

INTERDISCIPLINARY LIBERAL ARTS



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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COMMENTS FROM JESSIE, ASC

University life means we have access to interesting invited speakers and special events on campus most weeks during the semester. This spring I went to hear Steve Dalton, author of the *The 2-Hour Job Search*, because I wanted more tips and information on how to talk with students about career hunting. Dalton is an affable and energetic speaker and his method, based on current social science research, is simple and effective. He wants students to be strategic and realistic about the search process. Rather than spending hours searching for keywords on huge job boards, he suggests focusing on strengthening LinkedIn skills and creating an Excel list of 40 employers that are within the commute range that you are willing to do. This list becomes a job seeker's starting point to see if those places are hiring, if there are any alumni in those businesses already, and if you can do informational interviews with them. During his talk, he kept plugging another book, *Designing Your Life* by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans. I got it from our library and devoured it in one night. The authors work at Stanford and were getting irritated at the awful question they heard seniors asked repeatedly: "So, what are you going to do for a job?" Burnett and Evans ask their readers to be able to create a narrative in your own words that clarifies A. Who you are, B. What you believe, and C. What you do in the world. If you can connect these dots there will be meaning for you. If you can articulate a version of this in a job interview, the employer can see who you are and how you fit within the company. This also links to Steve Dalton's "XYZ technique." When you get a standard yet devoid question in an interview like, "tell us about yourself" you can use a pattern that is optimistic and builds on itself. For example, "When I graduated I knew I wanted **X** because I am good at **Y** and now I want to put that knowledge to use and help build your company by **Z**." The keys to job searching and interviewing involve skills that Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts students already have: creativity, curiosity, and communication. Think of the job search as a process of honing and showing off those skills.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As I am writing this, spring—I hope—is finally picking up a bit of steam. This year Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts has been busy. First off, we've now instituted in our junior seminar course a 'Meet the Director' session we plan to hold every semester in LB 392. One of the challenges of any academic program is getting a good sense of how students are feeling and whether or not our program is meeting your needs. We been working hard these past few years on creating a better and more reliable platform for 'hearing' what all of you think. During the summer of 2017, we rolled out a 'Senior' Survey we ask everyone to take in Capstone Seminar. We feel, though, that it is also important that we 'hear back' from students midway through the program. So, that's what the 'Meet the Director' session is all about. I'll be visiting your Junior Seminar class soon. It's your chance to let me know what's working and what we might want to do to make your I-LA major even better.

Second, we have been proud sponsors of the ACT Human Rights Film Festival that happens every spring here at CSU. This event is one of the keynote events put on by the Department of Communication Studies Department. Filmmakers from around the world are invited to CSU, and for two weeks we have the opportunity to watch powerful documentaries that not only document human rights but also champion the power of the human spirit to endure even in the worst of times. Equally as important, this festival celebrates the beauty and eloquence of cinema, perhaps the most vital medium of contemporary society and the 20th/21st Centuries. But there is even more. Part of our sponsorship of this event involves two film festival internship opportunities specially designed for I-LA majors. For more information about these opportunities or about internship credit in general, do contact Professor Cindy Murillo.



Finally, we brought on a new undergraduate course, cross-listed with the Department of Economics, called Working with Data, e.g., LB – ECON 235. An understanding of data and how one works successfully with data is an increasingly important skillset for the 21st century workplace. Economics Professor Steven Shulman has been tireless in creating this new course designed for all Liberal Arts majors. Yes, we're not economists or data analysts or even statisticians, but some experience in working with data can round out your career skillset as you head towards graduation.



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UPCOMING SUMMER ABROAD OPPORTUNITY

Gina Robinson, J.D.

Brush up on your Italian and prepare to eat a lot of pasta. We are building an interdisciplinary study abroad class for Summer 2020 in Florence, Italy. (including a three- day trip to Rome and an optional trip to Venice). It is a 21- day trip that will teach you all about the

Italian legal system in comparison to the US legal system. The class will be called Comparative Legal Studies in Italy and will count as an upper division course in the Legal Studies minor.



Our first week will be in Florence where we will visit a local law firm and have a lecture from a local attorney on the practice of law in Italy. We will visit the courthouse and observe a trial and learn about some famous cases in Italy. We will also take a cooking class where you will receive a mock case and work as a group to solve it. Our second week will begin with a three-day trip to Rome where we will tour the Vatican and learn about Vatican law vs Italian law. We will visit the Supreme Court and the Senate in Rome and have a guest lecture on how the government works and how laws are passed in Italy. When we return to Florence for our third week, we will learn about the Italian Mafia and how it has influenced the Italian legal system. We will also have the opportunity to hear lectures from various local attorneys on subjects such as the labor unions, how the media is run and learn about some specific legal cases that exploded in the media. We will visit a local business and get a hands-on lesson on how to start and operate a business in Italy. During the trip we will offer an optional weekend trip to Venice for a cappuccino in St. Mark's Square and an evening gondola ride. Of course, we will eat our way through Florence and Rome as we learn about the culture. I have been to Italy several times and I am so excited to lead this trip. For more information email gina.robinson@colostate.edu. Ciao!



AWARDED GRANTS FOR I-LA

Dr. Murillo received funding for an interdisciplinary studies undergraduate research academy grant to fund archival research to recover many of the lost works of Latina writer María Cristina Mena; in this research academy students will participate in primary archival research, transcribing, translating, annotating, and researching Mena's unpublished documents currently housed in the Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage Project (US HLHP) at the University of Houston. By transforming boxes of papers into discoverable content, undergraduate students will help to ensure a more accurate and thoroughly researched legacy of María Cristina Mena and highlight the historical presence of Mexican-American culture in Larimore County.

A MESSAGE FROM DR. MURILLO

“I know why the caged bird sings’ opens the poem ‘Sympathy’ by African American author Paul Laurence Dunbar and serves as the title for Maya Angelou’s famous novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). When Dunbar penned that poem in 1897, he could not have imagined the burgeoning African-American literati who would revive his ‘caged-bird’ metaphor during the civil rights movement of the 1960s and use it as a symbol of oppression.”

This serves as the opening to my decade-long labor of love, *The Selected Literary Letter of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, which should come out in print sometime next year. This project taught me so much about community, collaboration (it is a co-edited volume), and the importance of resurrecting from the footnote those forgotten voices that contributed so much to the world, but now remain in a critical blindspot, mostly because of socio-political forces beyond their control. Although much is known about Angelou—her writing circulates in high school and college classrooms—little is known of Dunbar, the most well-known writer in the Midwest at the turn-into-the-twentieth-century. As a scholar and teacher, I always look for something new, some untapped territory to “rediscover” and learn from—I hope I am able to convey this same idea to my



students. Look for the road less traveled. Seek out the story not read. Perhaps you too will discover something fresh. If one of the purposes of education is to help us discover multiple ways of seeing in the world, then my long dance with Dunbar did exactly that.

RECOGNIZING OUR I-LA STAFF

Brittany Laser

As the end of the semester approaches, the College of Liberal Arts is thrilled to recognize the outstanding faculty and staff members that exemplify an outstanding level of commitment to students, research, outreach, and the overall value of a liberal arts education. The work of these individuals, along with so many others, helps support the University's land grant mission of creating an environment that encourages education for all.

The following individuals were recognized at the All-College Award Reception on Wednesday, April 24 for their accomplishments during the 2018-2019 academic year:

Excellence in Teaching Award, GTA

Melanie Wentzel-Long, Economics

Excellence in Teaching Award, Non-Tenure Track

Denise Apodaca, Music, Theatre, and Dance

Excellence in Teaching Award, Tenure-Track

Peter Harris, Political Science

Excellence in Teaching Award, Tenured

Jeni Cross, Sociology

John N. Stern Distinguished Professor Award

Nancy Jianakoplos, Economics
Prabha Unnithan, Sociology

Professor Laureate Award

Steve Mumme, Political Science
Jared Orsi, History

Morgan Endowed Chair (2019-2022)

Cindy O'Donnell-Allen, English

Ann Gill Faculty Development Award

Maricela DeMirjyn, Ethnic Studies

Frédérique Grim, Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Pat Hastings, Sociology
Ziyu Long, Communication Studies

Thomas Lundberg, Art and Art History

Tara Opsal, Sociology
Michael Pante, Anthropology

Outstanding Engaged Scholarship Award

Tobi Jacobi, English

State Classified Award

Magdeline Golnar, College of Liberal Arts Dean's Office

Administrative Professional Award

Karli Hansen, College of Liberal Arts Advising Center

Distinction in Curricular Innovation

Kristina Quynn, English

Outstanding Service Award

Eric Aoki, Communication Studies

GREETINGS FROM ABROAD

Kyra Goren
Ethnic Studies minor

Hello!! My name is Kyra Goren and I am a Junior studying abroad in Athens, Greece at Deree – The American College



of Greece. This semester has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life, even though I know anyone who goes abroad says that, but it is

honestly so true. I am currently in my last week of being here and I have been looking back on this semester with, "Wow, I got to do so much and to be able to do this has been a blessing!!" I didn't just stay in Greece, I went to: London, Italy (Florence, Venice, and Rome), Prague, Barcelona, and went island hopping for the last few weekends in semester (Crete, Aegina, Paros, Zakynthos, and Santorini), as well as Mount Olympus. The school and my program, AIFS, also took us on a few trips around Greece: Arachova/Delphi, Nafplio, and the Acropolis. I can definitely say that I was able to travel almost every weekend with my friends. This semester I took electives: Body Awareness & Movement, Abnormal Psychology, Modern Greek I, and Sociology of Modern Life. Being an Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts major gave me the flexibility to choose where I wanted to go to study abroad and what classes I wanted to take, which is why I love this major so much. My minor is Ethnic Studies, which includes classes that are not offered at the college in Greece, and I figured that these classes wouldn't be offered here, so that is why I left some electives for my semester abroad. If anyone is planning on studying abroad, I would suggest taking electives that are fun and something you wouldn't normally take. For example, I would never have taken Body Awareness & Movement or Modern Greek I back at CSU, but I wanted to submerge myself in the culture by learning the language and to stay in shape while I was away. This experience has been more rewarding than I would have ever thought and no words can describe the feeling of wanderlust more than being abroad traveling across Europe.

I-LA INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We have been working hard with the ACT Film Festival Staff in developing a 3 credit, 2 semester (1 credit fall, 2 spring) Professional Operations internship for 2019-2020. It's an excellent opportunity to learn what it takes to put on a full-scale, dynamic, internationally-orientated film event. You'll be learning skills you've never even realized you've possess. And for film enthusiasts, this is your golden opportunity to work with films and filmmakers from across the globe. For more information, contact Professor Cindy Murillo, your I-LA Internship coordinator.

STUDY ABROAD STORY

Edenne Gross, Junior

"It's like a choose your own adventure major." I often respond when people press me for more information about what Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts means. At first, this answer was used to end the often stressful conversation of "What's your major?" and "Do you have any jobs lined up?". Now though, it's my favorite opener to describe the adventure that the department of Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts has aided me in choosing.

My personal adventure took shape during the Fall semester of my junior year at Colorado State University. After a long summer of applying to programs with the help of my incredible advisor Jessie Stewart, I was accepted to study abroad in Tel Aviv, Israel.

After a 12 hour flight, I landed in Tel Aviv feeling a little antsy as I knowingly was on the brink of a million and one new experiences.

It's funny looking back, because I had no idea of the extraordinary adventure that awaited. During this semester, I made lifelong friends, bartered with merchants in bazaars, and participated in lectures taught by famous professors. I found myself constantly depending on the set of skills involving communication, writing, reading, and problem solving that Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts back home taught me.



Traveling back in time to 2016, I started my education at CSU as a befuddled freshman. Academically, I wanted to learn my family's native language of Hebrew, I felt passionate about literature from authors like Plath and Tolstoy, and throughout high school I had developed a keen interest in historical studies. Without the guidance and personalized structure of Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts, I fear I would have remained confused, without direction. My time as a student at CSU has taught me that passion and education are not mutually exclusive. Studying in Tel Aviv, my dreams were constantly being fulfilled. I read the entirety of the Bell Jar whilst laying out on the beach. I pursued my historical interests by hiking around throughout the historical sites of ancient Judea. Lastly, I worked hard to achieve my goal of speaking Hebrew.

Today, I find myself back in good ol' Fort Collins. It is bittersweet to reflect on the incredible memories I made while abroad, but I can truly say that I owe so much of my positive experience to the department of Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts. I've achieved my goals and now through meetings with my advisor and a variety of new classes that easily fit within my major, I'm creating even bigger goals and planning my next adventure.

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES INTERNSHIP

Amanda Adama, Senior
Philosophy minor

I've had the incredible opportunity to serve as a student intern for CSU's 4th Annual ACT Human Rights Film Festival. Put on by Communication Studies and sponsored by our very own Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts program, it's the only human rights film festival in Colorado and even beyond. Its showcases artfully made and thoughtfully selected documentary/narrative films that shed light on a range of human rights issues around the globe.

This year's event took place April 5-13, screening 12 feature films and 8 shorts, many which were attended by the filmmakers and individuals featured in the films in post-screening dialogues. We had significant turnout by CSU students and staff, as well as people from the greater community. Taking part in something so grand has been an invaluable experience. Not to mention, I've loved building upon my professional skills and representing our degree program. Although very difficult at times, I learned more than I could've ever imagined and felt incredibly rewarded in the end.

With the official title of Operations and Event Management Intern, my main responsibilities were to orchestrate outreach, coordinate volunteers, and help with operation. Student volunteers play an important role in the ACT Film festival, and my job was to find, communicate, train, and supervise many of the wonderful students who gave their time and energy to making the festival such a success this—and every—year. Through the process, I was also able to engage with peers and community members, get the word out, and encourage attendance. After considerable planning and steady execution, we're now in the wrap-up stages, thanking everyone involved, conducting thorough feedback, and making records.

I didn't realize how much goes into a production like this, but now I feel entirely qualified for the work. Film is a very recent passion of mine, and I hope to continue exploring the industry, taking with me other passions like Social Sciences and Philosophy. Thanks to my Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts major, I've been able to keep all these doors open. I have no real clue where the future will take me, so having the freedom to stretch myself across multiple disciplines is ideal. I have never felt more confident in and excited about my education!



Picture caption: Amanda Adams guiding a guest at the ACT Human Rights Film Festival. Credit to CSU Photographer Bill Cotton.

HEARING FROM I-LA MAJORS

Dominka Rubio, Senior

I have always been a bookworm. I owe that in part to my upbringing; my parents started me early, at age two and a half, reading Superman comics and National Geographic magazines. Even at a young age, I loved the thrill of the pursuit of knowledge. By the third grade (yes, that early) I knew I wanted to go to college and get higher education, as I'd heard it called by the adults around me. There wasn't a specific thing I wanted to do with it, simply because I wanted to do everything!



I've always had a myriad of interests and passions, ranging from psychology, to the study of astronomy to legal issues and even musical theory. It truly runs the whole gamut. So, when I transferred to CSU from CU Denver, and was introduced to the I-LA degree, it was love at first sight. In addition to my psychology and sociology majors, I knew I-LA was the perfect size for me. It had a little bit of everything and the

flexibility and depth it offered was/is the stuff of academic dreams, especially mine. Although I still desire to do everything, that's okay, because the multidisciplinary approach and tools that earning an I-LA degree will equip me with, will do just that; prepare me to work in any of my chosen fields. And perhaps that's what higher education means, filling our hearts, minds and souls with knowledge and wisdom, and using it for improving our world. And that's a beautiful thing.

Sabryne Buchholz, Junior

I just recently switched into the I-LA major, and I truly believe it was a wonderful decision. I came to Colorado State University geared up and ready to pursue a B.F.A. in the electronic art concentration, and after completing two and half years of coursework, I just wasn't happy with where I was sitting and really needed a change. I had been waiting for the more specialized classes within my original track because I had hope that they would be exactly what I was looking for, but when I got there at the beginning of my junior year, I still wasn't happy. So, being completely honest, I found the Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts track originally because I was looking for a degree program that would be able to take most (if not all) of the credits I had previously earned. I had been so excited when my mom – a CSU alum – pointed me in this direction and it turned out to be that all of my previous credits would count and I wouldn't be set back at all like many of my friends have been when they switched degree paths themselves. But after exploring Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts more and seeing what this path had to offer, I started feeling that it was definitely where I belonged. I fell in love with the diversity in disciplines and perspectives and this collective of individuals who see the world from all different angles, and I truly feel like this is where I was meant to end up. The Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts path I have embarked on has brought back the passion I was scared I had lost and I finally feel satisfied and happy with where I am at and what I am learning.



Bryce Liebe, Senior

Hello! My name is Bryce Liebe and I am currently a Senior here at Colorado State. I will be graduating with an Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts Studies Major along with a Business Administration Minor. I am from Madison, Wisconsin and that is where my story begins. I started my first two years at a smaller school in Wisconsin and when second semester Freshman year rolled around, I started feeling empty. I wasn't being who I wanted to be. One April weekend, I visited my brother at his college in Minnesota where one of his friends eventually brought up Colorado State University. She was originally from Colorado Springs and knew that I had grown up skiing my whole life. I got accepted over Spring Break sophomore year. Before leaving I wanted to do something with my little sister, so of course naturally my mom chose MMA (Mixed Martial Arts). I met an individual who learned I was really into talk shows, and the whole film business in general. Knowing that information, this individual set me up with a contact who could get me a job with Warner Bros, specifically with Ellen DeGeneres and her crew. Given this, I now have a route I can go to after college. Because of such, I now have the opportunity to pursue a dream of mine.

When I packed up all my things to transfer for Junior year a thousand miles away from home, I had no idea what I was about to embark on. If there's anything I have learned from college, it's these three things: nothing has to be permanent; recognize when you are unhappy; and it's not always what you know, it's who you know. Whether it is a job, a friend, someone you're with at the time, or in my case: school. If I do choose to go with Warner Bros post college I know the sky is the limit and it all stems back to my decision of finishing school at Colorado State University.



AN INTERVIEW WITH AN I-LA MAJOR AND ASPIRING SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) MASTER

As an editor for the I-LA newsletter, I recently had the pleasure of interviewing one of our fantastic I-LA students—Sophomore Lu Epstein, an impressive CSU student and soon-to-be double minor. Her accomplishments and interests are what make our department proud, as the talent and diversity of our students knows no bounds. Read below to see just how this student has incorporated her skills into our I-LA Major!

Q: Tell us about who you are and what you are studying here at CSU and within the I-LA Major?

A: Hello, my name is Lu Epstein, originally from Las Vegas, NV but moved to Littleton, Colorado in August of 2013. I'm finishing my second here at CSU majoring in interdisciplinary liberal arts as well as minoring in anthropology and ASL (once int becomes an official minor at CSU)

Q: What are your interests and how does the Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts Major supplement and encourage them?

A: Finding a major that suited my interests seemed impossible when I started applying to colleges in 2016. When I found out there was a major that incorporated my passion for art, social sciences, AND humanities, I was set. Ever since I was little, it always seemed like I could never find the right words for what I wanted to say; heck, it took me two weeks to write that sentence. Finding a hands-on language such as American Sign Language made me feel connected with the world on a different level. The interdisciplinary liberal arts major has given me the opportunity to discover more of my passions, such as anthropology, that I hope to continue pursuing in the future.

Q: Your mastery in ASL is incredibly interesting. How did you come about wanting to obtain this skill and how does I-LA give you the opportunity to explore this particular interest?

A: I've always struggled communicating with people until I found American Sign Language. ASL allows me to communicate non-verbally through sign, facial expression, and gestures. It allows for far more in-depth understanding of what someone communicating than a spoken language because it incorporates many more elements than just vocalics. I've studied ASL for five years now, however, I'm not fluent; I hope to be in the near future, but until then I will continue submerging myself in my studies.



Q: What has been your experience trying to combine or explore your interests with the I-LA Major?

A: The interdisciplinary arts department, particularly my advisor Jessie, has been more helpful and encouraging than I could ever imagine. They've helped me find classes that suit my interests and the best part about this major is that there are endless options. I can't get enough!

GREETINGS FROM THE I-LA NEWSLETTER SENIOR INTERN

Hello! My name is Johnna Vasselli, a senior I-LA major and editing intern for this semester's I-LA Newsletter (Yes! This newsletter right here!). As a student graduating here pretty soon, I'd like to add my very quick two cents on my experience in finding my way into this fantastic degree program.

For me, I wanted college to be as holistic of an experience as possible. I had big questions facing me and I was beginning at CSU trying to discover if my education could in some way help me understand how best to approach the daunting nature of being, well, a human. I soon began to discover, however, that studying just one thing wasn't giving me that experience. How could I possibly understand our political climate if I didn't also have an understanding of history? Am I missing a layer of depth of a piece of art if I'm not exposed to the sociological context in which it was created?

The Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts major has been a helping hand in my quest to these answers. Because yes, how could anyone adequately understand politics without being knowledgeable of history? And there are plenty of contextual hints in art that will be missed if you are unaware of the sociological climate during its creation!

And while questions will always be abundant, it is the skillset to approach them now that this major gives its students space for.

It is one thing to know something, and another to be able to continuously learn, and that's what I-LA is all about.



Publisher's Note: We think Johnna has done an excellent job of putting this all together this semester. This is our best newsletter to date. Way to go—Johnna!



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