Depth and Breadth
HOW A SECONDARY FIELD CAN ENHANCE YOUR PHD

The Graduate School added two new secondary fields to its roster of offerings last year, bringing the total lineup to 17 (listed below). These secondary fields, listed on transcripts when completed to satisfaction, represent a chance for PhD students to broaden their intellectual and professional portfolios. They help to demonstrate tangible achievement and to suggest range as a scholar and teacher.

Among the newer secondary fields are several with intriguing cross-disciplinary appeal. Computational Science and Engineering advances current interest in analytical skill-building across a variety of natural and social science fields. Mind, Brain, and Behavior offers both a general track, for students from the humanities, and a specialized track, which gives students whose home disciplines are in the MBB fields a new line of research opportunity in a related field.

For program descriptions, visit www.gas.harvard.edu/programs_of_study/secondary_fields_in_phd_studies.php.

Secondary Fields in PhD Studies:
- African and African American Studies
- Celtic Medieval Languages and Literatures
- Classics
- Comparative Literature
- Computational Science and Engineering
- Critical Media Practice
- Film and Visual Studies
- German
- Historical Linguistics
- History of American Civilization
- Linguistic Theory
- Medieval Studies
- Mind, Brain, and Behavior
- Music
- Romance Languages and Literatures
- Science, Technology, and Society
- Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality

XIAO-LI MENG, PHD ’90, THE WHIRLPEE V. N. JONES
Professor of Statistics, is the new dean of Harvard’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, effective August 15, 2012. Widely known for his innovation in pedagogy and — through the depth and breadth of his own research — for helping to cement a newly central role for statistical analysis across Harvard disciplines, Meng’s passion for graduate education is irreplaceable.

“Xiao-Li will be an exceptionally strong voice for the important mission of the Graduate School at Harvard and for our truly global community of students, faculty, and alumni,” said Administrative Dean Margot Gill. “His connections to the Graduate School run deep; he is our own PhD (1990, statistics), and he has been a valued colleague for many years, working to advance initiatives in pedagogy that have benefitted our graduate students and the Harvard College students they teach.”

A native of Shanghai, China, Meng received a BS in mathematics (1982) and a diploma in graduate study of mathematics (1986), both from Fudan University in Shanghai. When he came to Harvard for his PhD, he lived on the third floor of Child Hall, one of the GSAS residence halls. His memories of those days, and of his graduate experience more generally, remain vivid in his mind, and he calls upon them frequently when counseling students, as he did to humorous effect during his Orientation address to new GSAS students on August 29.

After receiving his PhD, he became assistant, associate, and then full professor in the Department of Statistics at the University of Chicago. He returned to Harvard in 2001, but remains affiliated with Chicago as a faculty member of its Center for Health Statistics. He is also an honorary professor of the University of Hong Kong.

As chair of the Department of Statistics since July 2004, Meng oversaw a period of dramatic expansion in the department, as the number of undergraduate concentrators has grown from the single digits to more than 70 since 2004, and the department’s core undergraduate courses have surged in popularity. He has been a leader in encouraging connections between disciplines at a time when the importance of statistical analysis has been broadly recognized, as breakthroughs in...
Welcome!
SNAPSHOTS FROM OPENING EVENTS
CAPTURE THE START OF A NEW YEAR AT GSAS

The weather made DudleyFest 2012 feel particularly welcoming. From the top, Harvey the Dudley Lion set the stage for a grand entrance; the Dudley Fellows welcomed all comers; and new GSAS Dean Xiao-Li Meng mingled with Administrative Dean Margot Gill and students.

DudleyFest!
The weather made DudleyFest 2012 feel particularly welcoming. From the top, Harvey the Dudley Lion set the stage for a grand entrance; the Dudley Fellows welcomed all comers; and new GSAS Dean Xiao-Li Meng mingled with Administrative Dean Margot Gill and students.

HILS Welcome Gala
First-year students mingled at the annual opening gala of the Harvard Integrated Life Sciences program on September 4. From left, Kamil Slowikowski, Stephanie Guerra, and Mitchell Leibowitz.

HGWise Welcome Lunch
New first-year PhD students in organismic and evolutionary biology Beka Buckman and Kira Treibergs.

Host Student Dinner
each year, GSAS welcomes international students by offering them the chance to participate in the Host Student Program, where current GSAS students serve as friendly guides to the newcomers at the beginning of the year. Above, scenes from the program’s highlight, a gala dinner for hosts and new arrivals, held this year on August 27.
EVERY SCHOLAR RECOGNIZES THE force of “interdisciplinarity” in today’s academy and acknowledges the appeal of new dialogues and collaborations between disciplines long discrete. But for most, interdisciplinarity is still a pursuit carried out from the security of a fixed departmental perch and professional identity. And yet a new type of scholar is emerging — one whose work can be characterized less by the disciplines linked than by the links themselves. Amanda Peters Randles is that kind of scholar.

In July, Peters Randles was one of 100 American graduate students selected to attend the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting, an annual conference in Germany that brings aspiring researchers into close contact with the world’s top scientists. A PhD candidate in computational physics, specializing in blood flow, she probably could have been forgiven for tuning out when one laureate, an astronomer, began speaking about his work charting the universe’s expansion. Instead, she began taking frantic notes.

“A lot of the equations he was giving were exactly what we’re using. I was like, ‘Oh, this is great!’”

A member of Efthimios Kaxiras’s lab, Peters Randles’s doctoral work involves intricate cardiovascular modeling, so it’s not too surprising that she works closely with computer scientists and doctors in the Boston area. But in her quest to identify the specific regions of a patient’s human heart, even “astrologer” seems an appropriate title.

The trickiest thing about the new class of eclectic scholars represented by Peters Randles may be figuring out their job descriptions. What do you call a physicist using advanced computer programs to change cardiology? With footholds in so many fields, one challenge Peters Randles will have to face without collaboration is how to define her own future as a scientist. She plans to finish her PhD next year, and describes her career prospects as wide open. “Every other day I change my mind,” she says. As she turns toward the stars for clues to the mysteries of the human heart, even “astrologer” seems an appropriate title.

BOUNDLESS
APPLIED PHYSICS PHD STUDENT AMANDA PETERS RANELLES HELP TO SHOWCASE WHAT “INTERDISCIPLINARY” MEANS TODAY

By NICOLAS NARDINI

Amanda Peters Randles

Amanda Peters Randles is a PhD candidate in computational physics at Harvard University. She specializes in cardiovascular modeling and has worked with computer scientists and doctors in the Boston area. Her work with Pixar to improve muscle models has been recognized as a great example of interdisciplinarity.
Top TFs

THE 2012 WINNERS OF THE BOK AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CENTRAL ROLE that GSAS students play in Harvard’s teaching mission, the Graduate School joins with the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning every year to present the Derek C. Bok Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching of Undergraduates. Five TFs receive the award, selected from a long list of students nominated by their departments. Winners receive a $1,000 prize, made possible by a gift by David G. Nathan, AB ’72, MED ’73, the Robert A. Straman Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, and his wife Jean Louise Friedman Nathan.

Meet the 2012 winners, honored by Interim GSAS Dean Richard Tarrant, Bok Center Executive Director Terry Aladjem, and fellow graduate students at a Bok Center ceremony last April.

Cosette Creamer

Despite pursuing both a JD and a PhD from the Department of Government, Cosette Creamer has found time to excel as a teacher in almost every capacity available to a graduate student, including the sophomore tutorial, lecture courses, and seminars of her own design. “A star in the classroom from her first experience as a teaching fellow,” according to a nomination letter from senior Governor faculty, Creamer created and led the interdisciplinary “Human Rights Scholars Seminar,” which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar, which began as a not-for-credit workshop but has since become a for-credit Seminar.

Valeria Espinosa

A PhD student in the Statistics Department, Valeria Espinosa consistently elevates her teaching with fun and innovative real-world scenarios, helping students to see why a given topic is important, and how they can use it. In her work as a section leader in Stat 110, 120, and 240, she goes far beyond the material covered in lecture, probing the outer limits of the subjects she covers.

Espinosa’s work has had a profound effect on her students, both in the classroom and in nontraditional settings, through the Harvard Bridge Tutor Program. A true leader, she intuitively understands the diversity of needs that students bring to any educational endeavor, and she is committed to meeting those needs with a remarkably positive attitude.

Joseph McMullen

As a third-year PhD student in Celtic languages and literatures, Joseph McMullen has proven himself to be a naturally gifted teacher who works hard at his craft and clearly loves engaging his students.

In Celtic 110, McMullen was an invaluable resource for students encountering difficult texts, “steering them away from blind alleys and offering additional information and readings,” says department chair Catherine McKenna. For a demanding assignment in which students had to research a character from a Welsh text not on the syllabus, he helped them navigate a 12th-century compendium of stories and lore from the British Isles — and a modern edition full of difficult abbreviations and obscure references (many in Welsh). Thanks largely to Joey’s generosity of time and expertise, the course ranks as “perhaps the best undergraduate teaching experiences I have had in seven years at Harvard,” Professor McKenna says.

In evaluations, students note that McMullen is always responsive, and always excited about the material in a way that triggered their own excitement. “Joey was one of the best section leaders I have ever had,” one student wrote. Another student, voicing a common sentiment, put it this way: “I really felt like he wanted to help and was there for us — even in the middle of the night! Joey is going to be a fantastic professor.”

Anand Patel

For Anand Patel, being a brilliant mathematician is no obstacle to teaching non-mathematicians. When he talks math, which he does at all hours of the day and night, it’s hard not to want to join in. Patel’s passion and imagination are universally engaging, whether he is explaining the attention of the least-prepared undergraduates or rewarding the dedication of the very successful ones.

Faced twice with the department’s toughest teaching assignment, the lowest-level Math Ma course, Patel embraced the challenge of making students believe in themselves and in their ability to succeed. “He taught them to engage by insisting on engagement,” writes Professor Robin Gotlieb, Professor of the Practice of Teaching in Mathematics, “and taught them to put in the time required to overcome difficulties by demonstrating that he was ready to put in his own Herculean effort.”

Last fall, when some of his Math Ma student-athletes couldn’t make afternoon office hours, Patel started holding them in the evening; the sessions became legendary, attracting students outside of his own class. He made the work fun, explained the material from a variety of perspectives, and described convincing real-world applications. “Best math teacher I’ve ever had,” wrote one student, in Q evaluations that were among the highest in memory for this course.

Elizabeth Sefton

In the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Elizabeth Sefton is helping to redefine what it means to run a successful laboratory session. As a teaching fellow for the challenging OEB 150 (Vertebrate Evolution and Development), Sefton went to unprecedented lengths to assemble lab apricots each week, scouring the hidden corners of the Museum of Comparative Zoology for subjects that would illuminate the hugely diverse range of topics the courses covered.

Professor Farish Jenkins, one of the faculty leaders of OEB 150, says that never in his 40 years of teaching had a richer array of materials been availed to students in lab. The weekly showcase of “eggs and embryos, prepared dissections, skeletons, fossils, and live specimens” routinely attracted Jenkins and his faculty partner, Associate Professor Arath Abughasian, who invariably found Sefton to be “constantly and completely engaged for the entire three-hour period,” her “whirlwind energy a marvel to behold.”

The labs were fundamental to the course’s success, and Sefton’s unwavering commitment, enthusiasm, and endless dedication to sharing the joys of learning make her an exemplar of the power of a teacher.
**Paths to Success**

**HGWISE MENTORING PROGRAM RECOGNIZES THE IMPACT OF A GREAT ROLE MODEL**

The Harvard Graduate Women in Science and Engineering started its Mentoring Program in 2008 with the hope that by explicitly pairing women faculty members and graduate students, it could help build relationships that would energize and inspire a new generation of female scientists.

The program currently counts 55 mentors and 105 mentees among its members, and the ranks are growing very quickly. HGWISE unveiled its Mentor of the Year Award last year, and the nominees and winner were honored at a dinner and ceremony on May 21. Nominations — a selection of which are excerpted here — reveal the impact these relationships can have on students:

- **“My relationship with my mentor has been one of the most consistent and long-standing sources of support and guidance throughout my dissertation. I feel that many of the most important lessons I have learned in graduate school are a direct result of our time together.”**

- **“My mentor’s approach cuts straight through the feeling of powerlessness that is so easy to get mired in during graduate school and helps me put everything in perspective and regain my sense of agency.”**

- **“My mentor cautions me about mistakes she has made in the past, pushes me to think about academic and career paths I have not considered, and has introduced me to her academic network.”**

**“We want to create sustainable and long-lasting relationships where the mentor is not only a role model, but a friend to her mentee(s). We chose a mentor who was emotionally supportive while also guiding her mentee through the academic challenges of graduate school. While mentors and mentees are often in different departments, there are several talents that are important for a successful academic career, in any department. These include giving talks, developing research questions, and teaching courses. We chose a mentor who helped her mentee develop these important professional skills and gain confidence as a young scientist or engineer!” The 2012 winner, Evelyn Hu, Gordon McKay Professor of Applied Physics and Electrical Engineering, embodies these qualities, Provost and Eng report.**

**The Carpenter Center at 50**

The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, with programming planned to showcase its vibrant history and the uniqueness of its building — the only one in North America designed by the famous Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier.

**Artist Talk: James Casebere**
Thursday, October 18, Room B-04, 6 p.m.
James Casebere’s pioneering work has put him at the forefront of artists working with constructed photography.

**Parsi: The Zoroastrians Of India**
Sooni Taraporevala in conversation with Homi Bhabha
Thursday, October 25, Lecture Hall, 6 p.m., reception to follow in the Sert Gallery.
The result of a 35-year labor of love, Parsis is the first visual documentation of India’s Parsi community, followers of the world’s first prophet, Zarathustra. Taraporevala offers a rare insider’s view into Parsi life in all its vibrancy and diversity. On view through December 20, Sert Gallery.

**Saturday Matinee Screening: Little Zizou**
Director Sooni Taraporevala in person
Saturday, October 27, Lecture Hall, 2 p.m., Q&A to follow.
Little Zizou, the first feature film written and directed by Sooni Taraporevala, depicts the unique and fascinating world of Bombay’s Parsi community. Taraporevala offers a rare insider’s view into Parsi life in all its vibrancy and diversity. On view through December 20, Sert Gallery.

**Carpenter Center Lecture: An Evening With Christian Boltanski**
Thursday, November 15, Lecture Hall, 6 p.m., reception with the artist to follow.
Boltanski, among the most prominent and celebrated artists of our time, works in video, photography, and installation to explore themes of death, memory, and loss. His video installation 6 Septembres will be on view in the Carpenter Center Main Gallery from November 1 through December 20.

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts
24 Quincy Street, Cambridge
617.495.3251; www.ves.fas.harvard.edu/ccva.html

**The inaugural winner of the HGWISE Mentoring Award is Professor Evelyn Hu (center), shown with student mentees Dilani Kahawala (left) and Elena Agapie. We also had another mentee, Rebecca Kramer (not pictured).**

**Faculty mentors nominated for HGWISE’s first-annual mentoring award: back row, from left, Rehana Patel, Cassandra Entwistle, Kirsten Bomblesis, Neena Haider, and Briana Burton; front row, from left, Sheila Thomas, Margo Levine, Suzanne Gaudet, Rachelle Gaudet, and Evelyn Hu. Not pictured: Corinne Augelli-Szafra, Sarah Jordaan, and Catherine Stamoulis.**
Welcome to Dudley

- Game Room
- Common Room
- Fireside Room
- House Office (say hi to House Master Hogie)
- Courtyard
- Café Gato Rojo
New GSAS Dean, continued from page 1

fields ranging from genetics to astronomy have demanded more sophisticated data crunching.

He and his colleagues have conducted projects with faculty and students in biology, medicine, chemistry, engineering, economic and health policy — and even history and language, making Statistics one of Harvard’s most interdisciplinary departments. Working with colleagues across disciplinary and school boundaries, he has served as a member of the Computational Science and Engineering Program at the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the Institute of Quantitative Social Science, the committee on higher degrees in the Public Health Sciences, and the subcommittee on the Biostatistics PhD degree, a collaborative effort with Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health.

He is also one of Harvard’s leading voices on pedagogical innovation, working to make the Department of Statistics a laboratory for pedagogical experiments whose common theme is the vital connections and mutually rewarding pathways between research and teaching. PhD students in statistics have been among the winners of the Derek C. Bok Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching in each year since the award was created in 2007.

“I am delighted to welcome Xiao-Li Meng as the new dean of the Graduate School,” said Michael D. Smith, dean of the Graduate School. “I am confident that he will build upon the strong foundation laid by his predecessor, Dean Christalyn Sims, and will continue to strengthen the Graduate School in its mission to produce leaders in all fields of human knowledge and to educate by a statistician under the age of fifty.

For his research contributions, Meng received the 2001 COPSS (Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies) Award, the most prestigious award by five statistical societies to a single statistician annually for being “the outstanding statistician under the age of forty.” He also received the 2003 Distinguished Achievement Award from the International Chinese Statistics Association (ICSA), and was elected a fellow by the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS) in 1997 and by the American Statistical Association (ASA) in 2004. More recently, he was the 2010 Medallion Lecturer of the IMS, the 2011 Mosteller Statistician of the Year by the ASA’s Boston Chapter, the recipient of a 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award by Fudan University, and a recipient of the inaugural (2012) PI Hsu Award for distinguished achievements in research and education by a statistician under the age of fifty.

At a Glance: Dean Xiao-Li Meng

» Xiao-Li Meng is noted for his scholarly breadth and pedagogical innovation

» GSAS alumnus and former Statistics Department chair brings irrepressible enthusiasm and a dedication to the professional development and scholarly achievement of Harvard graduate students

» Meng is broadly interdisciplinary. During his chairmanship, statistical analysis assumed a newly prominent role across Harvard disciplines.

» Meng is passionate about the Graduate School’s global reach and the benefits that this diversity brings to our community.

» Meng lived on the third floor of Child Hall, a GSAS residence hall, as a first-year PhD student.

THE DU BOIS KICKOFF DINNER

The W. E. B. Du Bois Graduate Society held its annual kickoff dinner on September 17 at Fire & Ice in Harvard Square. Attendees included (clockwise from top right) research scholar Christalyn Sims and PhD students Aaron Benavidez and Nicole Nitch.
Don’t Miss!

OUR DUDLEY HOUSE PICKS OF THE MONTH. FOR OUR COMPLETE LIST OF EVENTS AND OUTINGS, GO TO WWW.GSAS.HARVARD.EDU/DUDLEY

Connect with Your Dudley House
Subscribe to one of Dudley’s program-specific listservs to get targeted event listings delivered to your inbox. ◆ Visit www.dudley.harvard.edu and click on the program link you like!

Apple and Pumpkin Picking
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 10 A.M. We’ll head to Honey Pot Hill Orchards in Stow, MA — home not only to a great orchard but to two hedge mazes to test your wits! Cost approximately $10 per person, but bring extra money for apples.
◆ Hosted by the Dudley Outings Fellows. Contact Chris Brown (cebrown@fas.harvard.edu).

What a Joke!
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 7–8:30 P.M., Dudley House Common Room. Hilarity will ensue as we bring student comics and local professionals to Dudley House for a night of stand-up comedy. Free food, free drinks, and uncontrollable laughter — don’t miss!
◆ Hosted by the Dudley Social Fellows (dudley.social@gmail.com).

Magical Mount Auburn
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1–3:30 P.M. A resting place for American luminaries, an arboretum, and a bird-watchers’ paradise. Explore with Dudley House Administrator (and Mount Auburn docent) Susan Zawalich.
◆ Contact Susan Zawalich (zawalich@fas.harvard.edu).

Creative Writing Circle
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18 AT 7 P.M., Dudley House Library. Creative writing is our focus, but we also hope to pollinate our academic writing with some of the narrative devices we learn. We’ll share copies of whatever creative projects we’re working on (fiction, poetry, drama), and we’ll also discuss academic papers we admire and invite scholars and writers to share advice.
◆ Hosted by the Dudley Literary Fellows (dudley-house.literary@gmail.com).

Visit the Peabody Essex Museum
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, LEAVING DUDLEY AT 8:45 A.M. Join us for a fall trip to historic Salem, MA, to see the impressive Peabody Essex collection and tour the town.
◆ Hosted by the Dudley Arts Fellows. RSVP (dudleyhouse.arts@gmail.com).

Halloween Hijinks
Dudley House does Halloween right! SPOOKY CLASSICS, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31: We’ll be running classics like The Mummy, Dracula, Frankenstein, and The Wolfman all day on the third floor;
HALLOWEEN MIT-HARVARD PARTY: A Halloween-themed dance party at MIT — check “Social Events” on the Dudley website for details;
HALLOWEEN GAME DAY FOR KIDS, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 3–5:30 P.M., Dudley Game Room: An afternoon of pumpkin decorating, music, snacks, games, and costumes! Open to the Harvard community and designed for families with children.
◆ Contact the Dudley Public Service Fellows (dudleypublicservice@gmail.com).

Dudley House Your Graduate Student Center Since 1991
Lehman Hall, Harvard Yard ◆ www.dudley.harvard.edu ◆ 617-495-2255
HOUSE MASTERS James M. Hogle and Doreen M. Hogle ◆ HOUSE ADMINISTRATOR Susan Zawalich
For two weeks in January, polish your CV, learn new research skills, make new connections, or relax with friends at Dudley House.

QUESTION:
Is there a winter break (or any kind of break) in graduate school?

* The good news: Well, Harvard does have a winter break, so that means no classes, no teaching, and no grading.

* The not-so-good news: Your research won’t take a break. You’ll probably spend plenty of time in lab or the library.

But January is one time of year when things slow down, and that makes it a good time to turn some attention to your own professional and personal development. Learn to write a fellowship proposal. Craft a powerful CV. Prepare for a job talk. Go deep into the latest analytical tools. Stay tuned for offerings!

January 14-25, 2013
www.gsas.harvard.edu/january

MINI-COURSES:
It’s About You

Each January, the GSAS Graduate Student Council sponsors a series of mini-courses on a broad variety of intriguing topics. These noncredit courses, taught by GSAS students for GSAS students, engage topics of discipline-spanning appeal; they’re stimulating and smart, but they’re designed for a diverse audience of nonspecialists.

These short courses give you a chance to step back from your own line of scholarly inquiry and step into other perspectives. They also provide valuable teaching and curriculum-planning experiences for the instructors.

* Take a mini-course — or propose one of your own! The Graduate Student Council will begin accepting course proposals this fall, so stay tuned.

GSAS Students Win Fulbrights For Research Abroad

Six Cultural Exchange Fulbright grants from the Institute of International Education (IIE) were made to GSAS students for the 2012-2013 academic year, allowing them to conduct dissertation or advanced research abroad next year. Here, we salute the students and summarize their topics.

Ethan Bushelle, East Asian Languages and Civilizations
Buddhist Literary Culture in Medieval Japan
Bushelle proposes to study monastic archival materials, including sermons, prayer statements, and catecheses, that provide a record of contexts for the reception and creation of Buddhist literature in medieval Japan. “By doing so, I aim not only to contribute to our understanding of a long-neglected body of ritual texts but also to contextualize the development of a distinctly Buddhist literary culture in early medieval Japan,” he writes in his proposal.

Sakura Christmas, History
Earth to Empire: Mongol Lands Under Japanese Rule, 1905-1945
“My project discusses the nature of Japanese rule from 1905 to 1945 as it expanded into a region in northeastern China known as the ‘Mongol lands,’” writes Christmas. They brought an unprecedented precision to the problem of colonial control in the region, she writes, both marginalizing from and thrusting it into the center of the global market through intensive agriculture, aerial surveys, forced settlements, and scientific research.

Amanda Lanham, History of Art and Architecture
Art and Expansion: Neo-Assyrian provincial art and the construction of empire
Lanham plans to conduct a close visual analysis of Neo-Assyrian provincial monuments in Turkey’s museum collections in order to determine to what extent the provinces emulated or rejected Assyrian aesthetic tradition. “I suggest that artistic emulation/rejection may be a reflection of similar political attitudes,” she writes. “My project may thus reveal important information regarding the political relationship between Assyria and her subject territories.”

Charlie Lesch, Government
Justice without Sovereignty: Power, Law and Ethics in Jewish Political Thought
Political theory has conventionally linked the site of legitimate political authority to the exercise of coercive power, Lesch says. During centuries of exile, Jewish philosophy developed a different model: lacking a sovereign state, the rabbis devised alternative methods to order and regulate society. “Observing the rise of
Daniel Majchrzowicz, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Writing Language, Reading Travel Language, Politics and identity in the Indian Travelsage

Majchrzowicz will visit libraries and archives in India to study how 20th-century Indian travel writers broach the topic of language in order to better understand how they confront and negotiate linguistic difference and ideologies. Particularly, he will focus on “how travel engenders novel perspectives on language and language politics, adding new depth to scholarly discussions on the mutual influence of language and identity in 20th-century,” he writes.

Sean O’Reilly, East Asian Languages and Civilizations Japan’s Appropriated Myths: the Afterlives of Meiji Restoration Heroes in Text and image

O’Reilly plans to go to Kyoto University in Japan and spend a full year examining how heroes of Japan’s Meiji Restoration are portrayed—and deployed—in elementary and middle-school textbooks, magazines, and newspapers for the 75 years from the 1870s through 1945, and in popular films of the latter half of that period. He’ll ask, How were heroes shaped by the nation-state and (mis)used to support the state in war and peace?

Objects of Their Instruction

In a series of posts last spring on the Bok Blog (blog.bokcenter.harvard.edu), Departmental Teaching Fellows, Anita Nikkanen (Comparative Literature), Erin Blewes (Organismic and Evolutionary Biology), and Meredith Schweig (Music) described how and why the inclusion of material objects can enrich one’s teaching. The GSAS Bulletin is reprinting three posts from that series, with permission, starting with this one.

As instructors at Harvard, we have an embarrassment of riches at our fingertips: remarkable libraries, expert faculty, and spectacular instructional support. In a 2012 Winter Teaching Conference session, we explored a set of resources that are, for the most part, underused by TAs at the College: our fantastic museum and research collections. Anita Nikkanen, Erin Blewes, and I discussed the benefits of incorporating material objects into our teaching, provided a whistle-stop tour of material things into the classroom might not be immediately obvious. At our workshop in January, I explored the benefits of teaching with objects through the Four main points made in John Honigaur Shuh’s 1972 article “Teaching Yourself to Teach with Objects.” I brought in a Chinese musical instrument called a guqin to anchor the discussion and really drive Shuh’s points home.

Oct 2012

In Shuh’s words, working with tangible things can help students to “develop their capacity for careful, critical observation of their world.” This is in and of itself an important intellectual skill. By bringing the guqin into our session, I invited participants to really stare at it and to touch it. They got a sense of its sounds, smells, and tactile qualities. Their investigations prompted them to ask questions about details that would not have been as readily apparent from a photograph. Why is it made of this particular kind of wood? Are the strings silk or metal?

For my part, I would add to Shuh’s list the idea that teaching tools can lend critical dimension to the study of history, which has often been dominated by the stories of socially and economically privileged individuals who bequeathed to history ample documentary evidence of their achievements. Those whose voices do not as readily emerge from such sources nevertheless left behind artworks, scientific instruments, religious implements, musical instruments, and other kinds of ephemera. Incorporating these objects into our teaching can help bring their stories to light.

“But objects help us to document the history of ordinary people” Although our museum and research collections include many rare and precious objects, they also include artifacts of everyday life. Shuh suggests that working with these kinds of materials can lend critical dimension to the study of history, which has often been dominated by the stories of socially and economically privileged individuals who bequeathed to history ample documentary evidence of their achievements. Those whose voices do not as readily emerge from such sources nevertheless left behind artworks, scientific instruments, religious implements, musical instruments, and other kinds of ephemera. Incorporating these objects into our teaching can help bring their stories to light.

“But using objects helps students develop important intellectual skills” In Shuh’s words, working with tangible things can help students to “develop their capacity for careful, critical observation of their world.” This is in and of itself an important intellectual skill. By bringing the guqin into our session, I invited participants to really stare at it and to touch it. They got a sense of its sounds, smells, and tactile qualities. Their investigations prompted them to ask questions about details that would not have been as readily apparent from a photograph. Why is it made of this particular kind of wood? Are the strings silk or metal? The sticker on its underside says “Shanghai”—did it come from a factory there? Through engaging in careful, critical observation, a host of interesting facts and theories about the guqin emerged.

For my part, I would add to Shuh’s list the idea that teaching tools can lend critical dimension to the study of history, which has often been dominated by the stories of socially and economically privileged individuals who bequeathed to history ample documentary evidence of their achievements. Those whose voices do not as readily emerge from such sources nevertheless left behind artworks, scientific instruments, religious implements, musical instruments, and other kinds of ephemera. Incorporating these objects into our teaching can help bring their stories to light.

“But objects are not age-specific” Shuh makes the excellent point that, regardless of age or stage of conceptual development, students can always “see an object and engage in an educationally worthwhile discussion about it.” I would add to this that objects are not discipline-specific—people with different disciplinary orientations will respond to them in different ways. For example, a music concentrator might comment on similarities between the guqin I showed at the workshop and other zither-like instruments; a physics student might have interesting insights into the guqin’s acoustic workings. Focused observation and handling of objects can draw out these kinds of diverse perspectives and help make the classroom a more inclusive space.

The guqin, a centuries-old Chinese stringed instrument, becomes a contemporary teaching tool.

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Preparing for Academic Careers
Don’t miss our annual panel of faculty as they share behind-the-scenes information about the faculty job search: The View from the Search Committee, Tuesday, October 23, 4:30–6 p.m. Dudley House Common Room. Find out what search committees look for in candidates — and what they don’t want to see! Part of the “Becoming Faculty” series, cosponsored by the Office of Career Services and GSAS.

Preparing for Nonacademic Careers
Exploring Careers in Science and Engineering: Beyond the Bench, Wednesday, October 10, 4–5:30 p.m. in Maxwell Dworkin 119. Advice and stories from engineers and scientists who have ventured beyond the bench into a wide variety of careers, such as patent law, consulting, government, policy, and business. Register through Crimson Careers on the OCS website.

“Put Your PhD to Work!”
Featuring Peter Fiske, Thursday, October 18, 6–8 p.m., University Museum, 24 Oxford St, Geological Lecture Hall (reception to follow). Don’t miss this engaging presentation from Peter Fiske — scientist, entrepreneur, and author of Put Your Science to Work: the take-charge career Guide for Scientists. His proactive job-search strategies apply to graduate students in all disciplines! Please register through Crimson Careers. Cosponsored by OCS and the FAS Office for Postdoctoral Affairs.

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