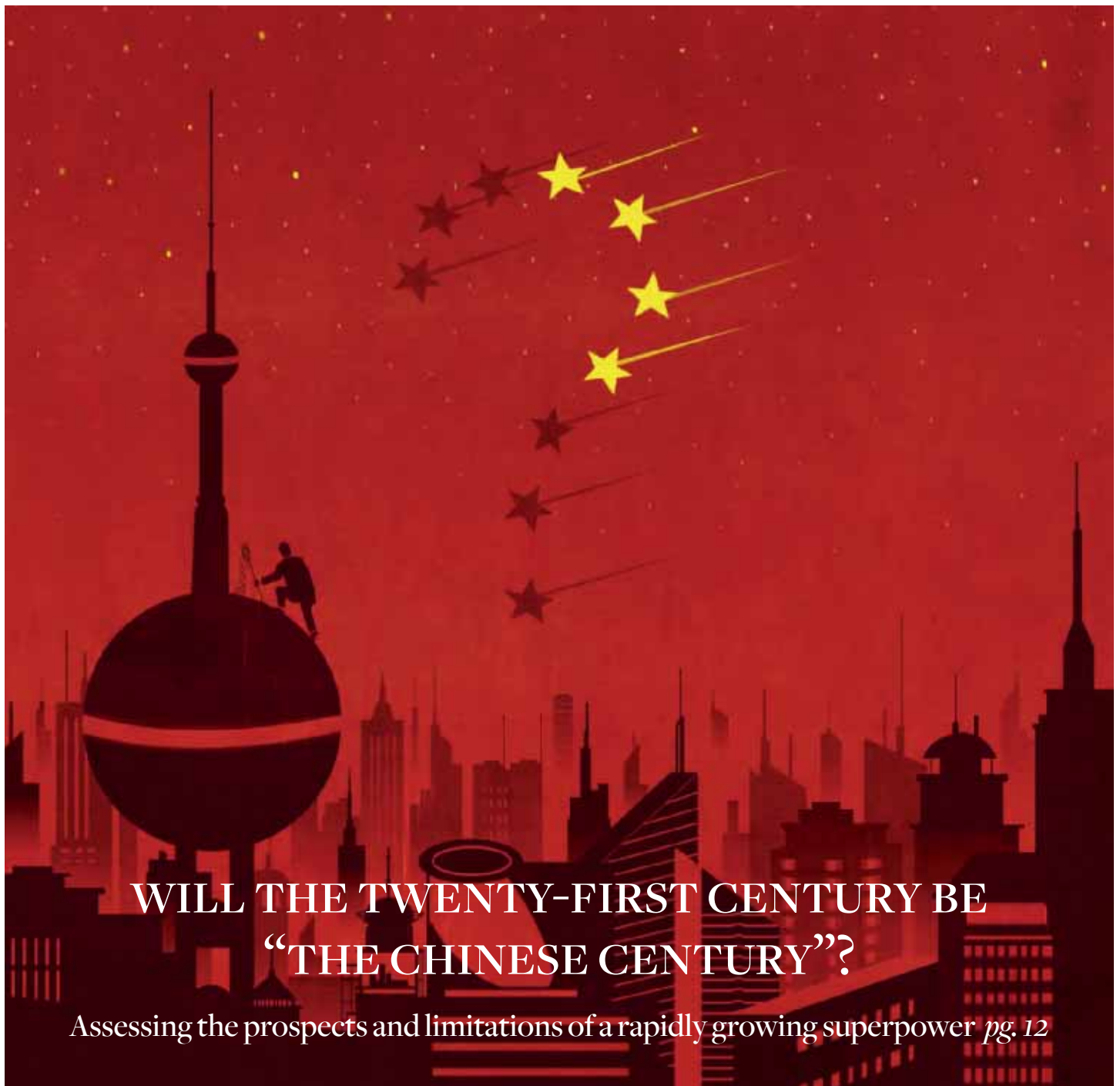


Colloquy

The GRADUATE SCHOOL *of* ARTS AND SCIENCES | HARVARD UNIVERSITY



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Colloquy

An alumni publication of Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

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Cover illustration by Emiliano Ponzi

Facing image: The Harvard Center Shanghai is located on the fifth floor of the HSBC Building (at right) in the Pudong district of Shanghai.

Stephanie Mitchell/Harvard Staff Photographer

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sonian Folkways Recordings, a longtime client.



As I've settled into my new job as dean of GSAS, one of my chief pleasures (and yes, there *are* pleasures in a dean's job) has been to appreciate more deeply the range of programs that fall under the GSAS umbrella. The breadth and depth of this institution's intellectual engagement is continually surprising; the diversity of our students and their scholarly pursuits is exciting — and also quite heartening, suggesting as it does the impact that our scholars will make on the world of knowledge.

This winter, as I have worked with our faculty to admit next fall's entering class of graduate students, I have benefited from a singular opportunity, one not available to me before I occupied this office: the chance to immerse myself in the unique norms, values, and goals of programs as disparate as Celtic and Systems Biology, as Health Policy and Film. I have had a chance to trace the excitement that new ideas can bring to disciplines both ancient and emerging.

The impact of new ideas is worth celebrating — and celebrate we will, in the form of a new initiative that will allow our normally reticent community to step into the spotlight. This new initiative, Harvard Horizons, is the brainchild of Professor Shigehisa Kuriyama, the Reischauer Institute Professor of Cultural History and chair of the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations. It will identify and mentor eight extremely talented PhD students, preparing them for a public symposium in May, in Sanders Theatre. There, they'll present their most essential idea, innovation, or insight — finely honed into a short, compelling talk that will allow their audience to share in the excitement, in the world-changing potential, of the intellectual work of Harvard's PhD community.

These talks will be filmed, and the resulting videos will

Xiao-Li Meng,
PhD '90, Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Whipple V. N. Jones Professor of Statistics

Celebrating the impact of new ideas, Harvard Horizons will select and mentor eight talented PhD students, preparing them for a symposium in Sanders Theatre.

be shared on our website and in other forums, allowing you, our friends and alumni, to participate in the conversations we're having — and to share in our pride at the accomplishments of these students. After all, each of us embarked on a rigorous intellectual journey during our graduate years at Harvard, and your scholarly contributions are the foundation for today's new discoveries and insights.

But even more than the public celebration is the opportunity this initiative has given our community to define what an essential research idea looks like, what a strong presentation must consist of, how to convert a good idea into an intellectually valid argument, and how a persuasive argument can be a key professional asset. Through our rigorous mentoring process, our selected students — designated as Horizon Scholars — will have regular sessions with faculty and pedagogy experts at the Bok Center, developing the tools they'll carry with them into their future lives as teachers and scholars. Moving forward, I fully expect the inaugural and future cohorts of Horizon Scholars to serve as both the face and the ambassadors of GSAS, epitomizing the achievements associated with the Harvard PhD.

I'm eager to talk with you more about Harvard Horizons and everything else that we're doing to support and prepare our students as they shape their big ideas into the foundations of scholarly careers with unlimited potential. I hope to see you on campus or at one of our regional events very soon, and until then, I invite you to be in touch with me at gsasmeng@fas.harvard.edu. 📧

Shooting for Peace

A PhD student finds a new angle on Colombia's long conflict



Alex Fattal says that Colombia's efforts to shape the narrative of its fight against rebels have the look and feel of a high-end ad campaign.

Below: Fattal's "truck camera," outside the Palace of Justice, Plaza de Bolívar, Bogotá, in November 2012.

In 2001, Alex Fattal was in Bogotá, Colombia, studying the country's ongoing conflict with rebel militias on a Fulbright fellowship. He had just graduated from Duke University and, feeling restless within the academic routine, found himself drawn to the *barrios de invasión* on the city's outskirts, ad hoc villages carved out of the surrounding hills by refugees. "They're dangerous communities, micro-neighborhoods controlled by a certain gang, which might be sponsored by a certain armed group, so it's not like they'd escaped the war entirely," Fattal says. Wanting to contribute, he got in touch with an informal school in the barrio, and offered to teach its children how to shoot.

He came armed with fifteen plastic cameras.

The fact that we *shoot* a camera as we *shoot* a gun is mere linguistic coincidence for most. For Fattal, a sixth-year PhD student in anthropology, it is the organizing metaphor of a growing body of work investigating the intersection of visual media and armed conflict — how photography can be used to wage war, and to promote peace. The project that brought him to Bogotá was an exploration of the divide between how the conflict was represented within Colombia and how it was represented in international media, where nuanced depictions of a society grappling with violence were eschewed for splashes of burned-out villages and child soldiers. The idea of teaching displaced children photog-

raphy, he says, seemed like a way of restoring some of the narrative of the conflict to those most touched by it.

In addition to assigning four themes for the children to explore in their pictures — memory, family, future, and fear — he showed them books of photographs, talked about which they liked best, and introduced them to the notion of thinking in rectangles. In his most popular lesson, he taught them how to make simple pinhole cameras from boxes.

The pictures that resulted were exhibited in a nearby house of culture, and the opening event earned widespread coverage in Colombian national media. "There was this notion that the kids were artists, and creative agents, rather than just victims," Fattal says. The photographs have been shown at Harvard's Peabody Museum and at the United Nations on World Refugee Day, among other venues, but the exhibition Fattal is most proud of was closer to home: immense versions of some of the photographs were reproduced in the barrio, on the exterior walls of the houses of the children who took them. When several schools approached Fattal asking to replicate his program, he founded a nonprofit, *Disparando Cámaras para la Paz: Shooting Cameras for Peace*.

The connection between cameras and peace in Colombia has become especially apparent in recent years, as the country's Ministry of Defense has opened a new front in its war against the rebels — a front found not in a swamp or jungle, but on YouTube. Since arriving at Harvard, Fattal has centered his studies on the Ministry's efforts, with the help of advertising agencies, to tip the narrative of the 50-year-old conflict. In one campaign, a series of advertisements convincingly replicating beauty-product spots invites *guerrilleros* to "Feel like a woman again. Demobilize." Another, Operation Christmas, decorated motion-activated trees along remote rebel pathways, displaying the message "If Christmas can come to the jungle, you can come home." The campaigns have received huge amounts of attention online, and Colombia claims they are responsible for thousands of new defections.

With rebel numbers down to half their 1990s peak, a possible end to the long conflict seems finally within reach. And as representatives from FARC and the Colombian government meet in Oslo and Havana for the first peace negotiations in over a decade, Fattal is planning new ways to bring these questions out of the ether and back into the concrete experience of Colombians. Recalling the success of his lesson on pinhole cameras, he devised a way to replicate it on a massive scale — by making a pinhole camera out of a truck. "The idea is to take the truck camera around the country and interview people about their life histories and their expectations for peace. So the truck is a kind of mobile photo studio, with the inverted image of the outside world projected inside" — a living metaphor for how war turns people's lives upside down, and how images can testify to the experience. 📷




The Diversity Pipeline

New Postbaccalaureate Program at GSAS

With the appointment of cancer biologist and Harvard Medical School faculty member Sheila Thomas as assistant dean for diversity and minority affairs, the Graduate School has dramatically expanded its participation in both Harvard-based and national programs designed to broaden the pipeline of talented students from underrepresented minority groups, in order to enrich and diversify the next generation of faculty and research scholars. These efforts include hosting campus visits for undergraduate students from historically black colleges, attending conferences and workshops dedicated to meeting and recruiting talented undergraduates of color, and hosting a full-fledged program of summer research experiences for undergraduates.

Perhaps the most ambitious initiative in this area is the new GSAS Research Scholar Initiative, a postbaccalaureate nondegree program that provides research and academic opportunities for select individuals interested in pursuing a PhD. The program's duration is one year, with the option of a second year. Each admitted Research Scholar is matched with a Harvard faculty member and carries out research in that faculty member's lab. In addition to this faculty mentor, Research Scholars are assigned program advisors, who will work with them to identify courses that fit with their scholarly interests and academic needs.

Scholars will also take advantage of targeted curricula, programming, and workshops designed to enrich their experience at Harvard and immerse them in the rigors of a PhD program. "We wanted to create an individualized, mentored research and academic program," says Thomas. "And we wanted to create a community among these Scholars, but also to give them opportunities to be part of the wider GSAS community." Indeed, Research Scholars are full members of the community, and they can make use of the full resources of the Graduate School. The initiative, with resources underwritten by the GSAS Dean, was launched as a pilot program last year; after proving its success, it will admit its second class of Scholars this summer. 



This January, as award-circuit controversies swirled over Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*, there was one clear beneficiary: Jason Silverstein, a PhD student in anthropology, whose non-credit January mini-course wound up drawing global media attention. Silverstein was even interviewed by cultural critic Touré on MSNBC the week before the Oscars (at which Tarantino was cited for best original screenplay and Christoph Waltz for best supporting actor), bringing intellectual heft to a conversation about the mechanisms for telling alternate or untold histories, for talking about race and US history, and for considering the difference between racist writing and writing racism.

For Silverstein, Tarantino is a hobby, albeit an especially fruitful one. His dissertation work, much of which is carried out in the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, is on science, race, and society, and he writes a monthly blog about the impact of discrimination on public health for PLOS. He was intrigued by the chance to talk about race and film in the setting of a January mini-course, which are sponsored by the GSAS Graduate Student Council and often bring together people from wildly different fields.

"That, to me, is the coolest thing about this. It's a true interdisciplinary program," Silverstein told the *Harvard Gazette*. "It's exciting to bring together a group of people who might not normally have these conversations."

Andre Green, a PhD student in molecular and cellular biology, was equally drawn by the relatively rare chance to escape the confines of discipline (and lab). "One thing I've taken away from this is the idea of where Tarantino is coming from as an artist. He's not trying to make a documentary. Rather, the films are his own interpretation of some historical event. It's interesting to understand the freedoms he has in making those interpretations, and how he presents them in his films."

— Reporting by Peter Reuell and Bari Walsh



PhD student Jason Silverstein



Would-Be Teachers Find There's a Lot to Learn

Laptops in class, teary undergrads, and other pitfalls for TFs in training

On a Thursday morning in late January, a roomful of would-be teachers were struggling, for the moment, to be students.

"Who, me?" one asked, surprised to be called on.

"Yeah, you," said Virginia Maurer, Associate Director at Harvard's Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. "You were making eye contact so I picked you."

The eye-contactor was a confounded-looking graduate student in history. "I was making eye contact because I was paying attention."

"Just answer the question."

The question being, what profession besides teaching would you use to describe your approach to teaching?

"Gardener, I guess," the graduate student conceded. "Because it's your job to foster intellectual growth."

"Good," said Maurer. "Now we've broken the ice."

And so kicked off the Bok Center's Winter Teaching Conference, an annual primer for graduate students launching their teaching careers. The session was "Fundamentals of Teaching Humanities and Social Science Discussion Sections," and attendees seemed to be doing their best to provide a typology of the students encountered in section.

In addition to the shy, there was the loquacious:

"I'd say tailor," answered one woman, "because you need to customize your teaching to suit individual students. Of course today we associate tailors just with haute couture, because we live in a prêt-à-porter culture. But before prêt-à-porter, if you were middle class you'd take

all your clothes to a tailor to have them fitted. One size fits all doesn't look good!"

"Prêt-à-porter comes in many sizes," said a student from comparative literature, fulfilling the role of combative sectioneer.

"I chose doctor," said another. "Because a doctor doesn't need to explain why what works works."

After the icebreakers, attendees were given the chance to pose questions to a panel of experienced departmental teaching fellows.

"What do we do when a student gives a wrong answer?" someone asked. "How do we correct them without hurting their feelings?"

"I find it helpful to accept all responses as fundamentally benevolent," offered a fellow from Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, dressed in elegant checkered pants. "Be sure not to judge. Then, find a position of humor from which to refashion the response."

"Are we allowed to ban laptops? Will they hate us for it?"

Toward the session's end, the fellows solicited contributions to a blackboard list of common stereotypes about Harvard undergraduates. The final list ran:

- Anxious
- Busy
- Need Rules + Structure
- Entitled
- High Expectations
- Young/Unreliable
- Diverse

One of the fellows regarded the list, nodding. "Yes, exactly, diverse. So obviously, none of these

Scenes from the Bok Center's winter teaching conference.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE DEREK BOK CENTER

stereotypes can really be true.”

Meanwhile, in a room upstairs, an undergraduate was crying. “I was just, really surprised,” she got out between sobs, “to see my grade on the midterm. I studied so, so hard. I did everything I was supposed to, and I just don’t understand why I got a C. My dad is going to kill me!”

The graduate student she was appealing to studied her like a dangerous animal. Finally he put out a hand, and touched her shoulder. “It’s OK,” he said. “It’s OK. I know you’ve been trying really hard.”

“OK, great!” Lee Warren, Bok Associate Director Emerita, was clapping. The sobbing “undergraduate” was really an actress from the “Bok Players,” and the teary scene that had just unfolded was an improvisational exercise in TF crisis management. “Have you ever had a situation like that with one of your real students?” she asked the graduate student, who still looked shaken up.

“Yeah, once.”

“What did you do?”

“I went to the vending machine. I got her an orange juice.”

After lunch, the false undergraduates were swapped out for a pack of real ones, who huddled at the end of a long table while graduate students swooped down hungrily around them.

Trevor Baca, the departmental teaching fellow from the music department, was leading the session. “Here we’ve captured some students for you,” he began, “so you can ask them whatever you want.”

The first question was about their best experience with a TF. A math concentrator answered: “Availability. I had a TF who literally would let me reschedule lab for whenever I wanted. He even gave us his cell phone number. I called him at one a.m. the night before the final.”

Baca waved his hands, shouting over the collective groan. “Just to be clear: you don’t need to be perpetually available for your students.”

On came the questions: what should I do for the first meeting of section? What kind of feedback do you want on assignments? Should I aim to teach to the highest or lowest denominator? And then, “What do you want your TFs to wear?”

“I actually wrote a series in the *Crimson* about this,” replied a psychology concentrator. “First, don’t smell. After that, we appreciate TFs with a unique fashion sense, but it’s not necessarily a requirement.”

“Final questions?” Baca asked, as the conference drew to a close.

A hand went up. “If we ban laptops, will you hate us?” ♡

Right: Harvard College student David Fan and GSAS computer science student Bob Adolf (left and center, at laptops) were second-place finishers in the IACS Computational Challenge.

Cracking the Foosball Code

On the surface, it might seem that evacuating a major city after a natural disaster and playing foosball have little, if anything, in common. But for students who entered an intensive computational challenge in January, both are problems that can be tackled with clever coding.

The challenge, now in its second year, was offered by the Institute for Applied Computational Science (IACS), which also hosts a new master’s degree and a new secondary PhD field in computational science and engineering. The goal was to give students a chance to flaunt their mathematical and computing skills by trying to build the best solution to a given problem, or a strategy good enough to win a 10-round tournament.

In last year’s inaugural, students were asked to design a system to evacuate thousands of Cambridge residents through debris-choked streets. That competition played out over 10 days.

In this year’s challenge, students were tasked with something a bit more winter-break relevant — designing a program to play winning foosball. And they had just two days to do it.

As eight teams of programmers gathered to duke it out in Maxwell Dworkin, hunkering over laptops to watch the games, the tension was punctuated by exclamations and high fives from successful teams, while losers worked feverishly to fine-tune their code before the next match.

The winners — James Damore, a second-year PhD student in systems biology, and Bo Waggoner, a second-year PhD student in computer science — received iPad minis along with their bragging rights. The pair modeled the game as though none of the players were able to move. Once they found the optimal strategy for those conditions, “we just put our players in a peak distribution, and our strategy was to just have one player chase the ball on top of that distribution,” says Damore.

The foosball challenge was developed by Cris Cecka and Pavlos Protopapas, lecturers in computational science at the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. “One of our goals was to make the solution space wide open,” Cecka says. “I wanted raw computation to be one answer to the problem, and I wanted really good probabilistic analysis to be another.”

For Miriam Huntley, a third-year PhD student in applied physics, the challenge was a chance to “practice the computational skills I use in the lab, because I code a lot,” she says. “But this also provides a good incentive to hone your skills in a high-pressure situation, and it’s just fun.”

— Peter Reuell, adapted from the *Harvard Gazette*



Q + Marv Levy

A famed football coach writes a new chapter in the playbook

Where else would you rather be? It's a question that former Buffalo Bills coach Marv Levy, AM '51, would ask his team before every game — expecting his players to share his excitement, optimism, and plain old gratitude for standing where they stood, playing a game they loved. Levy, who led the Bills from 1986 through 1997 and became the winningest coach in the team's history, was revered by his players — he was motivational and always respectful — and beloved across NFL fandom. But he was no softie; always competitive, striving to find new angles on winning, he was a shrewd manager who tallied one of the most impressive streaks in the game when he led his Bills to four straight Super Bowls. Of course, they lost all four times — the stuff of Homeric tragedy, but a burden that Levy has borne with grace. He was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 2001, and in his retirement, returned to an early love: writing. Now, at age 86, he's just published his first novel, *Between the Lies*, in which a Los Angeles football team finally wins the Super Bowl, only to lose it again in a cheating scandal.

Q+A ID

NAME:

**Marv Levy,
AM '51**

FIELD OF STUDY:

History

TODAY:

**Novelist,
retired football
coach**

Your trajectory is uncommon. Did you always want to write?

Actually I was a fairly mediocre student in high school. I went into the service in World War II, and during an injury in the hospital there was only one book in the library, one that I had detested reading in high school: *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. Well, it was the only one there, so I read it, and I was enamored. I honestly think it turned my life around. And after that I became a very avid reader.

I always said that someday I would like to write. So I had this long coaching career, but throughout, I would put aside potential plot lines, character studies, scenarios. And finally, after I'd retired and got done doing some of the television work that I did, I had the time and I went after it.

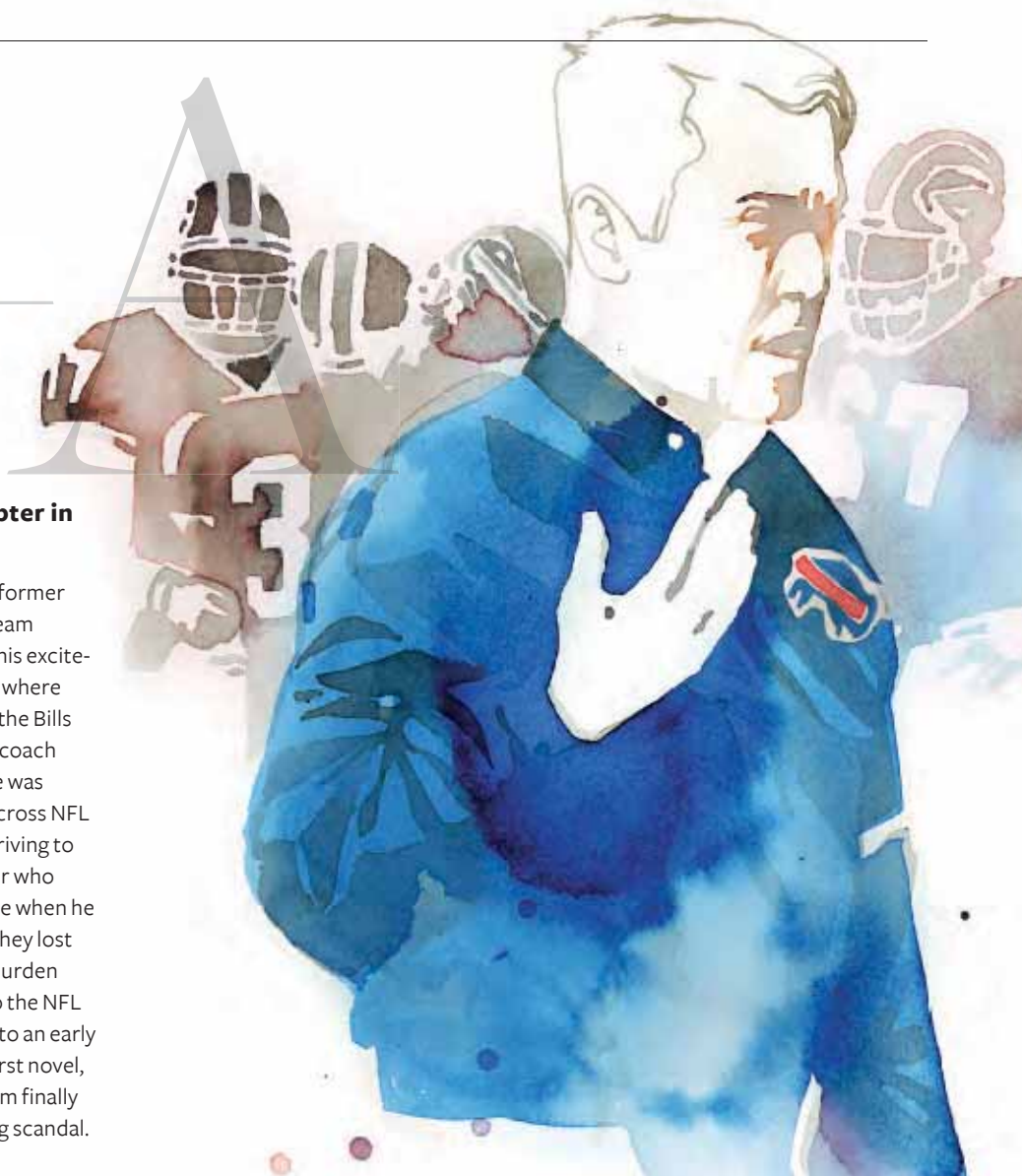
Your novel is a thriller about two very different coaches and a run for the championship. Was any of

it based on your real experiences, or was this all fiction?

I'd have to say it was a combination of the two. But as a rookie writer, you do, I think, rely pretty heavily on experience — if there's such a thing as an 86-year-old rookie. I tried to give some insights into what the coach-owner-general manager relationship is really like behind the scenes, in a fictitious framework.

Was it gratifying to essentially invent a Super Bowl team, one that you didn't have to draft or shape? How did you avoid the temptation to give yourself an easy victory?

Well, I didn't think that would be very intriguing. I tried to put twists in it — some of the elation, some of the agony. I also wanted people to know that it wasn't always a smooth ride. There were disagreements, and how people handled those was important.



There are some images and turns of phrase in the book that hint at your literary bent. One sentence I liked was: "A happy landing doesn't always mean you've had a good flight." Where did you get your love of words?

My parents were immigrants — my mother from Russia, my father from England. My mother's family was very poor, and she had only one year of grade school. Yet, she was the most literary person. She was always reading; she had the complete works of Shakespeare and countless others. With her I read tremendous amounts of poetry early, and of course those phrases resonate and are easy to refer back to.

What did you like about coaching football?

First of all, the association with so many people that you get to know and like, and with whom you share goals. It went well beyond the players. For every one of the Super Bowls we went to, our team owner, Ralph Wilson, took every single person in our organization — over 200 of us, I'm talking about the ladies that cleaned up at night, the switchboard operators — to the game — hotels, tickets, everything. There was such a great sense of teamwork.

And competition was fun — honest competition. Football is not war — it's anything but. I've been in both.

I've said this before: As a coach, particularly at this level, you spend many, many, many hours of every day, week, and year on the job — but I've never worked a day in my life. It was fun. It was joy.

Did you find any satisfaction intellectually, as well as professionally?

It did stimulate me mentally. I don't want to make football sound too intellectual. But you really learn how much preparation is important, no matter what it is you're doing. I used to tell players, don't tell me you have the will to win. Do you have the will to prepare? If you don't have that, your likelihood of being successful is

tremendously reduced.

There were two feelings I loved. First, when you walked up the tunnel before the game, you didn't know who was going to win. There was no assurance. And that uncertainty, of something that wasn't life-changing, was stimulating. And I loved the feeling that during the course of the game, as the coach, you've got to make about 200 decisions, and you've got maybe 30 seconds to make each one of them. That's stimulating.

What are you most proud of?

That we followed a certain mantra that I always preached to our players: We played hard, we played clean, we played to win, but win or lose, we honored the game, and we went right back to work.

In the preface to your memoir, Jim Kelly [the Bills' quarterback during the Levy years] wrote that after the Super Bowl losses, you always found a way to be positive, to look at the next journey. How did you do that?

Well, first of all, 32 tremendously talented teams come to camp every year, striving to make the playoffs. 20 of them go home. Of the 12 that make it, 11 finish their season with a loss. So, what do you do? Do you lie there in the fetal position and whimper? Do you throw in the towel? Do you say, what's the use? Or do you do something about it?

Yes, there is a period where you mourn — not too long. And then there's a period where you own up — what didn't we do well enough that we can address? Then you recognize the good — look at the people around me. And then you make a plan. And then you go to work on it, because as the philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, 'A great idea is but a job half done.'

Our organization really made an effort to bring on board only people of high character. We tried to stay away from the guys who had a history of being bad actors. That had to do with character, not personality. They might

"Yes, there is a period where you mourn — not too long. And then there's a period where you own up — what didn't we do well enough that we can address? Then you recognize the good — look at the people around me. And then you make a plan."

be extroverted, they might be kind of quiet and reserved. But did they show up on time, did they work hard, did they not place blame on their teammates? Were they resilient? We had a remarkable group of people with those Buffalo Bills.

Are you thinking about any other writing projects? What are you doing to keep your writing skills sharp?

Well, believe it or not, I'm about 80 pages into a projected 200-page book of poetry. I'm doing it for fun.

It seems to me that poetry is something that people come back to over the years.

Yes. This was inspired by my mother, who was so enamored of poetry and would buy me small books of the great poets. I used to read them and read them and read them. When I left for the service during World War II, my mother gave me a book of poetry. So I'm reading poetry on the troop train, going to camp and looking around to make sure no one's seeing me do it. But there was one four-line poem in there that I'd forgotten, and after we lost our first Super Bowl, the words came back to me. And the next day, for our final team meeting, I posted it for the players: "Fight on my men, Sir Andrew said/A little I'm hurt but not yet slain/I'll just lie down and bleed a while/And then I'll rise and fight again." The players all asked me if they could have copies. 🏈

Shelf Life



Building Resilience: Social Capital in Post-Disaster Recovery (University of Chicago Press, 2012) analyzes the factors that fuel recovery after natural disasters. Although attention focuses on governmental responses and material assistance, **DANIEL P. ALDRICH** (PhD '05, government) stresses the role of social capital — preexisting networks of family, friends, and neighbors. He opens with Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans and his own neighborhood. Afterward, he observed sharp disparities in recovery: within two years, population and business activity in one neighborhood reached 90 percent of pre-Hurricane levels, contrasting sharply with neighborhoods a few miles distant. Aldrich also examines recovery after Japanese earthquakes (1923, 1995) and the Indian tsunami (2004). Marshaling quantitative and narrative evidence, he highlights the role of social ties and concludes that recovery plans should nurture (not disrupt) them.



CANDY GUNTHER BROWN (PhD '00, history of American civilization) wants to use science to test Pentecostal faith-healing. But **Testing Prayer** (Harvard University Press, 2012) isn't an exercise in debunking. Rather, Brown envisions a respectful dialogue across the religion-science divide. The book usefully locates Pentecostalism within larger American Protestant traditions and recounts its rapid worldwide growth. But its crux is Brown's studies of "proximal intercessory prayer" (prayer undertaken close by, often including physical contact). Her research in Brazil and Mozambique has involved people with diagnosed visual or auditory impairments, and she reports finding small but statistically significant prayer-related improvements in her subjects' sight and hearing. (Strangely, she couldn't replicate these results in the

United States.) Though not conclusive, her research offers strong grounds for further study.

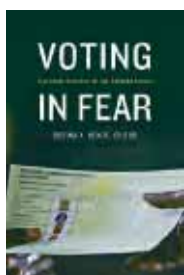
In the 1990s, democracy displaced one-party rule across sub-Saharan Africa, a transition as momentous as the gaining of independence itself. But problems remain, as evidenced in the essays that comprise **Voting in Fear: Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa** (United States Institute of Peace, 2012). Yet this volume, edited by **DORINA BEKOE** (PhD '02, public policy), also offers grounds for hope. Extreme violence, while too frequent, only characterizes about one-fifth of elections, and problems vary nation by nation and over time. Focusing on Togo and Zanzibar, Bekoe sees hopeful signs in Postelection Political Agreements, designed to address problems and avoid future violence. And by making economic assistance contingent on electoral reform, the European Union played a significant role in Togo's successful and nonviolent 2007 elections.

American Genesis (Oxford University Press, 2012) recounts the history of anti-evolutionism (or creationism) through the 21st century, but **JEFFREY MORAN** (PhD '96, history) focuses on the 1925 Scopes Trial. He analyzes that event through the lenses of gender, region, and race. Sweeping changes in gender roles — wild Flappers, women's suffrage, Progressive women reformers, even the athletic, self-assured New Woman of the 1890s — helped catalyze fundamentalism and anti-evolutionary thought. Regionalism also mattered, but not in the tired dichotomy of cosmopolitan North and backwards South. Anti-evolutionism had and continues to have broad, nationwide appeal. Moran highlights the unpalatable choices available to black intellectuals of the

1920s, forced to choose among socially conservative black ministers, frequently racist proponents of creationism, or a scientific community itself enamored of eugenics and racial hierarchies.

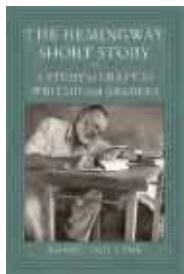
Lee Kuan Yew (MIT Press, 2012) focuses on the insightful, expansive views of Singapore's first prime minister (from 1959–90), who is known as the founder of modern Singapore and who remains an astute observer of world events. The book features a question-and-answer format and topical chapters, for example, on China, Sino-American relations, India, and globalization. **GRAHAM ALLISON** (PhD '68, government), Robert Blackwill, and Ali Wyne distill Lee's answers, drawing on Allison and Blackwill's 2011–12 interviews with Lee, along with excerpts from his writings, public statements, and speeches (going back to 1950). His observations are acerbic: India's economic potential won't be realized as long as it retains a stultifying bureaucracy and hidebound caste system — and, he insists, "Multiculturalism will destroy America" (though he also worries about our propensity for guns, drugs, and "unbecoming behavior in public").

With **The Hemingway Short Story** (Louisiana State University Press, 2013), **ROBERT PAUL LAMB** (AM '85, English; PhD '88, history of American civilization) offers an excellent second volume on Ernest Hemingway's short fiction. Lamb's earlier *Art Matters: Hemingway, Craft, and the Creation of the Modern Short Story* (2010) sought to restore Hemingway to his rightful place as a master of short fiction, an interpretive concern that effectively precluded rigorous exegesis of any given text. In this volume, Lamb provides that careful literary exposition. In particular, he

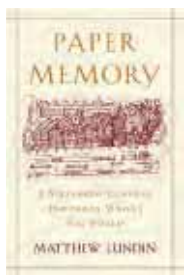
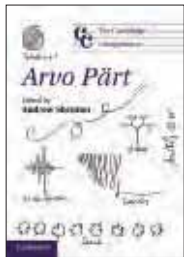


Alumni authors: Would you like your book (general interest, published within the past year) considered for inclusion? Send it to *Colloquy*, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. Questions? E-mail gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

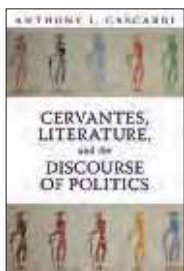
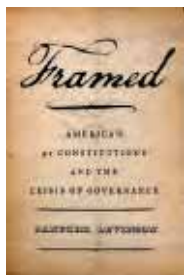
bookends his narrative with insightful analyses of two early Hemingway stories — a nearly line-by-line reading of “Indian Camp” (1924), his first truly great literary achievement, and an equally thought-provoking consideration of his short-fiction masterpiece “Big Two-Hearted River” (1925).



Composer Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) should inspire late-bloomers everywhere. **The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt** (Cambridge University Press, 2012), edited by **ANDREW SHENTON** (PhD ’98, music) tells the story of his surprising trajectory, a journey that started in Soviet-era Estonia. Pärt spent years scoring Soviet films—an endeavor where, he says, the music “was cut like ... sausage.” He disliked the political restrictions of the era, and his concert music experimented with twelve-tone approaches and serialism — and got him blacklisted. In 1976, after an eight-year hiatus, Pärt introduced a wholly new approach, “tintinnabuli” or “sounding bells.” It employs just two musical lines (one sounding the notes of a basic triad, the other moving in stepwise fashion) and leaves much open space — quite unlike the angularity of twelve-tone music or busy Philip Glass-style repetitions.



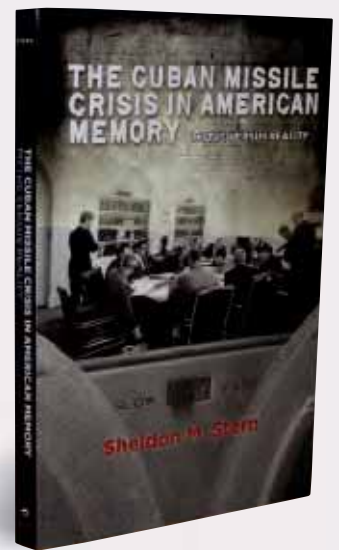
The 16th century encompassed both veering, shearing change — Reformation and Counter-Reformation, New World conquest and Copernicanism, Renaissance art, emerging individuality, an explosion of literacy and the printed word — and an obscure Cologne lawyer named Hermann Weinsberg (1518–92). Weinsberg responded to the uncertainties of his cyclonic age by writing thousands of autobiographical pages only discovered at his death. **In Paper Memory** (Harvard University Press, 2012), **MATTHEW LUNDIN** (PhD ’06, history) interprets Weinsberg’s writings in the context of his concerns over his family fortunes and personal legacy, Cologne’s political and economic life, the rift caused by Protestantism, and the new, rapidly expanding print culture. Weinsberg emerges as a vain but sym-



pathetic figure with a sense of humor, who has left an incomparable record of 16th-century life.

“We the People” — and our representatives — are mired in political acrimony, leading **SANFORD LEVINSON** (PhD ’69, government) to rethink our governing framework. **Framed** (Oxford University Press, 2012) is a unique contribution to constitutional analysis. Rather than highlighting points of disagreement, Levinson zeroes in on what amounts to the boilerplate — matters of representation, age qualifications for office, succession — and finds much confusion. He also measures the federal Constitution against its state-level counterparts, which often reach different solutions. He favors a constitutional convention and new constitution and, to avoid “single-issue zealots,” recommends a delegate lottery. Yet in such contentious times, could any mechanism secure delegates against pressure or bribery? Could any deliberative body, however chosen, produce a document that would win approbation from a divided electorate?

ANTHONY CASCARDI (PhD ’80, romance languages and literatures) thinks we should rethink Don Quixote. There’s been too much intoning, “the first modern novel” — too much Man of La Mancha’s “The Impossible Dream.” Instead **Cervantes, Literature, and the Discourse of Politics** (University of Toronto, 2012) sets the Spanish author alongside Machiavelli, Montesquieu, and Thomas Hobbes. Besides locating Cervantes in a larger political context, Cascardi underscores his ability to speak the truth under “conditions of political constraint” (i.e., the Inquisition). Particularly intriguing is Cascardi’s dissection of the Canon, a character who condemns chivalric literature (and Quixote’s misadventures) as “harmful to the state,” insisting that fiction ought to proceed by “restraining exaggeration and moderating impossibility.” The Canon emerges as analogous to a Stalinist dutifully imposing socialist realism in the arts. 🏰



Fifty years ago, the United States and Soviet Union inched away from Armageddon, halting all but underground nuclear tests and installing a hotline to avoid escalating conflicts. The Cold War wasn’t over, but these steps mattered. They were largely a product of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, which, according to **SHELDON STERN** (PhD ’70, history), is still seriously misunderstood — due to flawed memories (or direct obfuscation) of participants and the mythologizing of popular culture (as in the 2000 film *Thirteen Days*). **The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory** (Stanford University Press, 2012) offers a compelling reassessment of these events.

Using tapes of ExComm meetings (the ad hoc group formed to meet the crisis), Stern challenges much of the received wisdom. In particular, he rejects Robert F. Kennedy’s dovish self-portrayal in *Thirteen Days* (1969), finding instead a consistent hardliner who, for instance, opposed an American naval blockade in favor of air strikes. Stern reveals how casually the president’s advisers endorsed military action, whether airstrikes, ship sinking, or full-scale invasion. But JFK himself played a consistent, restraining role — conscious of the dangers of escalation, the need for clear communication, and the imperative for political rather than military solutions. Despite unanimous opposition from ExComm, he backed the proposal that ultimately resolved the crisis: joint removal of American missiles from Turkey and Russian missiles from Cuba.

Will the 21st century be “the Chinese Century”?

Two of Harvard’s most astute China observers assess the prospects and limitations of a rapidly growing superpower

by Bari Walsh / illustration by Emiliano Ponzi

A wife is jailed for poisoning a business acquaintance, a man with whom her family was enmeshed in shadowy, lucrative financial schemes. Her charismatic husband, once ruthless in his privilege, is humbled, disgraced, and about to face his own prosecutors. Their seat of power evaporates as allies and enemies battle over the remains, and a young heir, a rumored jet-setter, sees his fortunes plummet. The scandal reaches all the way to the top.

It’s a plotline that might have been ripped from the script of a vintage American soap opera. But this lurid tale is real, as are the insights it offers into the explosive growth, amazing resources, and crippling limitations of its particular setting. China, that is — ancient and all-new, revolutionary and constant, too big to fail, where small gestures and a good lunch still make things run.



This is China's new moment of transition. The Communist Party has moved a new slate of leaders onto the Politburo's elite Standing Committee, and party chief Xi Jinping became president in March, vowing to tackle corruption, wasteful spending, and wide disparities in wealth and living standards, all while continuing an extraordinary infrastructure boom and bolstering the military.

As this nation of 1.3 billion people rockets through the start of a new century, economists and policymakers are wondering whether China, now the world's second-largest economy, is poised to become the world's sole superpower. Will it leave the upheavals, the political struggles, and the rivalries behind — will the 21st century come to be known as “the Chinese century”?

That is the question that animates the forthcoming book by William C. Kirby (PhD '81), F. Warren McFarlan (AB '59, MBA '61, DBA '65), and Regina M. Abrami — an expert trio who, for seven years, collaborated to teach Harvard Business School's second-year MBA course Doing Business in China in the Early 21st Century. The book, titled *Can China Lead?*, due later this year from Harvard Business Review Press, grew out of the cross-disciplinary perspectives — and decades of in-country experience — that enriched their teaching collaboration. Abrami, now at the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton School, is a political economist. McFarlan,

THE RAPIDITY OF THE COUNTRY'S TRANSFORMATION IS STUNNING, AND “THE BEST IS YET TO COME.”

During a conversation at HBS, Kirby and McFarlan — two of the most engaged and nuanced China watchers at Harvard — say that the case of Bo Xilai, that disgraced former politician with the murderous wife, captures enduring patterns in Chinese history, while revealing systematic weaknesses in microcosm. Bo Xilai was the party secretary in the province of Chongqing. He was a “princeling,” the son of one of modern China's founding families — a member of the elite and

a possible future member of the Standing Committee. “He was a regional power, and he had absolute authority in Chongqing until the day he didn't,” says Kirby. “He had strong local military support — you could have called him a warlord in a different period.

“And he was corrupt, almost assuredly financially corrupt. But no more than anybody else. And look what he was trying to do,” Kirby continues. “Build houses, roads, railroads, and even an opera house. He's following in this line of technocratic development that starts not with the Communists but with the Nationalists.”

In what it reveals about the power of family and military, the patterns of corruption, and the belief in transformative infrastructure growth, the saga bookends neatly with an earlier drama, says McFarlan — the failed coup attempt by the Gang of Four, led by Chairman Mao's widow, in 1976.

“So those are the goalposts,” McFarlan says with a smile. “And in between, you had this incredible period of stability and economic expansion driven by Deng Xiaoping.”

Deng “drove out all the politicians,” McFarlan says. “This is a government that is entirely put together by the military and by the engineers. And they are thinking *big*. They are spending on infrastructure like it's going out of style, and the best is yet to come.” McFarlan, a guest professor and co-director of case development at the School of Economics and Management at Tsinghua University in Beijing, recalls getting a taste of that during a visit to one university in the Pearl River Delta — “a modest site of 180,000 students,” he says, in Guangdong Province, a region in which entire cities are being merged, creating a megalopolis poised to “put Hong Kong out of business.”

But to McFarlan, Kirby, and Abrami, those bookends are inescapable. The corruption and lack of political openness, the economic inequality, the lack of an exportable model — all of these are factors that help explain why China will be *a* leader this century, but not *the* leader, despite the impressive growth.

“When it comes to universities — there, as with the infrastructure — China has nailed the hardware,” says Kirby, the former dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. “If you take an aerial photo of Harvard and Allston or even of the remarkable development of MIT and Kendall Square, and compare



Warren McFarlan, left, and Bill Kirby can draw on decades of experience in China.

Baker Foundation Professor and Albert H. Gordon Professor of Business Administration, Emeritus, is a management expert. And Kirby, T. M. Chang Professor of China Studies and Spangler Family Professor of Business Administration, is a historian of modern China.

it to what's going on in China, you'll wonder who is coming out ahead. They build universities and high-tech parks as if overnight. But the big question — which they know is a big question — is how do they innovate? How do they educate people to be leaders?"

In a country that sees nothing counterintuitive in planning for innovation, one natural approach is to mimic the pathways that encourage it elsewhere. "We see every major Chinese university now experimenting with a liberal arts college within it," Kirby says. "When I was dean and we were doing the General Education program, many Chinese university presidents came over and studied it. I often joke that it was more carefully read in Beijing than it was by my colleagues here in the FAS."

It's nothing new, Kirby adds. Chinese universities "grew up on international models in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and they became extraordinarily good at it," he says. Educational institutions were later "destroyed by the Communists during the 1950s and 1960s, but they're coming back again," Kirby says, though with strong political controls.

And there, perhaps, lies the rub. The talent and capacities of the Chinese people are unlimited, Kirby says. "China will do well. But what makes for good university governance? How do you follow excellence all the way through? Well, that might mean not having a party secretary at every school."

The political infusion doesn't necessarily lead to dysfunction, however. As McFarlan notes, the School of Economics and Management at Tsinghua has "both a dean and a party head, a structure unknown at HBS. It is not clear to me who is technically responsible for what, but they collaborate closely and I consider it a well-run school."

"And to be fair," Kirby adds, "there are party secretaries who are the innovators, who *because* they are in the party can get things done. So it's not uniform." And although some of the academic freedoms that are customary in the US don't exist in China, or are undermined, rising levels of creativity and a more expansive sense of mission now characterize the best Chinese universities. In addition to the new liberal arts emphasis, universities are also emphasizing leadership training and problem-solving skills. Some are experimenting with international programs, intent on bringing leaders from all over the world to China. Some are doing important, groundbreaking work in a topic not easy to confront: contemporary Chinese history. And across the board, China is putting "unimaginable amounts of money into research."

"From a broad historical perspective, I disagree with people who say that China is not an innovative society," Kirby continues. "You don't stay the most successful civilization

for 2,000 years without the capacity to reinvent yourself. And very often that reinvention takes the form of seeming traditional even though it isn't. You could argue that what Deng did in the 1980s — keeping the structure of political authority while opening up the markets — was indeed very innovative, within the Marxist-Leninist tradition."

China has, and will have, some of the best engineering schools in the world. But to academics in the US who worry that China will surge ahead in all aspects of higher education, Kirby and McFarlan say it's unlikely in the short term. "In terms of comprehensive universities, unless there is some serious structural change in governance, no, it won't take a leadership role there," says Kirby, citing the combination of research and teaching that has defined the American system, and the "genius that we've had in embedding liberal arts colleges within the great universities, protecting them there."

"And you can't visualize Chinese universities able to handle the kind of ethnic diversity of US schools," adds McFarlan. That doesn't mean that the leading position of American universities is guaranteed in perpetuity; after all, as Kirby has written, the best universities in the world were in Germany at the start of the last century. "The US may not always lead, but China may not, either," McFarlan says.

Walking through Shanghai today, through the modern district of Pudong, the rapidity of the country's transformation is stunning, Kirby says. "In the early 1990s Shanghai looked just like it did in the late 1930s, except dirtier. And now it's one of the cleanest, most modern cities in the world." Signs of the boom are everywhere; the country is "massively reaching out," McFarlan says. "There are lots of foreign interactions, lots of international acquisitions. Some 78 of the world's 500 largest companies are now headquartered in Shanghai. That came out of nowhere. That didn't exist 15 years ago."

What will the next 15 years bring — or the next 50? China has played an amazing game of catch-up, McFarlan says, after losing years of innovation and a generation of leaders to the Cultural Revolution. Under Deng, when leaders such as Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang unleashed the forces that let the country begin to redefine itself, they also allowed for "significant economic

and regulatory reform," says Kirby. There is still a long way to go in all of those areas, but political reform, stalled after Tiananmen Square, may be the longest road of all. With the increasing wealth and power of the state and military sectors — and the influence of both on the political system — "China may have a great deal to gain from political reform," he says, "but those in power in China may not." ❧



A view of the Shanghai skyline; the Harvard Center Shanghai is located in the building at left.

WHEN IT COMES TO UNIVERSITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE, "CHINA HAS NAILED THE HARDWARE."

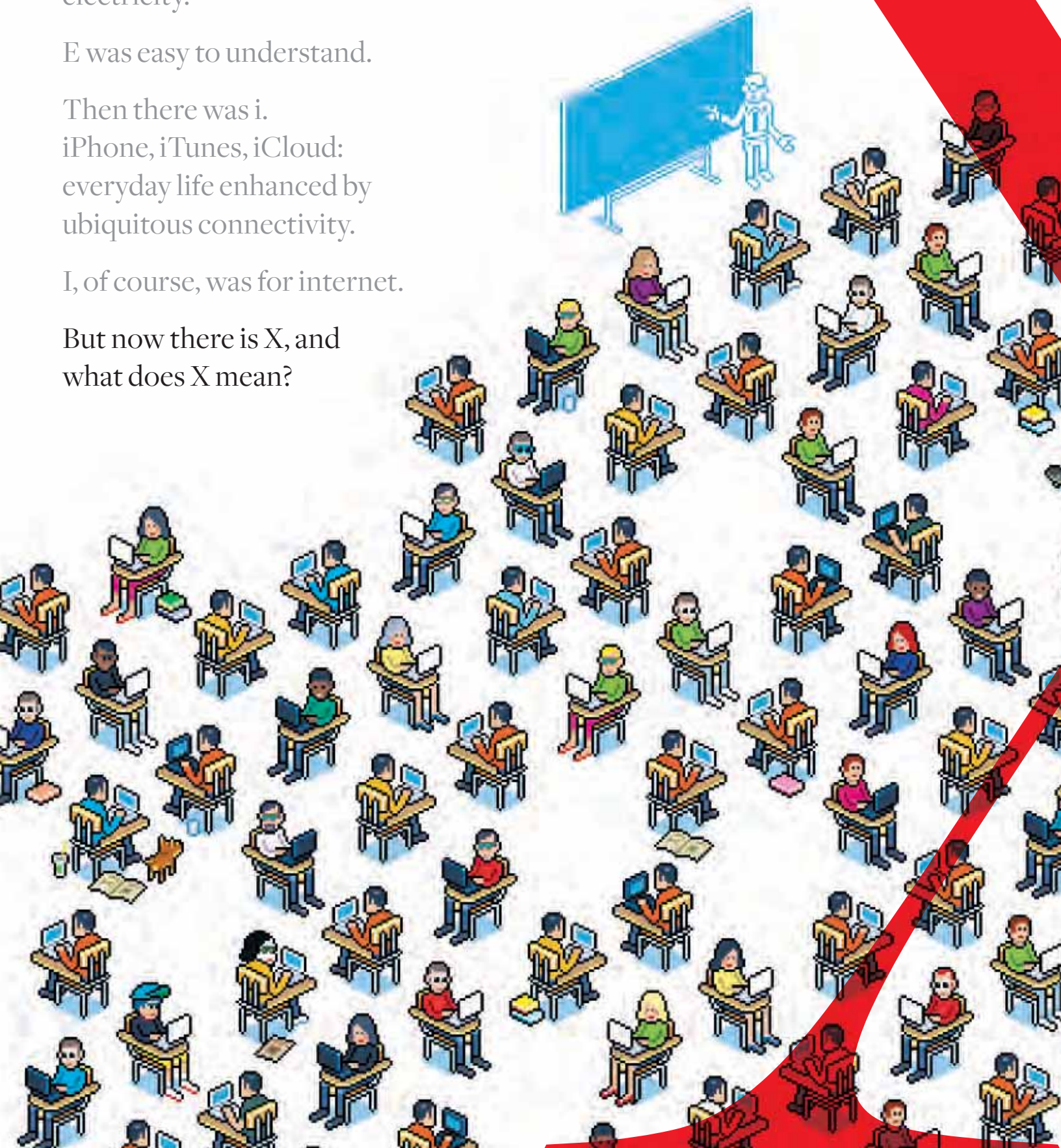
In the beginning was e.
E-mail, e-trade, e-book.
Familiar things, but with
electricity.

E was easy to understand.

Then there was i.
iPhone, iTunes, iCloud:
everyday life enhanced by
ubiquitous connectivity.

I, of course, was for internet.

But now there is X, and
what does X mean?





Colloquy 17
SPRING 2013

value

A look inside HarvardX, the
ambitious, game-changing online
education experiment

By Nicholas Nardini
Illustration by eBoy



The question of what this newest techno-lexical appendage means is one that has preoccupied the Harvard community since last May's announcement of edX, the nonprofit online learning venture launched by Harvard and MIT. By now, some things about edX are common knowledge. That the organization's president, MIT's Anant Agarwal, promises it will be "the most important educational technology in 200 years." Or that, on the day after it went live, the first course offered by HarvardX received more than four times as many enrollees as there are undergraduates at Harvard. But even as engineers are hired and professors rush to pitch online versions of their most popular courses, it remains unclear what exactly X will mean for Harvard, and for higher education more generally. X, after all, is conventionally variable: not anything certain, but uncertainty itself.



EdX promises nothing less than to provide world-class education to everyone, everywhere. As of February, the consortium that started with Harvard and MIT had added 10 other members, including the University of California, Berkeley; Wellesley College; the Australian National University; and McGill University. It had welcomed more than 700,000 individuals to its platform, accounting for more than 900,000 course enrollments.

"In five years, the classroom will be entirely transformed," says Robert Lue, PhD '95, professor of the practice of molecular and cellular biology and the faculty director of HarvardX, as the local subsidiary of the edX consortium is known. Like the internet that birthed it, HarvardX remains, for now, remarkably non-hierarchical: not so much an organized body as an emergent phenomenon arising from a network of initiatives, committees, and loose collaborations. But if you had to identify the project's on-the-ground head it would be Lue, a pedagogical innovator who origi-

"Harvard's duty is to be transformative in the world."

— Robert Lue, faculty director of HarvardX

nally made his mark at Harvard with the development of freshly construed introductory courses in the life sciences. Earlier this term, he was named the inaugural Richard L. Menschel Faculty Director of the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.

Speaking one morning in mid-February, Lue showed no sign that his enthusiasm for HarvardX had abated since May. "The rising tide of having great educational material more broadly available than it's ever been in history will have far-reaching consequences for the readiness of the global workforce," he says. "Look at what Twitter did for the Arab Spring, and then think about what having access to Michael Sandel and other deep thinkers will do for people's

As faculty director of HarvardX, Robert Lue oversees course content — and helps persuade the skeptics.



perceptions of right and wrong.”

As faculty director, Lue oversees the course content being prepared for HarvardX. And more than anyone else, he has also been responsible for selling the idea of HarvardX to a university not especially famous for entrepreneurial risk-taking. One of the ways he does so is to describe how HarvardX will bring new tools and perspectives back to the physical campus and the University’s more conventional students. An explicit aim is to improve education — both online and on campus — by learning more about how students learn.

Those most skeptical about online learning tend to be humanists, he says, who argue that the most valuable thing about a college education, the interpersonal chemistry of the physical classroom, can’t be replicated online. Lue, who has an undergraduate degree in philosophy, is especially sensitive to those concerns. Putting material online for students to ingest on their own time, he says, frees up time for more substantive in-classroom discussion. “The information glut has killed the Socratic method,” he says. “We have too much stuff to tell students, so we don’t have time to talk to students. Online learning will give us the opportunity to return to the primacy of human interaction.”

Andrew Ho, assistant professor of education and HarvardX research director, says three things distinguish HarvardX from similar online learning ventures: attention to the quality of the courses, emphasis on the benefit to students enrolled at Harvard, and a commitment to seizing the research opportunity represented by the venture. “What does a teacher want to know before starting a class?” he asks. “Who are their students? What are their various levels of engagement? What is the value of personal contact? We’re in an excellent position to use the data from HarvardX to study these questions. It’s a playground of limitless research potential.”

That’s an idea that particularly excites a pedagogically oriented scholar like Xiao-Li Meng, PhD ’90, dean of the Graduate School and a member of the HarvardX Research Committee. “We continually work with our teaching fellows on new ways to employ technology in the service of better teaching — and better learning,” he says. “Graduate students are often leading the charge on these teaching innovations, and I expect they’ll play leading roles in HarvardX course building as well. The theories they test in the edX setting, and the data they obtain, will be fascinating to see.”

But there are broader aims as well. “I see HarvardX as an essential experiment in liberal arts education,” says Michael Smith, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and a member of the HarvardX Leadership Group. “It gives the FAS faculty a new venue in which to demonstrate the transformative value of a liberal arts education. By showcasing the creativity of our faculty and breadth of the FAS disciplines, HarvardX will bring the excitement and satisfaction of learning to students on campus and around the world.



The liberal arts will be made to come alive for learners everywhere.”

The idea that online courses are not competitors of the classroom but rather a return to the classroom’s original principles is a common one among the people building HarvardX. “It’s the *nostos*,” says Claudia Filos, referring to the Homeric Greek concept of a journey of homecoming. I was visiting the Science Center offices of the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, where Filos was about to participate in filming for CB22x: The Ancient Greek Hero, the

Brandeis professor Leonard Muellner, left, is chair of the Board of Readers for the new HarvardX course The Ancient Greek Hero, taught by Professor Gregory Nagy. They discussed *The Iliad* during a recent filming session.

“The theories graduate students test in the edX setting, and the data they obtain, will be fascinating to see.”

— Xiao-Li Meng, dean of the Graduate School

online version of a class Gregory Nagy has taught for over 35 years at Harvard. Filos, who currently works at the Center for Hellenic Studies, originally took the course through the Harvard Extension School and has now performed her own *nostos* to serve on Nagy’s Board of Readers, a group of former students with whom he films concise textual discussions meant to give online learners the feeling of a Harvard discussion section. “Professor Nagy’s course has always been about making these ancient texts accessible to as many people as possible,” she says. “So HeroesX isn’t a departure, but really the fulfillment of the mission he’s had all along.”

The prevailing atmosphere in the Bok Center that morning was energetic bustle: lenses were focused and refocused, a camera that wouldn’t fit onto its tripod was found to be backwards, and the elaborate array of spotlights tripped the



fuse on an extension cord. Directing the show was Marlon Kuzmick, an associate director at the Bok Center who serves as something of a multimedia guru-about-campus. With an MA in English literature from Cornell and several years as an Expos preceptor on his resume, Kuzmick represents a type of scholar and teacher especially common in EdX circles, a humanist self-refashioned as techie in the pursuit of new pedagogical possibilities. His Twitter handle is @VisualRhetoric. With four separate cameras, he was preparing to make future viewers feel like part of the discussion.



Marlon Kuzmick (with camera) offers a different lens on the HeroesX filming.

“Our geniuses!” exclaimed Professor Nagy when he entered the room, gesturing toward Kuzmick and his assistants. “Where should I sit? Should our laptops be in the shot?” Seated across from Filos and another discussant, Nagy launched into an account of Odysseus’s *nostos* as the cameras rolled. The digital Nagy, blown up on a flatscreen monitor, looked crisper than the physical one, and possibly even more professorial and engaging.

“HarvardX has helped us to realize that, in a way, to be a professor is to be looked at,” said Kuzmick, in a break between segments. “Our job is to figure out how to use ways of looking to tell the different stories of these professors.”

At a recent HarvardX town hall, meant to introduce the wider Harvard community to the still-emerging organization, Kuzmick demonstrated some of the new ways he is looking at professors, showing footage from a class on American poetry that the English department’s Elisa New is

developing. In the film, New stands before rows of pews in Christ Church, conducting her class in a Puritan hymn, as the shot switches between close-ups of her face and angled views of the class lurching off-key through the piece. The cinematography is as beautiful as the singing is bad: Kuzmick’s technique is fluid and dynamic, with no relation to the static straight-on shot familiar from YouTube lectures.

When asked what she thinks HarvardX will mean for humanities education, New is equivocal. “It might change higher education,” she says. “What I think about more is that we’re filling a desperate need for high-quality content in high schools. We’re making the humanities more accessible.” But she admits her real motivations for taking the digital plunge are slightly more selfish: “It’s been so much fun. It feels like all of a sudden having capacity to do all of the things I’ve imagined. I’ve always wanted to have film and music and student performance fully integrated with a course. I don’t want to use a blackboard! This course allows me to do all these things, partly just by giving me a staff.”

While most of the staff members assisting with HarvardX are moonlighting from other University responsibilities, somewhere near the center of the tangled web of cooperation can be found Jeff Emanuel, the first “HarvardX Fellow,” whose full-time job is ensuring the project’s smooth operation. With an eclectic background including stints in the Air Force, combat journalism, and archaeology, he compares his current role to that of a showrunner in Hollywood: “I oversee courses from conception to completion. Everyone else is touching part of the elephant, I’m the guy who can see the whole elephant.” For now, he’s perched in an unlikely spot for such a vantage point, in a tiny compartment behind an obscure office of University IT. “Just enough room for my air mattress and pillow,” he says, reaching up to pat the bedding stored above a cabinet. “But what you see here is startup culture: you need people willing

“It feels like all of a sudden having capacity to do all of the things I’ve imagined. I’ve always wanted to have film and music and student performance fully integrated with a course. I don’t want to use a blackboard!”

— Elisa New, professor of English

to spend nights and weekends making it happen.”

“Startup culture” and “Harvard culture,” are not often considered synonymous, but Emanuel believes change is coming. “Sure, Harvard is an elite name, but this is our chance to prove *why* it’s elite. We’re blurring the line between ‘outsider’ and ‘insider,’ and we’re doing it the





same way a pencil eraser blurs — so eventually the line will be gone.”

Not everyone shares Emanuel’s enthusiasm for that prospect. “I’m afraid that this is going to destroy grad students,” one professor told me. “Not because of what it will do to elite universities, but other places. Why should a community college hire a new PhD when they can pipe in Stephen Greenblatt?”

Lue has heard this kind of thing before. “There are some people who say we are the doomsday machine of higher ed,” he says with a smile, “but I don’t believe that. A major change is coming, there’s no question about that. And we have two options: pull up the drawbridge and heat the boiling oil, or go out there and make it happen the way we think it should. Harvard’s duty is to be transformative in the world.”

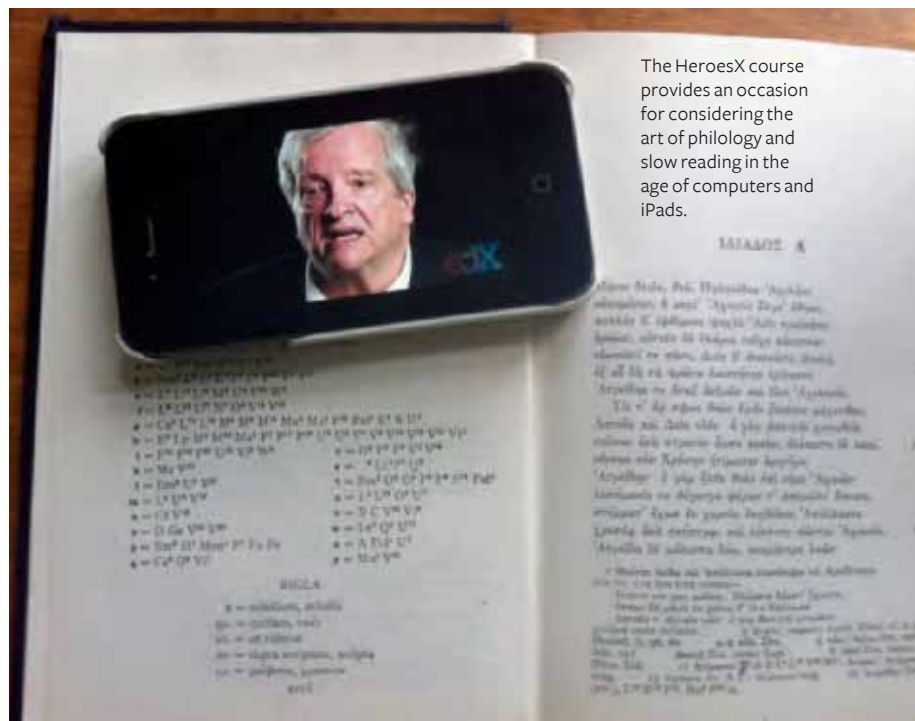
Indeed, graduate students collaborating on HarvardX seem more excited by their current work than worried about prospects for work in the future. Bill O’Hara, a PhD candidate in music theory working with the Bok Center on video editing for the project, says that HarvardX has begun to change the way he perceives the world, as on a recent trip to Italy to film medieval manuscripts: “I would enter a church and be thinking not only about its history, but about how to convey my sense of the place, how I was taking it in visually. It makes me want to be a more dynamic teacher.”

Two more PhD students thinking hard about the pedagogical benefits of HarvardX are Ian Miller and Wen Yu, teaching fellows for Peter Bol’s Chinese History 185 — “Creating ChinaX.” In this first-of-its-kind course — half Chinese history class, half cross-University workshop in designing an online course — students will actually develop modules for a future online version of the class.

“Everyone has implicit theories of learning,” says Miller. “So when they design a class, they design a class like the ones they took in college.”

“So the real benefit of this course for us,” continues Yu, “is that it forces us to reflect on the processes of our teaching and the structure of our knowledge, even in a subject we think we know really well. It’s a chance to make our teaching and communicating more rigorous.”

Part of that rigor has involved questioning received notions of how knowledge should be conveyed and evaluated. “The hour-long lecture is a particular adaptation to the technological constraints of the twentieth century,” says Miller, who admits that he now finds even five-minute video clips a little lengthy. The tools Miller and Yu are currently developing include one for the collective annotation of texts and another that maps video clips onto a branching tree of possible student interests, creating a kind of choose-your-own-adventure lecture. They are even investigating a program that employs computational linguistics to automatically grade essays, though they are quick to add that it



The HeroesX course provides an occasion for considering the art of philology and slow reading in the age of computers and iPads.

“HarvardX has helped us to realize that, in a way, to be a professor is to be looked at. Our job is to figure out how to use ways of looking to tell the different stories of these professors.”

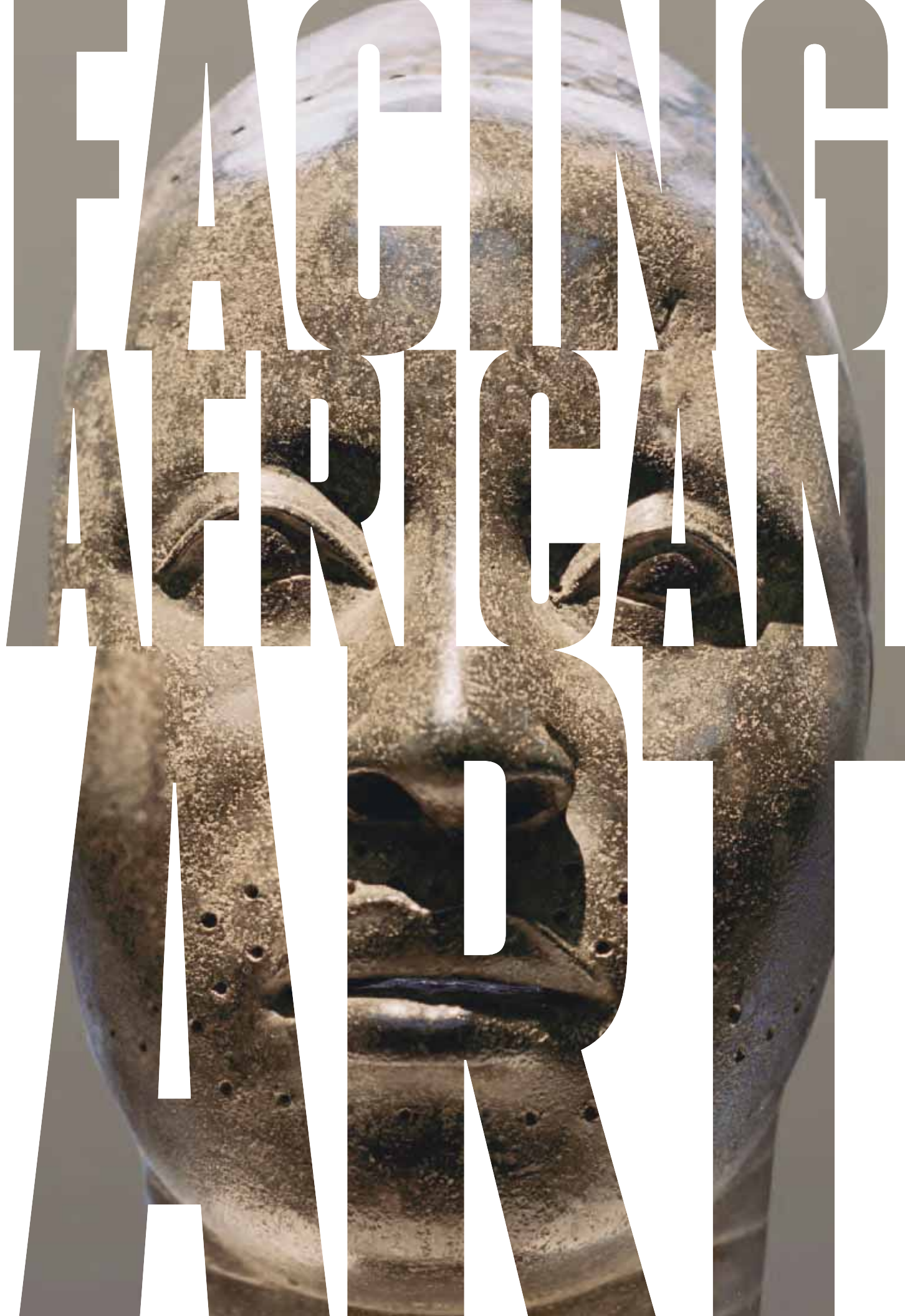
— Marlon Kuzmick, assistant director of the Derek Bok Center

would mainly be used to weed out the worst writers.

Does all of this pose a threat to the traditional academic job market? Perhaps, but both Miller and Yu are glad to be at its vanguard. “I feel more ready to teach Chinese history having worked on this course” says Yu. “I think I’m more competitive now than I was.” Thanks to technologies like HarvardX, she and Miller suspect, there may be fewer professors in the academy of the future, but they will be much better teachers. “Are we going to be the last cohort that’s tenured on the old model?” Miller asks. “Or the first cohort that’s not?”

Miller isn’t sure what X will end up meaning for Harvard, but he does say this: “I have a one-year-old son, and we’re beginning to think about saving for higher education. At the current rate of tuition increase, the cost to send him to college will be astronomical. But I really don’t think we’re going to spend that. I think something’s going to change.”





Each object of art tells its own story, on its own terms. Suzanne Preston Blier listens — and then weaves connections between its makers, their society, its journey, and ours. By Siddhartha Mitter

As an undergraduate at the University of Vermont in the late 1960s, Suzanne Preston Blier heard an idea in her very first art history class that cemented her vocation in the field. It came from the great art historian Erwin Panofsky. “In his eyes, everything had a symbol and a meaning, and you could go into a work and decipher it,” Blier says. “It’s like being part of, and also writing, a detective novel.”

It’s appropriate, then, that Blier, who happily cites Nancy Drew novels as one of her life’s inspirations, thinks of herself as a sleuth. Her specialty is African art — a field in which art historians do well to bulk up on forensic skills. Africa is the cradle of humanity; its art is as old as its cultures. But objects that date back before colonial times — and even some that are more recent — come to museumgoers, collectors, and students bereft of much key information. We are given, perhaps, a time period, a region, an ethnicity. But who made the work? Who paid for it? What events surrounded its making?

With little to no written history to turn to — most pre-colonial African civilizations transmitted knowledge orally — art history for many years essentially threw up its hands, says Blier, the Allen Whitehill Clowes Professor of Fine Arts and professor of African and African American studies. “When I grew up in the field, we focused on works created in the late 19th through mid-20th centuries,” she says. “And it’s a fabulous field. But for the most part, people were not going back in time.” She heard of eminent scholars, pleading the lack of data, saying: Leave it to the anthropologists. It can’t be done.

But Blier had an edge. She’d been to West Africa — to Bénin, with the Peace Corps, before she even completed her bachelor’s degree — and she knew instinctively that its early art deserved better. “I’m a terrier,” she says. “I grab onto something like that. I had fallen in love with Africa, and I decided to dedicate my career to African art history and try to transform it.”

Mission accomplished. Blier, who came to Harvard in

1993 after teaching at Columbia, is not only one of the most honored historians of African art practicing today, but also one of its broadest thinkers. Her books encompass not only issues of form and aesthetics, but also architecture, psychology, representation, and philosophy. She has immersed herself in multiple West African cultures — the Yoruba of Ile-Ife, Nigeria; the Battamaliba of northern Togo; the Abomey kingdom of Bénin — as well as followed the trace of African art as colonialism and commerce scattered it into the West, along the way picking up leads that tell us much about not only art’s makers but its viewers — ourselves.

This year alone, Blier has four books appearing or near completion. They address the spectacular bronze and terracotta sculptures of Ile-Ife and what they tell us about Yoruba civilization circa 1300; the Amazon women warriors of Dahomey (now Bénin) and their representation in the West, including travelling shows at international exhibitions in the early 20th century; and, in a characteristically creative sidebar, a fresh contribution to scholarship on Pablo Picasso’s famous — and at least partly Africa-inspired — *Demoiselles d’Avignon*.

At the same time, Blier has revealed her techie side. In 2009, she launched AfricaMap (worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap), a Web-based tool that allows rich sorting and visual layering of all kinds of existing data: social, environmental, political, economic, historical, linguistic, and so forth. Its success led to an expanded platform, WorldMap, that launched in 2011. Hosted by Harvard’s Center for Geographic Analysis, but open-source and freely accessible to all, these platforms open new horizons for research, teaching, and interactive presentation of ideas to any audience, and for collaboration across locations and fields. As co-chair of AfricaMap and head of the WorldMap steering committee, Blier is the rare art historian blazing trails in technological innovation for all disciplines.

Blier’s work on the Ile-Ife sculptures — a project she began almost 30 years ago and pursued, she says, with the

doggedness of a “military campaign” — exemplifies her methods, and also her ambitions. The bronze and terracotta sculptures she considers are, in one sense, well known. They are naturalist masterpieces, so refined and realistic that the German archaeologist Leo Frobenius, who unearthed the first one to come to light in 1910, believed that they could not be the work of Africans. Instead, he speculated, they might have come from the lost kingdom of Atlantis. That theory quickly lost currency, but the figures retained their mystique, anchoring a major exhibition on Yoruba art that toured Britain, Spain, and the United States from 2010 to 2012.

Yet in another sense, these pieces remain unknown — “a challenge to decipher,” as one reviewer wrote, due to the lack of documentation and their provenance from “sites altered over time, resulting in a compromised archeological record.”

But Blier took a different starting point. Ife, she notes, is one of the world’s oldest continuous kingships. “One thing that fascinated me was, how does that kind of longevity happen? And how are arts embedded in that society?” Waving aside the lack of written record, she spent time with the objects themselves — in Nigeria, at the British Museum in London, and elsewhere — seeking clues in their materials. Some were pure copper, some were various alloys, resulting in different hues and textures that could convey separate meanings. She immersed herself in Ife, interviewing families that live at the archeological sites, teasing out histories. She connected the period when the key bronzes were made to the aftermath of a brutal civil war in Ife and that war’s stakes, to do with resources and control of trade routes with other African states and across the Sahara. She began to know more about the artists who made these works at massive furnaces — possibly sealing their own death by the use of arsenic — and Obalufon, the king who commissioned them.

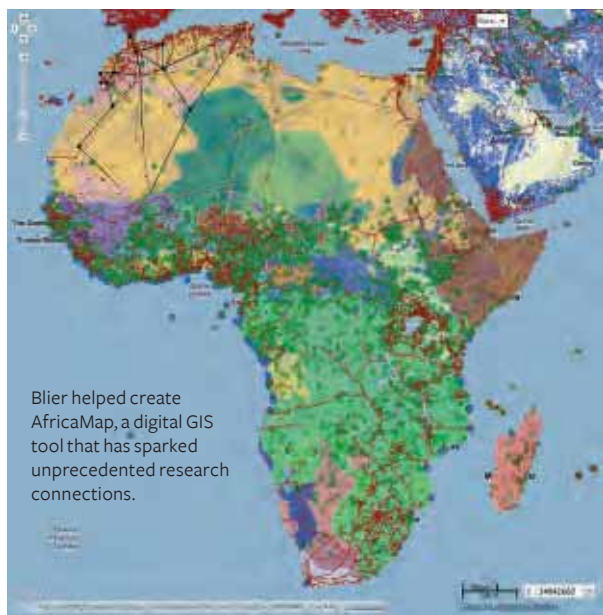
Blier’s forthcoming book on the Ife sculptures is titled *Art and Risk in Ancient Yoruba*. “There was enormous risk in manufacturing these life-size bronzes, enormous potential for failure,” she says. “And the risk that people take who have been involved in a great tragedy, such as this civil war: they feel a compulsion to tell it through their arts and their oral literature, so that people know what went on. You can see comparable things in the aftermath of the Holocaust, or the slave trade: this thirst for people to know the story.”

Who tells the story is of course a fraught question when it comes to African culture and arts, where colonial explorers, agents, and scholars have done so much of the talking. Another forthcoming Blier project, *Imaging African Amazons: The Art of Dahomey Women Warriors*, is as much about Western interpretations of these all-women brigades, which go back to the 17th century, as it is about the warriors themselves. In Abomey, Bénin, Blier became fascinated with a palace bas-relief depicting these Amazons, who were often the first to go into battle. “It shows them doing the devastating work,” she says. “Killing, taking objects, taking slaves.” The Amazons were often captives taken from neighboring kingdoms; Dahomey, where the Vodoun religious system that is now associated with Haiti originated, was heavily involved in the slave trade.

By the late 19th century, with the kingdom fallen and colonial rule entrenched, the Amazons had become the object of European fascination and fantasy, freighted with conceptions about race and sexuality. At the turn of the century, groups of them actually toured and performed at colonial exhibitions in Europe, and also in the United States, where, Blier says, “their guide was a Frenchman who was also involved in contract labor to build the Panama Canal.” Each audience imbued these women with a meaning — about colonialism, military discipline, and more — that reflected local concerns. In America they got portrayed as canni-



Suzanne Preston Blier



bals and savages, undermining calls for racial equality. “It became about slavery and Jim Crow,” Blier says. “And it’s about women’s rights, women as cannibals and agents of destruction, and God forbid we should give women the vote.”

Blier happily concedes that projects like this spill beyond the borders of art history. “I’m interested in how images construct the world, and also in how the world in which images are made constructs those images,” she says. Looking for clues in geology, economics, or any other discipline is fair game — indeed, it’s necessary. The AfricaMap platform integrates databases on everything from religion to commerce, disease prevalence, climate, and conflict history, making this kind of cross-discipline work feasible, not overwhelming. Blier says it has revolutionized her work, allowing her to collaborate with other scholars and perform fascinating new analyses. “Simply locating people in space is central to my research,” she says. “I’m looking at DNA, architectural forms, trade routes, water availability — it’s taking me into areas I never imagined I would be able to explore.”

Blier thinks big, but she’s just as excited by the small revolutions in academic labor — the way that patient scholarship, and a touch of serendipity, can present an old topic in a whole new way. She lights up when she evokes her forthcoming Picasso project, *Decoding Picasso’s Demoiselles*, a re-reading of the famous painting in light of material Blier found that, she is certain, influenced Picasso at the time. She is coy, for now, about the details, but gives a hint: “Africa is being brought back into the story of the ‘Demoiselles’ in a central way,” she says. “Picasso had close sources. And he was far more engaged than we have assumed with the major issues of the day.

“This is sort of my late-life love child,” Blier says of the Picasso project, laughing. But it illustrates a theme: from her base in the supposedly obscure and difficult domain of pre-colonial African art, she has presented ideas and developed tools that speak not just to art history as a whole, but to many other fields. “I’m viewed as an Africanist,” Blier says, “but that has given me a huge amount of freedom to come back to central issues and re-engage them in ways that others have not done.”

OBJECT LESSONS

When documentation is scarce, artworks reveal their own truth



“Museum collections of African art are notorious for having very little information on them,” says Catherine Hale. That’s as true at the University of Iowa Art Museum, where Hale is the curator of African and non-Western art, as it is elsewhere. “We have collections that were not acquired with the best documentation. So I think, how can I translate my academic methods into how the museum functions?”

For answers, Hale looks no further than to her experience at Harvard, where she is putting the finishing touches on her PhD dissertation, supervised by Suzanne Preston Blier. Her thesis examines ceremonial stools of carved wood associated with Asante (or Ashanti) chiefs, in Ghana. For decades, colonial observers associated different types of stool with particular chiefs. “They had neat and cogent categories,” she says.

Those typologies were only part of the story, though. “Discussions of the stools are framed around male chieftaincy,” Hale says. “But more often than not, the chiefs don’t sit on the stools. The people who sit on them publicly are the queen mothers.”

In her research, Hale reviewed the literature on Asante stools, tracing how their complex and shifting use and symbolism became depicted in such static, and erroneous, ways. She travelled back and forth to Ghana for seven years, forging relationships and interviewing 17 queen mothers, including one who was “enstooled,” or elevated to her title, in 1928.

Hale traces her project’s roots to the very first class she took with Blier. “She set it up around the idea of working with objects firsthand,” she says. “She told us to go to the Peabody Museum and pick something interesting.” Hale was drawn to a stool, and her adventure began. “She had us look at objects from multiple vantage points, and use the material to follow the path of evidence.

At Iowa, Hale is applying exactly that method. “I went around and asked professors how the museum can work for them,” she says. Many said they wanted the museum to be a place of investigation for their students. “They didn’t want answers pinned on the wall.”

Hale is deploying the open-source, Harvard-based WorldMap (world-map.harvard.edu) platform to put her collection in rich context. “We’ve pulled in layers like ethnolinguistic history, trade routes, slave trade history. We can ask, why does it matter that female circumcision rates are 91.3 percent in an area where a certain mask is made?”

The result, she says, is finally to give the objects in the collection their due — while turning the museum into a place of discovery. “Through an art object-centered approach,” Hale says, “you can talk about science, religion, politics — you name it.” — SM

In Ghana, Catherine Hale (left) forged a relationship with Nana Yaa Birago Kokodurofo, the Adumasahemaa (or queen mother) of Adumasa, who was “enstooled” in that role in 1928. Also pictured are Osei Tutu (her son) and Rita Paintsil (her granddaughter).

Noted

Anthropology

Intent on understanding the mind of man's best friend, **BRIAN HARE, PHD '04**, has launched Dognition, an online service offering the pet owner an in-depth diagnosis of his dog's personality, with detailed information on how a particular pet thinks. Users fill out a personality questionnaire about their dog and use a specially designed Canine Assessment Toolkit to lead 10 experimental games meant to reveal each animal's unique abilities. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the relationship between pet and owner. Hare is associate professor of evolutionary anthropology at Duke University and the co-author of the book *The Genius of Dogs* (Dutton, 2013).

Applied Physics

LEO BERANEK, SD '40, has been awarded a 2013 Institute of Electric and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) Medal for outstanding contributions in the leadership, planning, and administration of affairs of great value to the electrical and electronics engineering profession; it is the highest award bestowed by the IEEE. Beranek, a National Medal of Science winner and founder of Bolt,

Beranek, and Newman in Cambridge, MA, was specifically selected "for leadership as a co-founder of a premier consulting firm that shaped modern acoustical practice and laid the groundwork for the Internet, and for public service."

Economics

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the launch of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), **STEVEN BLOOM, PHD '86**, was bestowed the honor of ringing the opening bell on the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange in January. Not long after graduating from Harvard, Bloom helped to invent Standard and Poor's Depository Receipts, aka SPDRs (ticker symbol SPY), a product considered one of the most successful financial instruments ever created, with over \$100 billion in assets and with trading volume in excess of 140 million shares per day.

English

DANIEL PICKER, GSA '84, has published *Steep Stony Road* (Viral Cat Press, 2012), a collection of poetry he refers to as his "life's work." Much of the poetry included in the book was written while Picker was a special student at Harvard, study-

ing under Seamus Haney and William Alfred, among others. Picker's poem, "River Goddess," won the *Dudley Review Poetry Prize* in 2010.



Geological Sciences

Two recently discovered minerals, *edgrewite* ($\text{Ca}_9(\text{SiO}_4)_4\text{F}_2$) and *hydroxyledegrewite* ($\text{Ca}_9(\text{SiO}_4)_4(\text{OH})_2$), have been named in honor of **EDWARD S. GREW, PHD '71**, a longtime research professor at the School of Earth and Climate Sciences at the University of Maine. Both minerals were unearthed by geologists Evgeny Galuskin and Irina Galuskina, colleagues of Grew, in the Chetumal caldera near Russia's Mount Elbrus. Grew, who has been studying minerals for more than 50 years, has himself played a key role in the discovery of 13 new minerals, making him an obvious choice for this latest distinction, news of which caught the attention of Maine Public Radio and the *Bangor Daily News*.

Government

In a new assessment of Hegel's contributions to philosophy, **LEONARD F. WHEAT, PHD '58**, argues that contrary to recent scholarly interpretation, Hegel *did* employ a dialectic

method in his work. In *Hegel's Undiscovered Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis Dialectics: What Only Marx and Tillich Understood*, Wheat argues that two of the philosopher's most important works contain 38 cleverly disguised dialectics, revealing previously undiscovered insights about God and freedom.

ROSS TERRILL, PHD '70, will be spending the next year as Senior International Visiting Fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute in Canberra, writing and lecturing on China's challenges for the United States and Australia. His memoir, *Wo yu Zhongguo (Myself and China)* (China Renmin University Press, 2011), has been published in Chinese in Beijing, and the latest edition of his book *Mao: A Biography* has sold over 600,000 copies in China alone.

History of Science

FANI PAPAGEORGIOU, AM '98, has made her poetry debut with *When You Said No, Did You Mean Never?* (Shearsman Books, 2013). The collection follows Papageorgiou's Greek novel, *Zero and One* (Kastaniotis, 2000), which won the Maria Rally award for a first novel.

Mathematics

Due in part to his work on the Mars Rover Curiosity, **SOLOMON GOLOMB, PHD '57**, will receive the National Medal of Science, the highest honor bestowed by the United States Government upon scientists, engineers, and inventors. It



was Golomb's mathematical coding schemes that enabled the rover to send stunningly vivid extraterrestrial images millions of miles through space. Golomb, along with 11 other scientists, will be honored at the White House later this year.

MIT professor emeritus **MICHAEL ARTIN, PHD '60**, is among eight recipients worldwide of the 2013 Wolf Prize, awarded by the Israel-based Wolf Foundation. The award, which has been a precursor to the Nobel for many scholars, is given for outstanding contributions across five scholarly categories. Artin, a GSAS Centennial Medalist in 2005, won the American Mathematical Society's annual Steele Prize for Lifetime Achievement in 2002. In selecting him for this latest honor, the Wolf Foundation called him "one of the main architects of modern algebraic geometry." He will receive the prize from Israeli President Shimon Peres at a special session of the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, in May.

STEPHEN COOK, PHD '66, is the author of one of the world's most challenging math problems. It is

so difficult that there is a \$1 million award on offer for the first person able to solve it. Cook himself is an expert on mathematical solvability, and his theorem on the topic is a mainstay of the computer science curriculum. For his contributions to the field, Cook was awarded the 2012 Herzberg Gold Medal, Canada's most prestigious science prize, which comes with \$1 million in research funding.

Medical Sciences

With *The Evolution of Vertebrate Blood Clotting*, **RUSSELL F. DOOLITTLE, PHD '62**, provides an in-depth look at the history of blood coagulation, starting with the basics of protein structure, animal systematics, and simple genomics. From there, Doolittle leads the reader through an investigation into the blood-clotting genes of non-mammalian vertebrates and shares insights into the future of genetic engineering and molecular evolution. Doolittle is professor emeritus of molecular biology at UC San Diego.

The University of Pennsylvania has tapped **H. LEE SWEENEY, PHD '84**, to serve as the inaugural director of

its new Center for Orphan Disease Research and Therapy. The center will serve to investigate and develop therapies for orphan diseases, the term for rare illnesses that affect fewer than 200,000 people. Sweeney, whose own research focuses on lesser-known muscle disorders, has been chair of the Department of Physiology at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine since 1999.



Psychology

Neuroscientist **ANNE SERENO, PHD '91**, has been making headlines for her research on the cognitive effects of heading a soccer ball. Using an iPad-based experiment, Sereno and her colleagues at the University of Texas Health Science Center examined both direct, stimulus-driven and indirect, goal-driven responses in a group of 12 female soccer players between the ages of 15 and 18 and compared the results to data collected from a control group. Their findings revealed that head-to-ball contact does indeed lead to cognitive dysfunctions consistent with mild traumatic brain injury.

Public Policy

JACK NEEDLEMAN, PHD '95, has been elected to the Institute of Medicine, an esteemed recognition

for individuals who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievement and commitment to service in the fields of health and medicine. Needleman is professor of health policy and management at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, director of the HPM PhD and research master's programs, and associate director of the UCLA Patient Safety Institute.

Regional Studies— Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia

JACOB HEN-TOV, LL.M. '60, AM '63, received the Superior Civilian Service Award on August 20, 2012, from the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies for 30 years of sustained excellence as a professor of history and government. Following the release of *Communism and Zionism in Palestine During the British Mandate* (Transaction Publishers, 2012), he is now in the process of preparing his next book, *The Palestinian Jewry in Support of the Soviet Union: The Story of the League V 1941-1946* (anticipated fall 2013).

Urban Planning

The University of Toronto has named **MERIC GERTLER, PHD '83**, as its 16th president. Gertler began his career at UT as an assistant professor in the geography department in 1983, shortly after earning his degree at Harvard. He was named Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in late 2008. 🏠



Kenneth Froewiss, Mia de Kuijper, and Karen Hladik. Photo by Molly Akin

THEY MEAN BUSINESS

Members of the GSAS Alumni Council, representing a globally diverse set of high-achievers, came together in January for a wide-ranging exploration of how the PhD can be valuable in the worlds of finance, consulting, biotechnology, entrepreneurship, and a host of other nonacademic settings. The two-day career immersion, offered to students considering a nonacademic path, focused on how the research and analytical skills necessary to the pursuit of a PhD can translate to professional settings, where they can form the basis of a marketable skill set. The presenters, who also made time for networking, were Reinier Beeuwkes (AB '62, PhD '70, medical sciences), John Fan PhD '72, applied sciences), Kenneth Froewiss (AB '67, PhD '77, economics), Karen Hladik (PhD '84, business economics), Daniel Johnson (AM '82, regional studies—East Asia; GSA '85, business economics), Alan Kantrow (AB '69, PhD '79, history of American civilization), Mia de Kuijper (MPP '83, PhD '83, economics), Betsy Ohlsson-Wilhelm (AB '63, PhD '69, medical sciences), and Marianne Steiner (SM, MEN '78, applied mathematics and information science).



Help GSAS recognize distinguished alumni of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences by nominating a colleague for the Centennial Medal. Awarded each June, the Centennial Medal is the highest honor bestowed by GSAS; it celebrates contributions to society that emerged from one's graduate study at Harvard. Please send nominations to gsaa@fas.harvard.edu or to the Harvard University Graduate School Alumni Association, Centennial Medal Nominations, Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. Nominations should be accompanied by a cover letter stating your reasons for selecting the candidate, along with the candidate's CV or résumé.

MARKET JITTERS

GSAS alumna Margaret Healy-Varley, PhD '11, an assistant professor of English at Providence College, was one of three recently minted PhDs who gathered in January to share survival tips with current students in the humanities and social sciences about to test the waters of an academic job search. The panel also featured Kellie Jackson (Columbia 2010, now a Harvard College Fellow) and Peter Kraus (MIT 2011, an assistant professor at Boston College); it was sponsored by the Office of Career Services. The aim was to demystify, encourage, and shed light on new approaches to career development. One of the new strategies panelists described is the postdoc, an opportunity once confined to the sciences, now cropping up as a viable post-graduate pathway in other disciplines — and winning good reviews in the process as a chance to build publications and solidify research interests.

Recent PhDs Margaret Healy-Varley (Harvard 2011), Kellie Jackson, and Peter Kraus found at least a few laughs in recounting their job hunt. Photo by Molly Akin



The Graduate School Alumni Association

Governed by its Alumni Council, the GSAA represents and advances the interests of alumni of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences by sponsoring alumni events and by publishing *Colloquy* three times each year.

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Letters to the Editor

Colloquy does not print letters, but we welcome your feedback and story ideas. Write to: *Colloquy*, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Holyoke Center 350, 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-3846; or e-mail gsaa@fas.harvard.edu.

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An Ashford Celebration

Ashford Fellows past and present gather with members of the Ashford family on October 27, 2012, at a reunion the family hosted at their home in Rhode Island. Photo by Elisabeth Nuñez

A FESTIVE GATHERING BY THE SEA TO MARK THE SUCCESS OF A SPECIAL FELLOWSHIP

In the endeavor to bring the brightest and most talented PhD students to Harvard, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has a stalwart ally: a family of Harvard College alumni who see the vital connections between a strong PhD program and a strong University.

The Ashford family — Theodore H. Ashford '58 and his sons, Theodore III '86 and Timothy '88 — has awarded fellowships to a select group of outstanding PhD students in the natural sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences since 2004. The funding allows GSAS to make the strongest possible offer to exceptionally bright prospective students, in many cases making a difference in students' ultimate decision about whether to come to Harvard for their doctoral study.

The family was inspired by the occasion of Ted Ashford's 45th reunion at Harvard, when he was contemplating a meaningful gift and learned about the competition Harvard faces in recruiting the very best graduate students to its PhD programs. "I understood that something needed to be done right away or we would begin to fall behind," he told the *Harvard Gazette* in 2004.

The awareness of how a strong graduate program is essential to ensuring a strong undergraduate and research program led the family to create the Theodore H. Ashford Graduate Fellowships, which have thus far supported 44 students, including 6 in the 2012–2013 cohort.

Over the years, the Ashford family has formed a close relationship with the Graduate School. Ted Ashford and his sons attend regular gatherings in Cambridge to meet the designated students and to hear in-depth accounts of their research, gaining a firsthand understanding of the impact that these scholars are making.

Last October, the Ashfords invited all current and past fellows to a reunion and celebration at their family home in Narragansett, Rhode Island. Approximately 35 fellows attended the reunion, and the weather cooperated, allowing for outdoor games and an al fresco luncheon, as well as a series of short research talks held under a tent.

It was clear from the camaraderie among the fellows and the pride they took in presenting their work to the Ashfords that this relationship, for all of the institutional needs it advances, is a deeply personal one. It was a special day, celebrating a special relationship.



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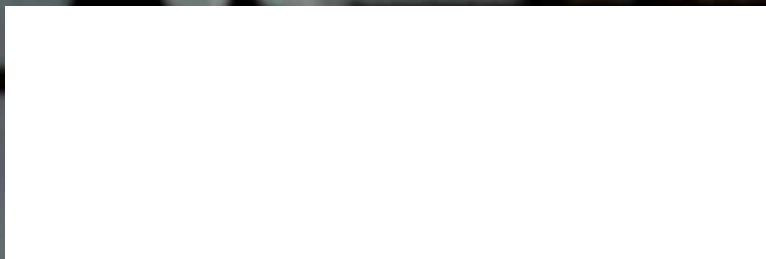
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Picturing Peace

Alex Fattal, a PhD student in anthropology, studies visual imagery and propaganda in Colombia's long conflict — and teaches photography to that country's young people. This is a self-portrait he took inside his "truck camera" — a large pinhole camera he's been taking around the country. See page 4.

Photo by Alex Fattal