podcast experience was completely unique. We would be going into a high-tech medical facility with Dr. Florence Comite one day, and the next we would be in Newt Gingrich’s office interviewing Congressman Bob Walker. People don’t always have the stories you’d expect from them. But sometimes the story you didn’t expect is the story you need to hear the most. We made it a point to be prepared, but at the same time to go in with doubts because that made the conversations much more interesting.

But working with new people wasn’t all smiles and rainbows; that’s where the heartbreak comes in. There were two or three experiences where we were hopeful about meeting a really cool individual and thought it would work out, but then as things sometimes do, the interview fell apart. But the heartbreak of being creative is part of what makes the successes so sweet. We managed to do exactly what we wanted this summer: meet fascinating people and gain perspective about the future that lies ahead. What stories were the most impactful, you ask? Well, you’ll just have to tune in and decide for yourself! The podcast is on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.
MAJOR MONDAYS

As a member of the Gould Center’s Student Advisory Board as a research fellow for our “Imagining Los Angeles” humanities lab, she says: “Studying Literature and History has taught me the value of learning about human nature, and the emotions and passions that drive us. One reason we immerse ourselves in higher education is to prepare for the workforce and a life-long career, but we should also strive to make connections with ourselves and the people around us on a deeper level, examine how society has changed over time, and determine how we can improve it in the future. Resume-building and networking may further our job prospects. But they don’t always teach us about cultivating communication skills in our intimate relationships, coping with adversity, or developing good character, self-awareness, and empathy for others.”

Anthony Madubunonwu ’22 (Pictured top left) says that he is attracted to the humanities because of his “ability to explore aspects of the human condition.” He thinks that “why we construct society in the way that we do is incredibly interesting.”

Amanda Mell ’20 is a Literature and History dual major from Los Altos, CA! As a member of the Gould Center’s Student Advisory Board and a research fellow for our “Great Expectations” lab, she says: “I love the humanities because I love how open the field is and how everyone is welcome to contribute. Every discussion leads to further questions and people sharing their personal experiences and opinions. The humanities also highlights how interdisciplinary studies can be and how every issue must be approached in a multifaceted way. The community is incredibly welcoming and I’ve been supported and encouraged by everyone to pursue and explore different areas throughout this semester. I’m very excited to continue learned from my peers and professors during my time here!”

Sophie Grossman ’23 is a Philosophy and Government dual major from Irvine, CA! As a member of the Gould Center’s Student Advisory Board and a research fellow for our “Great Expectations” lab, she says: “I love the humanities because I love how open the field is and how everyone is welcome to contribute. Every discussion leads to further questions and people sharing their personal experiences and opinions. The humanities also highlights how interdisciplinary studies can be and how every issue must be approached in a multifaceted way. The community is incredibly welcoming and I’ve been supported and encouraged by everyone to pursue and explore different areas throughout this semester. I’m very excited to continue learned from my peers and professors during my time here!”

When asked about their favorite class at CMC, Junior Andria (Dri) Tattersfield ’21 says “Knowledge, Power, and Justice (PHIL193) with Professor Martin! It made me view knowledge as a fundamental force mediating how people interact with each other and through which power structures form. It made me feel like I understood the systems I live in a lot more!”
We hosted our second annual Humanities Halloween party this year, which was another hit among students and professors! Our costume contest winners were as follows:

Best group costume (right): Jake Leischner ’21 and Abby Gilliland ’21: Judith Jarvis Thomson’s “Violinist” thought experiment

Best humanities-inspired costume (tie): Rachel Keady ’22: Notes from the Underground and Laura Brenalvirez ’22: Plato’s “Rave” (left)

David Gushue ’22 is a dual Literature Government major from Baltimore, Maryland! He says being a “literature major is all about discovering the ways in which great literature gives commentary on so many different aspects of life. I love the experience of finishing a terrific book and then proceeding to just sit there with my mind-blown for the next hour. Afterward, I get to come into class and hear about all the awesome insights my classmates and professor took from the reading. In no other academic setting do I feel so intellectually stimulated.”

Jun Chung ’21 says that he chose to study Philosophy with a sequence in computer science “because whatever I end up doing after college, my ultimate goal is to create well-being for society. This summer I had the chance to be a user experience design intern in a brand consulting agency, I realized ethics is yet a field that has been developed in our digital platforms. Many of our digital applications are made for maximizing profits and widespread marketing such as social media apps using dark patterns and other deceiving tactics. Our digital realm should be however more for than just capitalist needs but promote well being values for our users. By studying philosophy, I allow myself to ask critical thinking questions such how will this web/application reorganize society and how will this shape our digital future. Philosophy helps me create a base for a type of open thinking that examines the fundamental digital issues of today.”

GHOULS AT THE GOULD

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