

# AUP MAGAZINE

FACULTY EDITION - FALL 2018

ASCENDING  
THE FACULTY, THE CURRICULUM & AUP'S RISING PROFILE  
ASCENDING

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# THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY of PARIS



Commencement Ceremony  
2015 at Théâtre du Châtelet

Dear AUP Worldwide Community,

I am very happy to be writing the introduction to this faculty edition of the AUP Magazine. As I have been adapting to Paris and AUP since my arrival as Provost a few months ago, I have been increasingly impressed by the pedagogical innovations of the AUP faculty, their engagement with essential contemporary issues - requiring innovative interdisciplinary approaches - and their commitment to connecting our students to these issues through the development of experiential learning opportunities.

Among the many qualities that drew me to AUP were the devotion and energy of the faculty, as reflected in their productive research output and dedication to new and unconventional teaching methods. The various articles written by our professors for this issue illustrate some of that essential creative energy and scholarship that contribute so much to the University's growing academic reputation.

AUP is a creative place where teacher-scholars actively tear down the walls that often hamper dialogue across disciplinary boundaries. They then go further, building bridges to connect their scholarship to the approaches of others, while creating pathways for students to explore nuanced ways of understanding the complex issues of our day.

As I have come to know AUP better, I recognize that it is not simply an American university located in France, but rather an institution with a unique global perspective at the intersection of the United States, Europe and the world. [Our faculty comes from more than 30 countries](#) and our students from more than 100. This global character creates a dynamic learning context and an environment that attracts and nurtures talented academics dedicated to our students, research and transformative education. With the involvement and commitment of our faculty, AUP will continue to expand its offerings, enhance its academic

reputation and shape its curriculum to provide graduating students with the tools they need to face the new challenges of today's world.

This compelling vision of an evolving and ascending university comes to life in the articles that follow, which illustrate AUP's essential creative energy and innovative scholarship. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I did.



Dr William Fisher, Provost & Executive  
Vice President for Academic Affairs



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**Dr Celeste Schenck**  
*AUP President*

Over the past ten years, President Celeste Schenck has witnessed firsthand just how vital the University's faculty is to its global reputation. Innovative teaching and cutting-edge research contribute to wide-ranging aspects of AUP's development: from designing state-of-the-art campus redevelopments to building a curriculum for the future. Cultivating an exceptional academic faculty is therefore central to ensuring the best possible experience for our Global Explorers.



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Kate Yue Zhang  
Associate Professor

## UNPACKING THE SOCIAL EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

*Crossing borders presents additional challenges to students embarking on new academic journeys. Professor Kate Yue Zhang researched the specific social experiences of global explorers.*

Perhaps the most exciting part of studying abroad is the potential it holds: new and unforeseen opportunities await you, where you'll be able to develop skills in ways you might not have thought possible. Whether it be through academic projects that test your expertise outside your comfort zone, or cultural discoveries that stretch beyond your studies in places you never imagined working, the people you work with and the relationships you develop along the way are key to these experiences.

The idea of exploring the social experiences of international graduate students came out of an evening's discussion I had with three colleagues in which we reminisced about our

own memories of studying abroad. Soon after, our research project successfully received funding from the UK Council for International Student Affairs. This allowed us, last winter, to set about using a mixed methodology of social network analysis, reflective diaries and semi-structured interviews to carry out research involving a diverse group of international PhD students studying in the UK and China. We were excited at the prospect of bringing personal narratives together into a bigger picture in a way that highlighted the students' cross-cultural dimension.

Indeed, graduate study - and especially doctoral study - can be a challenging and socially

isolating experience. One available support mechanism is building a social community with peers. We therefore wanted this project to unpack the institutional, situational and personal factors that impacted the students' opportunities and experiences when developing peer support networks. We focused on two research questions. The first looked at what mechanisms doctoral students used to develop social communities with their peers. The second focused on how situational and institutional factors impacted how the students developed these communities.

Our results showed that virtually all participants appreciated opportunities for student-led social



Tianjin City, China



initiatives and student-only communication spaces. Across all the institutions we studied, students typically used mechanisms such as social media, off-campus social events and access to physical study spaces on campus to develop their social communities. At the same time, these communities often relied on unofficial student leaders, which frequently led to perceived inequalities in the kinds of social opportunities that were available and who was invited to participate.

At the same time, participants nearly unanimously longed for more support and guidance from their institutions when leading and developing their own communities. In particular, there seemed to be a tension between students feeling that they should organize and attend social activities and feeling that they and their peers did not have resources available to do so. Furthermore, it appeared that the most vulnerable students were those who were new to the local area or were undergoing the most significant social transitions. The importance of support networks to managing these transitions was regularly emphasized by our participants. One student, who had always been frightened of change, said that her advice was “to push yourself out of your comfort zone, enjoy life and make friends.”

Building on previous studies, our findings confirmed that institutional contexts and cultures strongly impacted the ways in which students developed social relationships with peers. For instance, participants reported that having students living in close proximity had an impact on whether or not social support systems were developed effectively.

To unpack these contexts further, we created a blog as a supplementary research tool to allow participants to share the full range of their social experiences and emotions: happiness and sadness, success and failure, decisiveness and confusion. Allowing students to express themselves this way further showcased how geographical and cultural transitions are part of a learning process. As one participant, an Indian woman who had studied in Japan and the UK, put it: “Meeting every tiny challenge head-on was a source of joy for me. There were many during my time studying abroad and I learned a lot from each one. I could have seen these encounters as problems, but having another perspective helped me see things differently.”

For some, the university experience is mixed up with turmoil and emotion, adding further nuance to their community interactions. One student talked about how she suffered when she lost her father. She received emotional support from her friends that helped her get through the most difficult time of her life. “In a way losing my dad has made me stronger and more determined to do well. It has also shown me the value of life and the relationships I have made.”

International students just like our own Global Explorers encounter unique and often difficult social experiences when transitioning to a new situation or culture, but behind these challenges lie inspiring stories worthy of academic attention. When finalizing this article, I got the news that our project has received the Paul Webley Award for Innovation in International Education for 2018 in the UK. The next step? We are already hatching a plan to conduct research into our own community to listen to all your AUP stories. ■

*“Life is made up of decisions, and circumstances impact those decisions. Perhaps the most exciting part of studying abroad is the idea of where it might take you.”*



Jessica Feldman  
Assistant Professor



## DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY TO SERVE DEMOCRACY

*Communications technology can both empower and disenfranchise. Furthering democracy relies on an accessible infrastructure and championing careful design.*

Starting on December 28, 2017 and continuing into 2018, massive protests erupted throughout Iran over a range of political and economic issues surrounding poverty, the cost of living and unpaid wages. During this time, platforms like Instagram and secure messaging apps like Telegram were blocked by the government, making it difficult for protestors to communicate with each other and to share documentation globally. This kind of action is a common state response to large protest movements and assemblies, not only in Iran, but worldwide. It is also nothing new: control of and access to communication technologies

Protesters supporting the uprising in Iran  
Amsterdam, 2018





Jayson Harsin  
Associate Professor

# FAKE NEWS, POST-TRUTH & DEMOCRACY

Recent tragedy has reignited debate about how online echo chambers fuel hateful discourse, but the real power to beat fake news lies in rediscovering an ethics of public communication and reorienting the goals of such communication away from winning and selling to informing about and solving common problems.

During this article's first draft, news broke of two new tragedies in the US. Firstly, Floridian Cesar Sayoc was charged with sending bombs to CNN, to billionaire George Soros and to prominent US Democrats. Secondly, Robert Bowers attacked a Pittsburgh synagogue, murdering 11 people and wounding six others in an act of extreme hate. Though it would be overly simplistic to blame these crimes on the mesmerizing power of fake news or the nefarious echo chambers of the internet, there are clear connections which deserve attention.

I have worked with the concepts of fake news and post-truth ever since my colleague [Waddick](#)

[Doyle](#) (Global Communications) organized a pioneering conference at AUP on media and belief in 2005. After many years researching the subject, I argue that disinformation - the spread of false information to deliberately deceive - is not chiefly caused by social media or bad journalism, but a larger set of cultural and historical developments that have undermined public trust in the kind of basic knowledge necessary for mature participation in democratic societies. I will briefly discuss my research in this broader context, and the challenges it outlines for democracy and its academic study.

I argue that we must look beyond the historical precedents of fake news and stop pointing out the obvious - that such things have always existed. In order to understand the causes of the current situation in greater depth, we must look at the changing practices and roles of those who participate in media, culture and politics. Popular accounts of post-truth rarely provide deep analysis of the changing historical conditions of media and communication, especially with respect to political communication.

November 10, 2016: British newspaper front pages reporting on the US presidential election result



Let's begin by focusing on one of the major effects of this superficial approach to post-truth: it encourages misleading debates about freedom of expression. For some, the idea of policing disinformation sounds an alarm as it could be a slippery slope toward Orwellian communication policies. However, there are several problems with this knee-jerk logic. Firstly, in most modern democracies, not all speech is tolerated. Hate speech is a recent exception to freedom of expression, while libel and sedition have long been viewed as having

fiction today. We call this the "fragmentation of attention" thesis.

Many political communities exist in closed networks such as Facebook groups, or even ones with encrypted data such as WhatsApp. Even in supposedly open channels, algorithms govern which content appears, customizing it to meet user interests. In the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century, democracy meant mass communication – which in turn meant mass attention was paid to media content. Millions

of such attention being paid to coverage of political communication through customized channels such as websites, radio talk shows and social media, where people come and go, graze content and move quickly on.

There are also other problems that go beyond questions of falsehood and freedom of expression. Consider that people are prone to "cognitive bias" – reacting quickly and irrationally to discourse that supports or contests their assumptions and worldviews. Even when people are presented with corrective evidence, it's still possible for them to reject it, clinging fiercely to inaccurate claims. Rampant distrust of the media and the fragmentation of debate appear to further facilitate these biases. The impacts extend beyond ignorance and volatile attitudes such as misogyny, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, as individuals then vote for candidates or policies that support their views. In extreme but not uncommon cases, disinformation can incite biased consumers to commit violence.

While one cannot definitively prove social media and the fragmentation of a common media culture contributed to Sayoc's hatred and acts of terrorism, those who knew him some 13 years ago say they never witnessed him making homophobic or anti-Semitic remarks. His period of radicalization therefore corresponds to the

growth of social media, political polarization and (especially right-wing) distrust of journalism and government. Sayoc posted disinformation, hateful views on social media. His targets included George Soros, who was recently implicated in fake news stories purporting that he organized the caravan of immigrants moving toward the Mexico-US border, and CNN, considered fake news and "an enemy of the people" by Donald Trump. In the case of Bowers, CBS News reports that he frequently used Gab, a social network known for white supremacist and other extremist content. Gab's slogan is "Here You Can Speak Freely." Bowers also frequently posted anti-Semitic messages about the George Soros migrant caravan conspiracy.

In Europe, both Brexit and the rise of the far-right have been closely associated with fake news production and a strong distrust of mainstream journalism. In Germany, this populist mentality is manifest in the revival of the extremist term Lügenpresse, or "lying press." Extremists use social media to bypass the checks and balances of mainstream journalism. Facebook and Twitter, the two biggest social media platforms for news and political communication, have so far avoided government action by self-regulating in response to their public perception problems. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, for example, has admitted to testing features that insert alternative viewpoints

into users' timelines. But this action by social media giants does not solve the problem of disinformation in closed or open channels. Academic approaches to fake news also tend to simplify the issue, reducing it to a series of echo chambers in which victims of disinformation are not exposed to truth or alternative arguments. I argue that this over-fixation on echo chambers does not address the transformation of the political communication environment, along with journalism's role within it. Closed channels, often little more than angry editorial spaces, are not subject to professional fact-checking standards, and surveys have shown that distrust in fact-checking itself is also on the rise.

Consider for a moment some of the challenges for research into bias, echo chambers and post-truth fact-checking. Some studies attempt to test what happens when those with strong political convictions are exposed to people with different views. However, problems arise when opinions are presented as facts. We need to know both how people react when they encounter evidence that contradicts their expectations and how they react to opposing viewpoints that may or may not have a factual basis. There is evidence that suggests that people, no matter their level of education, have the potential to discount factual information that does not correspond to their expectations. However, much of this

research is experimental and does not observe people in real life situations, and has therefore been criticized for producing results that can't be applied outside of a laboratory setting. Studies also need to test the effects of repeated exposure to different viewpoints when backed up by multiple sources. However, trust is the research area in need of most development.

Most popular takes on post-truth politics and fake news misunderstand the relationship between truth and trust. In modern public life, a citizen's sense of truth depends on trust. Most people are not scientists and therefore receive information and expert knowledge filtered down through professional journalism. Before reassembling the fragmented spaces of political communication, we need to reestablish public trust in a more convincing way. This needs to be coupled with rethinking the logic of information provision to avoid misleading, even false opinionated content, which is entertaining for some, but not aimed primarily at informing. This will, however, require pressure on politicians to tame the accepted modern practice of strategically presenting half-truths, unprovable suggestions and truncated contexts in order to achieve support for policies and gain votes. Only then can we start to talk about moving from post-truth politics to something more stable and deserving of the term democracy. ■



no place in free societies. Secondly, the liberal democratic argument for free speech posits that if you don't like what someone is saying, then the best solution is more debate. But this position assumes a media environment that is a

of people tuned in to news broadcasts or read newspapers that reported on controversial political speech and its counter-arguments, while monitoring and following one another's news agendas. Today there is no guarantee



AUP student advisors during orientation in the fall

Hannah Westley  
Assistant Professor



## WHAT MAKES YOU CLICK? AUP STUDENTS & THEIR NEWS

*The media industry is constantly changing as new technology and shifting audiences reshape the way we get our news. Professor Hannah Westley (Global Communications) shows that, when it comes to the internet, the millennial mindset is about far more than pictures of cats.*

Much of the most effective journalism begins with the plight of an individual and opens out to illuminate a larger socio-political situation or dilemma. Journalists know that empathy doesn't scale up, so in order to make a reader care about an abstract piece of legislation or the consequences of a natural catastrophe, it helps to let them know how it affects them, or people like them. Similarly, it helps a student to understand a theoretical proposition when a professor can demonstrate how it relates to them. Even the driest theoretical exposition will pique a student's curiosity if it is linked back to their lives and interests.

In the communications classroom, my colleagues and I push to transform our students from passive consumers of media into active, critical audiences. Journalism takes this transformation one step further: students make the switch from consumer to producer. To do this, they first have to become more discerning readers of the news. In the Fall semester of 2017, I collaborated with students on a research project to help them become more aware of their own news habits and those of their peers.

As a former journalist who now teaches the discipline, I am heavily invested in the fate of

the profession as it traverses a period of great upheaval. One of the first questions I used to ask my students was how they got their news. Their answers tended to be variations on a theme: most undergraduates consumed news via social media. As a researcher, I know this corresponds to global trends. Recent

Though the AUP classroom aligns with global trends, it also shows interesting divergences. I believe this to be due to the heterogeneous nature of our student body. With over 100 different nationalities, AUP shows how news habits are culturally embedded and geographically distinct.

of students keeping detailed news diaries. Over the course of a week, they recorded when they engaged with the news, where they came across it, and its genre, language and headline. They also indicated how often they followed a link back to its original source. One group of students compiled the results and presented them to the class. Another was charged with carrying out a campus-wide survey of their peers' news habits and comparing these results to patterns in their own class. The last group contrasted these results with findings presented in recent industry surveys: Reuters' *Digital News Report* and the Pew Research Center's *State of the News Media*.

The students' results, which are published on the [Civic Media website](#), were both surprising and heartening. While many assumptions are made about the passive and gullible news habits of millennials, our findings showed AUP students to be curious, cautious and open-minded in their news consumption. Rather than clicking links focused on celebrities, cats, and makeup, AUP students showed a preference for hard news related to international politics and current affairs. They showed a willingness to cross-reference news stories, to find their original sources and navigate the modern web. As expected at an Anglophone institution,

almost all students accessed news in English. However, a large percentage of AUP students are bilingual or multilingual and so also consumed news in other languages, providing them with the ability to cross-reference yet further.

The project took place almost a year after President Trump was sworn into office at a time of great tumult for the press concerning fake news, filter bubbles and echo chambers. Many of the students involved in the project were tuned in to this debate and claimed both to have come across fake news online and to be able to recognize it. Alarming discourse surrounding the manipulation of users via social media may have made them more cautious in their online news consumption than previously.

There were two consequences for my own work. Firstly, I determined that digital literacy should assume a primary position on my syllabus. It is too often taken for granted that millennials are "digital natives" who have more to teach their elders than they have to learn. Just as a literature student comes to university to become a more astute reader, communications technology students come to acquire a more critical approach to the tools they use in their everyday lives.

Secondly, I realized that this was a rich vein of research that could have consequences not only for consumers but also for the industry. The students' research later contributed to a cross-cultural study into millennials' news habits that I carried out with teams from the US, the UK and Russia. We presented our findings at a conference and they were later published in the *Journal of Digital Journalism*.

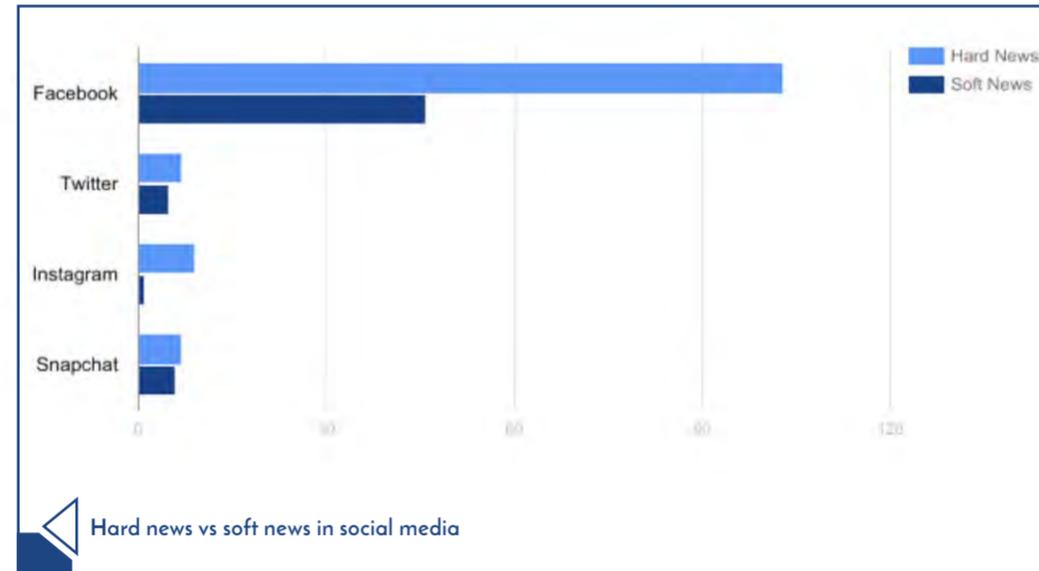
My research and my teaching remain closely intertwined. As Faculty Advisor to [AUP's student media organization](#), I teach students how to structure online content in the form of news and feature articles. This sparked my interest in the strategies news outlets use to convince readers to click. In an internet-driven economy, what's become of the tabloid tradition of punning headlines? How does a journalist harness the power of keywords for search engine optimization (SEO) without deadening their prose? In an age of emotive reporting, what effect do headlines have on the consumer?

An article's headline is the first contact a reader has with a story. It is important to get right as it both "tells and sells." An online headline, like in print, has to quickly draw a reader's attention. It performs several functions at once:

introducing the topic of the article, generating audience interest and indicating the news outlet's attitude toward it. Headlines not only give a first impression, potentially determining if people read a piece, research also shows that they influence which parts of a story we remember. A headline's phrasing can impact what a reader recalls about an article if certain details meet the expectations it sets up.

My research contributes to a field of journalism studies that examines the "audience turn." If the reader's perspective on news has historically received scant attention, digitalization, globalization and the increasingly participatory nature of journalism have put these ideas center stage. It is imperative to understand how such phenomena shape people's engagement with the news. These lessons are essential not only to journalism but to the future of democratic society.

Today, I ask my students not where they get their news but which headlines they click on and why. Our students have many valuable lessons to teach us about what works in journalism today, giving us an indication of what the future has in store. ■



industry reports show that, while users are turning away from Facebook in the wake of the 2016 American election controversy and the company's algorithm tweaking, other platforms such as WhatsApp and Snapchat are on the rise when it comes to news.

In order to dig deeper into these differences, students worked together to research media consumption on campus - thanks to a grant from the [Civic Media Lab](#). Our methodology consisted of three different modes of enquiry. The first stage of the project involved groups



Michelle Kuo & Albert Wu  
Assistant Professors

## CRISIS AT THE BORDER

This summer, AUP Professors Michelle Kuo (History, Law, and Society) and Albert Wu (History) traveled to San Antonio to volunteer with the legal aid organization RAICES. What follows is a short Q&A about their experiences.

### Q: WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TRAVEL TO THE BORDER?

**A (Albert):** Like many, we were horrified by the stories emerging in May and June of this year. The images of children separated from their parents struck us deeply. We felt powerless, and Michelle, in particular, had a deep sense that we needed to do something to help. Before moving to Paris, she worked as a legal aid lawyer on behalf of undocumented immigrants in the Bay Area. She reached out to some former colleagues who recommended that we contact

RAICES, the largest organization offering legal aid to immigrants in Texas. They had recently launched a Facebook campaign that raised 20 million dollars in a couple of weeks. The fact that there was such an outpouring of support for the group reflected the grassroots anger that Trump's policies had engendered. We later learned later that RAICES staff had been flooded with requests to volunteer. We were lucky - even though they were still figuring out how to manage the flow, they allowed us to come along. Once Michelle said she needed to go, I knew I wanted to be there, too.

### Q: WHAT DID YOU DO WITH RAICES?

**A (Albert):** We were originally scheduled to spend the entire time in the detention center in Karnes County, about an hour south of San Antonio, helping asylum seekers with their applications and preparing them for interviews with asylum officers. But Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) were late in giving us authorization, so we ended up spending the first week in the RAICES office in San Antonio. We helped process bail bonds, passed out supplies at the Greyhound bus station, and helped file cases in the district courts.

**A (Michelle):** We came away with a profound sense of the heroic nature of the organization. The staff there are indefatigable, working long hours with paltry resources in the withering Texas heat.

### Q: WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART OF THE WORK?

**A (Albert):** Definitely going to the detention center (ICE calls it a residential center to hide its true nature). We would wake up early to drive an hour away, and the shift was from 10 a.m. to 8

p.m. - ten straight hours of meetings with clients, hearing their stories, helping with their cases and trying to figure out which "particular social group" they belonged to, as is required under asylum law. We packed peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to bring with us and snuck in breaks when we could.

**A (Michelle):** Hearing the individual stories about torturous journeys to the United States was heart-wrenching. It was enraging to hear that children had been taken from their families once they arrived. It was clear that they were all traumatized by the experience.

*“It was enraging to hear that children had been taken from their families once they arrived. It was clear that they were all traumatized by the experience.”*



Caged detainees at the Ursula detention center in Texas, USA



People marching against ICE practices in the "Families Belong Together" march

**Q: HOW WERE PEOPLE BEING AFFECTED BY TRUMP'S SEPARATION POLICY?**

**A (Michelle):** When we arrived at Karnes, ICE was using the detention center as a site to reunite fathers and sons. We had been trained to counsel women and their children, but when we arrived the last group of women was already being transferred to a different location, and suddenly we had to scramble to adapt our counseling to men. All of the fathers had been separated from their children for several months and had only had the opportunity to talk to them for five minutes at a time. Most had asked for asylum when they arrived. Some of the men had been loaded onto buses and sent around the country. One of the men we talked to ended up in a detention center in the Northeast, after six different bus rides.

**A (Albert):** The Karnes family detention center has been in operation since 2014. It was set up by the Obama administration to deal with the upswing of refugees seeking asylum at the time. However, Obama detained families together in the same facility; he did not order their separation. Long-time volunteers told us that they had never seen morale so low. Most asylum seekers just wanted to be deported. They didn't want to risk losing their children again.

**Q: WAS THERE ANYTHING HOPEFUL ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE?**

**A (Michelle & Albert):** We were incredibly moved by the work being done at the Greyhound bus station, the first stop for parents and children who had been released from detention. We saw RAICES and other civil society groups, including Catholic charities and interfaith groups, passing out backpacks with clothes, toys and toiletries and helping people find their way to their next destination.

RAICES was also an incredible source of inspiration. Many staff and volunteers were either in college or had just graduated, and we were invigorated by their dedication to the cause.

And of course, we were inspired by the refugees and asylum seekers. Many had lived through unspeakable, harrowing experiences - threats of violence, kidnapping, torture and separation from their children. Their resilience made a deep impression on us. ■



Christy Shields & Beth Grannis  
Assistant Professor & MA Student '18



## FOOD WITHOUT BORDERS

*Nothing brings people together like a good meal. Professor Christy Shields (Global Communications) and MA student Beth Grannis '18 witnessed this firsthand when helping sixth graders create a collaborative film for the Food without Borders project.*

For the past six years, Maurice Ravel junior high school in the 20th *arrondissement* of Paris has been engaged in a civic experiment. Here, bilingual students who test into the International English Baccalaureate (OIB) share most of their classes with students who are just beginning to learn English and who follow the traditional French Baccalaureate (Bac). The class therefore reflects two distinct groups of global youth: those who travel across borders as the children of professional classes, and those who travel across borders as the children of working-class and immigrant families. This second group sometimes speaks

another language at home with their families even if they don't use it in school. Bringing these students together in a single class is done carefully and consciously, with the belief that working together will benefit all.

I am a food anthropologist and Assistant Professor in Global Communications at AUP, and Beth is a student in our [MA in Global Communications program](#), a filmmaker and Deputy Director of Filmmakers without Borders. During the 2017-18 school year, we designed and directed a collaborative ethnographic film project for Ravel's incoming sixth grade class.

Student Beth Grannis '18 in front of a class of students at Lycée Maurice-Ravel

AUP's [Civic Media Lab](#) and Filmmakers without Borders both provided support for the project. Throughout the fall, we led the sixth graders through a series of anthropology and filmmaking workshops designed to help them produce a film about memorable foods while encouraging collaboration and a sense of community. In the movie, each child tells the story of a dish that connects them to the past, a place, a people and a sense of belonging. On March 20, 2018, the class presented their work at the *Premier Festival*

to the community screening. Students' families helped them to prepare often labor-intensive dishes and lent a hand with the extensive subtitling necessary for a multilingual film. Finally, a group of AUP student mentors worked alongside us in the classroom. While they shared basic anthropology training, their French language and filmmaking skills varied. They also represented, individually and collectively, an example of global students in a diverse learning community.

However, there is no substitute for time and trust. I recorded 160 contact hours during the project, and Beth, who had additional filming responsibilities, put in more than 190. That's not even counting time spent on preparation and on editing the film. The work involved coordinating workshops and film screenings as well as hundreds of emails and face-to-face meetings with participants. Collaborating on a project means taking time to get to know everyone involved, to get a sense of their experience within the community and their hopes for the project, and to build shared processes and a sense of mutual trust.

We drew on our respective disciplines to help shape these interactions. As an anthropologist, I lent particular importance to the role of language in framing collaboration. I used cultural concepts of meaning, such as Proust's madeleine and the French civic ideal of *vivre ensemble* (living together), to shape exchanges and create space for the discussion of different lived experiences and perspectives. Language was also central when teaching interviewing techniques, which were key to the project because the sixth graders told their food stories in conversation with a classmate. Word choice is important when formulating questions. Are your words expressing judgment? Do you formulate open-ended questions so your partner can

respond in their own terms? Students were told to build bridges, not walls, when interviewing their partner. This quickly (and quite unintentionally) became a project theme, picked up in other contexts by students and teachers alike. Everyone working on the project was encouraged to share their languages with others. The final film is in French, English, Italian, Chinese.



Beth, on the other hand, relied on visual imagery and movement. She worked with the tradition of participatory filmmaking and drew from a Common Core curriculum originally developed by Filmmakers without Borders in 2014 - originally for students who did not speak English. She adapted this pedagogy to the Ravel classroom and it worked to create cohesion and

a sense of equality. When teaching different camera shots, she stood in front of the class and called out the technical terms (like "close up") while framing herself with her hands. The children then copied the movement, repeating the term. In this way, a student's literacy or English level was not a barrier, as they were learning together and working towards a shared goal.

respect their sixth grade students and to ask new questions about the nature and power of education systems, identity, structural inequalities and civic ideals. Through our interdisciplinary encounter, I discovered the power of film to encourage cross-cultural empathy, and Beth how anthropology can help frame such work. This project is part of AUP's



How might such collaborative endeavors inspire change? One sixth grader described the project as an opportunity "to know one another, learn about things and not be in a bubble," an apt summary of the project's goals. Ravel's teachers, inspired in part by our collaboration, are now involved in two new OIB/Bac projects of their own design. AUP students grew to

wider efforts to strengthen its commitment to community service, new learning experiences and engaged scholarship. Leaving our bubble is not about reinforcing ingrained beliefs through new encounters, but formulating critical, constructive and empathetic questions that aim to build bridges, so we can sit down at shared tables in troubled times. ■

“This project is part of AUP's wider efforts to strengthen its commitment to community service, new learning experiences and engaged scholarship.”

*des Arts de la Scène et du Goût*, organized in partnership with the French Ministry of Education and held at a Michelin-starred restaurant and theater, *La Scène Thélème*.

In addition to the sixth graders, we collaborated with Ravel's language teachers who helped to shape the project and developed relevant lessons for their classes. The school's administrators helped with consent forms and invited education officials

From the outset, we wanted to build the project in dialogue with community members. With such a diverse class and so many different groups of participants, framing this collaboration was one of the project's biggest challenges. What would it look like in this context? How could the project encourage further collaboration within the community? Though we shared the final goal of producing a movie, this didn't necessarily mean we'd all work well together!

# AUP ASCENDING

THE FACULTY, THE CURRICULUM & AUP'S RISING PROFILE

*Over the past ten years, President Celeste Schenck has underscored repeatedly how vital the University's faculty is to its global reputation, pointing to the AUP faculty's significant achievements in innovative teaching and mentoring, as well as in research.*

*Much has been accomplished at AUP in supporting faculty-student collaborations, creating new and appropriate learning environments on a state-of-the-art campus, and designing a curriculum for the future.*

Dr Celeste Schenck  
AUP President



The faculty of The American University of Paris is the jewel in the crown of the University, and richly deserves the credit for the significant enhancement of AUP's academic reputation over the past ten years. Since the early 2000s, a number of strategic decisions have strengthened faculty productivity and excellence in teaching, broadening its representation from 20 to nearly 30 different nationalities. Among the first contributing factors to the University's rising reputation were international recruitment of faculty on the teacher-scholar model, increased support for innovative pedagogies and faculty research agendas, and near-continuous grant support since 1999 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York for curricular renewal and faculty development. It's also worth mentioning the vast increase in electronic resources available in the AUP Library. Over the past decade, AUP has gone from some 70,000 books in its library to well over half a million electronic resources, making our library - soon to move to the Quai d'Orsay Student Learning Center - one of the most substantial Anglophone research collections in

Europe located in a non-Anglophone country. Additionally, the creation of the Academic Resource Center (ARC), the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and the annual Trustee Awards for faculty achievement, as well as the founding of the five research centers and the Civic Media Lab, have all provided support in incalculable ways for both faculty research and teaching. And AUP's faculty research productivity has skyrocketed as a result.

## TEACHING, LEARNING AND RESEARCH

At AUP, teaching and research go hand in hand, along with the substantial service to the institution that is at the heart of faculty self-governance. Small liberal arts colleges such as ours provide close faculty mentoring of student aspirations and research, innovative teaching methods and a curriculum under virtually continuous review. It is deeply rewarding for faculty to interact one-on-one with students and to guide their intellectual development, but it also takes a tremendous commitment



TLC workshop on designing courses to facilitate active learning

of time, focus and energy. At the same time, the finest teaching is informed by currency in one's field and cutting-edge research. At AUP we like to think of research and teaching as intertwined, each informing and influencing the other. Teaching a course on a new topic of research is exciting for teachers and students alike, providing faculty with a laboratory in which to try out new ideas and approaches; students benefit from producing original research alongside faculty who are deeply engaged in their own. Faculty who keep current in their field, who contribute to disciplinary debates and who engage in activity within their profession are modeling intellectual inquiry and leadership for their students. At AUP, a core group of faculty meets regularly in the [Teaching and Learning Center](#) to explore new pedagogies and share their experiences in the demographically diverse AUP classroom, while others share their work across the University via interdisciplinary projects supported by our research centers and within our departments. Students are at the center of all of this work, even that of running the departments themselves, where they serve as departmental representatives.

AUP students recognize the stellar teaching that goes on in the classroom at AUP. Last spring's teaching evaluations, tabulated for all

courses taught at the University, showed that 82.5% of respondents felt that their professor had created an environment conducive to learning; 79% said that the course made them want to learn more about the discipline; and 88.5% reported that the course stimulated their thinking. Another way to measure student acquisition of departmental learning outcomes – dependent upon excellence in teaching – is to consult the list of last spring's 27 submissions, from all departments, for the annual Simming Shaw Award for Academic Excellence. A glance at just a few of these titles indicates the level of student research attained: "Brain to Drone: A Pilot Study of a Novel Brain-Computer Interface and its Effects on Attention Disorders," "Equity for All Children or for 'Our Children?' Contradictions Amongst International Agreements, Domestic Law and the Treatment of Unaccompanied Minors in France" and "Art in the Age of Capitalism: Financialization of the Art Market." An even better and more objective measure of faculty mentoring and student achievement is our harvest of distinguished graduate school admissions. Just last year, our graduates went on to renowned institutions in the UK (Oxford, LSE, SOAS University of London, Manchester, York, Edinburgh, Glasgow, King's College London and Sotheby's Institute of Art), in the US (NYU Institute of Fine Arts, NYU Law

School, Columbia, Babson, Parsons School of Design, New York School of Interior Design, School of Studio Arts and The New School) and elsewhere in Europe (Paris Descartes, Oslo, Lisbon and Prague). Five years ago, 14% of our graduates of the prior three years' classes went to graduate school; today the figure is 54%. And the entering GPA of new students has risen from 2.8 to 3.4 during the same period. All boats are rising.

Clearly the most visible measure of an increasingly burnished academic reputation is faculty research productivity. Attendance at international conferences and the hosting of our own, along with the publishing of articles, monographs and books, all contribute handsomely to a university's visibility. In recent years, [producing an annual report of Faculty Achievements](#), the Provost's Office reported an astonishing record of scholarly productivity. In 2016, AUP faculty published 19 books and 150 articles and papers, attending over 200 conferences throughout the year. In 2017, the results were consistent – a further 17 books, 138 articles and papers, seven exhibits and films, and the same attendance at conferences as the year

before. Conferences such as the International James Baldwin Conference organized by Alice Craven and Bill Dow in the Summer of 2015 (with over 400 participants), and their Hemingway conference this past summer (that attracted over 500 participants) have prompted well endorsed and well received scholarly collections. Last spring's "Words That Kill," hosted by the George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention attracted some 300 scholars from five continents. These are but the tip of the iceberg, as AUP faculty host dozens of scholarly gatherings on campus a year, many of them in



concert with French universities and institutions. Last year AUP's Center for Critical Democracy Studies collaborated with the French grande école Sciences Po on "Federalisms and Political Transitions." Lissa Lincoln, head of AUP's Gender Studies program, collaborated on a symposium

on #MeToo (in French, #BalanceTonPorc) with the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and the French national research laboratory CNRS.

### A NEW CAMPUS WITH PURPOSE-BUILT FACILITIES

One of the pillars of AUP Ascending, our 2015-20 Strategic Plan, has been the [consolidation of our campus at 69, quai d'Orsay](#), with the conjoining of the Combes Student Life Center and the Quai d'Orsay Student Learning Center. But as we've renovated Combes, the

102 Saint-Dominique teaching facility, parts of the Passage Landrieu, the Grenelle Teaching and Mentoring Center, and the La Tour-Maubourg Administration Building, not to mention the Quai over the past year, our goal has been to create better offices for faculty

and staff, centers or hubs of collaborative activity and student services, and the right kind of purpose-built facilities to support our kind of learning. We've created group and team study rooms in all sizes and shapes, better outfitted classrooms, and gathering spaces for students where they can collaborate with each other and faculty members. The new building will feature an entire floor devoted to media production, quiet study spaces, lively study spaces, and a host of other configurations for student research and teamwork. As students have flooded into some of our liberal arts majors, we've experienced meteoric growth in these areas, notably in History (up over 300% in five years), Art History (up nearly 160%), Psychology (up 113%) and – probably due to our two new popular majors in this department – Computer Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Science (up 106%).

Indeed, the demand for fine arts classes, amongst both visitors and degree-seeking students, has become so high that this past summer we made the decision to keep the Montessuy building. As our librarians move to the Quai d'Orsay Student Learning Center in March 2019, we'll begin work on a new Montessuy Center for the Arts that will feature two large studios, one for painting and drawing and one for clay and sculpture, with



Maria Rodriguez  
SERVICE TO OTHERS THROUGH...

- Leadership
- Management
- Communication
- Community Building
- Content Creation
- Dedication
- Efficiency
- INITIATION!

Mirror Mirror on the wall  
Who's the most...

Charitable  
of them  
all?

AUP Core and Alifia Tibhan wish to recognize our students philanthropic achievements.  
A Ceremony will be presented at graduation.  
To apply and for more information contact [agarcia@ag.edu](mailto:agarcia@ag.edu).  
Applications are due May 9.

attendant storage spaces, offices for faculty, other Art History classrooms and – dependent on a donation – an 85-person auditorium in the basement. We look forward to opening this new facility in Fall 2019. Virtually all faculty members at AUP have had to undergo moves over the past three years, and most have moved into upgraded, painted and better laid out offices in which to receive students and accomplish their research. We've been able to group departments more strategically and to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations. Careful planning has made for both beautiful and more practical learning environments for faculty and students.

### A 21<sup>st</sup>-CENTURY CURRICULUM

The next step for us in our long and complex strategy for refounding AUP – one that will begin this year under Dr William Fisher, AUP's Provost – will be the thorough review of our curriculum, which will engage our imaginations and energy for the next five years. We will be looking at everything from what we teach to what we don't but should, from our existing array of active pedagogies to new learning models, from individual course assessment to the sequencing of learning across majors

and minors, as well as across a student's entire college trajectory. Bill's academic trajectory and intellectual interests have prepared him uniquely for the project ahead. For those who do not know him yet, Bill holds two degrees from Columbia University: a PhD in Anthropology and a Master's in International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs. His BA was in History and Philosophy. Bill has served on the faculties of Clark, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia and Barnard, and has worked internationally as a global development consultant. He is impressively interdisciplinary in his approach to learning and research, as was much in evidence at Clark where he founded the undergraduate and graduate Department of International Development, Community Organizing and the Environment, today the university's second largest department. Author of two books and two collections, winner of several prestigious fellowships (amongst them the Salzburg Seminar Presidential Fellowship) and recipient of the Thomas Temple Hoopes Prize for Excellence in Teaching, Bill brings deep social science expertise across multiple disciplines (including global health policy) to the Office of the Provost, complementing the depth of the bench that we already have in the humanities. Just as Hank Kreuzman brought the experience we needed to design the Quai

last year and recharge faculty governance, so Bill Fisher, with his recent expertise in both graduate studies and curricular development, has precisely the background and strengths to take on our biggest challenge yet: the review and realignment of the curriculum and graduate programs with the needs and aspirations of AUP's Global Explorers.

We have to date achieved remarkable coherence, beginning with our [mission](#) and extending down through the [strategic plan](#) to the [institutional learning outcomes](#), and then from there through the learning goals of the various majors, programs, individual courses and even study trips. I like to call AUP's increasingly integrated curriculum a triple helix, in which core curriculum (the shared part of the curriculum that all students take that is the "signature" of an educational institution) and the co-curriculum (everything that takes place outside the classroom that is also a learning experience) wind themselves around the major and minor curriculum. The Provost and faculty, working together, will find the right terminology to describe this holistic integration of our educational program. The already-existing coherence of AUP's model was made evident last year when the faculty produced our four AUP Core Capabilities to be attained by all AUP graduates, just as the

architects of our Global Professional Skills Program came up with nearly identical goals.

As our Provost works with departments, groups of faculty, chairs and programs to ensure this coherence across our entire curriculum, all will be guided by this model. The faculty voted in a new Global Liberal Arts Core Curriculum this fall that includes two new approaches, digital literacy and experiential learning – perhaps the two most critical skills for the world our students are inheriting. Students will begin our new core curriculum with FirstBridge, a discipline-based introduction to interdisciplinary study in the freshman year, and they will conclude their academic trajectory with a Senior Capstone that will help them to reflect upon their entire scholarly journey at AUP. Ensuring a summative experience that brings general and specialized learning together in the senior year is a widely-viewed best practice in education. Our generally agreed-upon guideline of curricular hybridity within all

majors (that is, our combination within each major of deep liberal arts learning and vocationally enhancing opportunities for applying knowledge to real-world situations) will continue to govern our curricular approach at all levels.

The Global Professional Skills Program (co-curricular), new this year, will guarantee AUP's place on the international higher education map. Students will receive, in addition to their academic transcripts and grades, a co-curricular transcript that will list all their co-curricular activities and the learning outcomes associated with each one. What better way to demonstrate leadership than to serve as captain of a sports team? What better way to evidence professional skills than by completing an internship? Students will thus undertake, as part of their three- or four-year trajectory, this twin pillar to their academic work. From the first year, career exploration, workshops using design thinking techniques, and internships and experiential learning opportunities will fuel a co-curriculum that aims to develop

our graduates' global competencies and professional skills.

### LOOKING FORWARD: AUP'S RESEARCH CENTERS AND THE FUTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

AUP's research centers are now three years old and were the fruit of an experiment to join our discipline-based curriculum to the problems of the contemporary world. In these supra-departmental centers, faculty and students come together to invent viable and empowering hands-on solutions to the global issues of our time - the environment, democracy, cultural translation, and genocide, human rights, and conflict prevention. A fifth - on global diplomacy and leadership - will join the others in due course. All are arrayed around a Civic Media Lab that provides funding and structure for faculty/student collaborations. The pressing need to shore up or remake civic media - at a moment when mainstream journalists are being called "the enemy of the people" and fake news has corrupted everything from civil discourse to the US elections - has encouraged The American University of Paris to redouble its efforts to strengthen students' understanding and production of digital media. First supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation by means

of a Presidential Initiative Grant three years ago, the Lab - founded by a senior professor in the Global Communications Department - will have gone from having a virtual but visible presence on campus to occupying a fully equipped floor of AUP's Quai d'Orsay Student Learning Center when this new building opens its doors in March 2019. The George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention will also be in the Quai. The Center for Critical Democracy Studies and the Center for Writers and Translators have their offices in the Grenelle Teaching and Mentoring Center. The Joy and Edward Frieman Environmental Science Center, with its climate chambers and lab spaces, is in the Combes Student Life Center.

Our vision for a 21st-century curriculum for AUP was vastly advanced by the creation of a hub of research centers that offer AUP students opportunities to conduct research alongside their professors and provide the University a global audience for its research output and teaching excellence in areas bedrock to its mission. The Centers and the Lab have already created a strong bridge between our liberal arts curriculum and the issues facing our globalized world, inviting students to apply their learning meaningfully to real-world issues.

Prof. Claudio Piani and Tony Hung '18 in the Environmental Science Lab





“AUP is a university in full forward motion thanks to the devotion and energy, and powerful research and teaching agendas of its faculty.”

The Provost’s work with faculty on horizon scanning and the continuous work of renewing our core teaching and research excellence, aligning it with the needs of our students, continue at AUP as we begin to imagine new disciplines to explore. We are looking at the cluster of fields William Fisher brings with him - international development, and environmental and global health policy - and adding to these new fields data science and analysis for which AUP students, with their global fluencies and linguistic skills, would be perfect communicators. In addition to being drawn to international careers in business, international affairs, communications and technology, publishing, teaching and policy making - not to mention humanitarian fields - AUP students are proving to be very successful in the travel and tourism sector as well as other forms of global service management. In the coming years, we hope to find our own liberal arts manner of incorporating some of these disciplines to our already-thriving curricular offering.

None of this innovative work on new pedagogies, curricular revision and faculty development would have been possible without AUP’s 20-year support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Since 1999, AUP has been the beneficiary of generous grants to create new programs, reinvigorate teaching and support our faculty as they explore new horizons. Our new Global Liberal Arts Curriculum and Global Professional Skills Program are only two of the many curricular initiatives funded by the Foundation over the past two decades, and for this support we are infinitely grateful. This year, in particular, was a highly successful year for grants. In June, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation granted AUP a three-year \$1 million grant to AMICAL, the consortium directed and founded by AUP that includes 29 sister institutions across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia. In September, the Mellon Foundation granted AUP a three-year \$588,000 grant for faculty development and curricular renewal. Over the summer, we were also invited to apply for a

\$250,000 Presidential Initiative Grant, which will be focused, if awarded next month, on support for the Civic Media Lab and its many projects, as well as the spread of visual and digital literacies across the curriculum.

AUP is a university in full forward motion thanks to the devotion and energy, and powerful research and teaching agendas of its faculty. Stay tuned for developments in these areas - innovations in teaching, announcement of international conferences and new faculty publications - as AUP further expands its curriculum for Global Explorers at the confluence of France, Europe and the world. ■



Jewish cemetery in Otwock, Poland

# REMEMBERING ATROCITY

*Commemorations of mass violence can shed light on the ways in which communities learn from the past, yet our collective memory of atrocities has not succeeded at preventing modern tragedy. Professor Brian Schiff (Psychology) looks at where memory went wrong.*

Nietzsche begins his well-known essay, "The Use and Abuse of History for Life", with a herd of animals in a field that are gifted in the art of forgetfulness and therefore happy. Without memory, you might also be content with your lot in the present moment, but such forgetfulness comes at a price. In our lives, our past experiences serve as a guide for the future – as successes to be built upon and mistakes to be avoided.

Memory is a fundamental concept that brings together my teaching, my research and my work as Director of the George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention. I am both passionate about and critical of the power of memory to promote a more just future.

I'm not referring to memory in the way that you might ordinarily do: as interiorized, personal recollection of your unique autobiographical experience. I'm fascinated by what French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs termed "collective memory" – or as later theorists refer to it, "social memory" – the way that groups

remember, represent and narrate the story of their past.

Social memory is inscribed in places: the memorials, monuments and museums that make up urban landscapes. It is also found in conversations, in college reunions where former classmates reminisce about shared experiences, or in family discussions about vacations, defining events and origin stories. Individuals situate their social identities within the stories of groups, appropriating collective points of view and locating themselves in a common landscape of memory.

The idea of social memory is central to the first-year FirstBridge seminar that I lead with [Professor Charles Talcott](#), "Making Memory," and to my upper-level course in psychology, "Social Memory." It is also evident in study trips that Charles and I lead to Warsaw and Treblinka, and to [Krakow and Auschwitz](#), exploring the history of the Shoah and the politics and design of museums and landscapes that commemorate the victims and the righteous.

Brian Schiff  
Professor



Social memory is also a concept that directly relates to my research ambitions. For more than 60 years, communities and nations have invested in memory projects on the Shoah and other events of mass violence as a means to prevent future atrocities. Although I believe that social memory must be represented in public spaces, education and commemorative rituals, I increasingly question the adequacy of our current memory practices to combat prejudice and instill the values of empathy and understanding necessary for tolerant and open societies.

Unfortunately, "never forget" has not translated into "never again." Given the extreme violence of the 20th and 21st centuries – most vividly represented by genocide, but also by innumerable atrocities – and the current wave of xenophobic hatred and right-wing extremism found across the globe, we have to ask: why has the memory project failed? Why has the memory of extreme violence not served the purpose of preventing prejudice and violence in our times? Is there another paradigm that might be more effective at achieving these goals?

Admittedly, these are rather big and ambitious questions destined for partial or unsatisfactory answers. But, in my opinion, they are exactly the kind of problems that scholars, especially psychologists, have the obligation to address at this moment. The current state of our social and political world is dangerously fragile and, in the near future, promises to be under additional stress from people seeking refuge from violence and climate change. In order to be resilient to the challenges of the future, we need to rethink our approach.

I'm not entirely ready to give up on the notion of memory, although it certainly requires extensive revision and critique. Memory could be key to challenging prejudice. The center is launching a collaborative research project with scholars from other European institutions on "Memory's Failures," which will examine ways in which the memory of mass violence is commemorated through public memorials and ceremonies, law and politics, schools, families and so on. The aim is to investigate the efficacy of these approaches and research innovative strategies for countering hate. Perhaps it is optimistic to think that we will have an impact on hate and mass violence in the world, but it is certainly an effort that is worth the risk and attention. ■



AUP study trips to Warsaw & Treblinka and Krakow & Auschwitz





Elena Berg  
Associate Professor

## TESTING THE WATERS

*Bottled water is a multi-billion-dollar industry, yet what's in the bottle might not be driving sales. Research from Professor Elena Berg (Environmental Science) and her students shows that there's plenty of room for science in the liberal arts.*

Did you know there's a science lab on AUP's campus? At the [Joy and Edward Frieman Environmental Science Center](#), we've spent the last few years busily carrying out research in the fields of evolutionary biology, climate change and sustainability. Some of our projects take place in the lab itself, but recently we have been exploring ways to integrate research into the classroom. An intimate liberal arts setting allows professors to spend the majority of their time teaching but leaves less room for independent research. Yet our students are more and more eager to get involved in this aspect of our work. So how might we combine

research and teaching to benefit both students and faculty?

A couple of years ago, I was reflecting on this problem with one of AUP's economics professors, Kevin Capehart (now at California State University, Fresno). One of Professor Capehart's research interests is the price of bottled water. His previous work had suggested that the characteristics of what's inside a water bottle - such as the amount of carbonation and various minerals - explained little if any of the price differences. His study was only suggestive; he hadn't yet tested people's water preferences. Coincidentally, my Environmental



Prof. Elena Berg and students  
conducting the water taste  
experiment

Science class had been discussing the problem of plastic waste and the overuse of disposable water bottles on AUP's campus and beyond. What if we combined forces with our students to produce a rigorous publishable study on water preferences, using the science lab as our base?

Together we designed our experiment. First, Professor Capehart looked into how professional beverage tastings are conducted. I had assumed we'd be relying on the protocols for beer or wine tastings, as we didn't imagine that water tastings would already be a thing. It turns out that the town of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia hosts the Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting every year, to crown the world's best bottled water based on a blind test. There are guidebooks to bottled water akin to wine guides and in local restaurants you can ask to see the "water list." At some top-end establishments there are even "water sommeliers," who help customers pair their food with bottled waters. You'll pay €15 for a bottle of "Berg" water, chipped from icebergs floating in the Arctic. "Gize" water is filtered through gold. If you're feeling particularly extravagant, a bottle of "Bling H2O," covered in Swarovski crystals, will set you back €50.

We adopted the Berkeley Springs protocols to allow us to compare our results to other studies

more effectively. For financial reasons, we chose water brands that were all priced below €5 at *La Grande Epicerie de Paris*. The first experiment was a "sensory discrimination test" which involved tasting water samples in rows of three. Within each row, two were the same brand and one was different. Could students identify the imposter? In the second test, subjects rated bottled waters using the same 14-point scale used in Berkeley Springs, along with tap water for comparison. For the final test, subjects tried to distinguish tap from bottled water while matching expert descriptions to each sample.

Students from Professor Capehart's economics classes participated and I turned the tastings into a regular lab in my own classes. After two semesters, we had data from over 100 participants - enough for a rigorous analysis of water preferences. What we found was sobering: despite all the marketing and hype, most students could not tell the difference between bottled waters. They were also not great at distinguishing tap from bottled water or matching expert descriptions to individual brands. Even when students could taste a difference, they did not express strong preferences for particular options, and some actually preferred tap to any of the more expensive bottled varieties. These results echo previous findings from taste tests of beer, wine

and other beverages. At the end of the day, we're just not that good at telling things apart.

Thanks to our students' participation, we were able to publish our study in *The Journal of Wine Economics*. The work has prompted additional questions that we would like to explore with our students. Why do we pay for bottled water, contributing to the ever-mounting problem of plastic waste? In wealthy nations, bottled water is typically less regulated than tap, so it's not even possible to argue that it's safer or better for our health. Just as there is more to a wine than the look, smell or taste of what's in the bottle, there must also be more to bottled waters than what's inside. For our next project, Professor Capehart and I would like to dig deeper and examine which cues are most important to people: the packaging, the advertising, the price point, or people's personal histories with the brand? How do rankings differ when people know what they are tasting versus when they are doing a blind test? Do people prefer more expensive brands only when they know they cost more? The answers, we hope, lie with our students. ■

The water taste experiment took place in AUP's Environmental Science Lab





The members of the Indian National Congress at its first meeting in 1885

Maria Bach  
Assistant Professor



## FROM REDEFINING DEVELOPMENT & AT THE MARGINS

*Dominant narratives of development assume that countries follow a rigid path to progress. Maria Bach's (Economics) research into Indian economics shows how ignoring marginal discourses leads to overlooking important distinctions.*

"Development" was formally conceptualized in the early 19th century to explain how an economy can harness progress to improve society through economic, political and social phenomena such as industrialization, intellectual progress and democracy. Half a century later, the first generation of modern Indian economists became increasingly frustrated with India's economic reality and its British rulers' failure to combat mounting poverty and deindustrialization. These intellectuals founded a school of study known as "Indian economics," in order to better conceptualize and theorize the Indian economy. As part of my PhD at King's College London, I explored

this conception of development between 1870 and 1905. My research examined how ideas coming from outside of India were reworked in an effort to reconcile foreign theory to India's reality. It is especially important to understand how ideas disseminate because discourses can affect policy implementation and socio-economic structures at large.

The concept of development in Indian economics explained the country's distinct socio-economic and political changes and constructed a plan that would stimulate much-needed progress in India. There were growing concerns from intellectuals, political activists, lawyers and civil

servants about applying existing development theory to the country, which culminated in Mahadev Govind Ranade's lecture at the Deccan College, Poona in 1892. As part of the imperial university system, the college was a prominent place for Indian intellectuals, and was among the oldest modern educational institutions in India. Ranade argued that it was paramount to reconsider the question of development "on broader lines than those you will find enunciated in the ordinary textbooks."

This inauguration of Indian economics positioned an increasing number of studies under its intellectual umbrella, yet it was and still is considered a marginal economic theory. The school's research was largely disseminated in English, although almost exclusively published in India, and overseas it was predominantly consumed by diaspora and anti-imperialist audiences in Britain. The Indian economists were not being published in British economics journals or even treated as economists. According to many imperial officers and British academics, they were political activists fighting for Indian self-rule, not economists creating knowledge. They were thought to write without any intention to make new discoveries or theorize new ways of understanding the economy. Indians were taught a Western curriculum, then accused of regurgitating existing European ideas and neglecting to transform

them into original thought. Indian economics is still often not considered to have contributed to economic theory.

The idea of development within Indian economics is therefore marginal, both because discourse within the school built upon existing ideas of development, and because Indian economists were situated at the margins of intellectual circles. The dominant narrative or discourse around development asserts that progress spread from England to other European countries, then to European settlements in America, eventually reaching Russia and Japan by the end of the 19th century. The idea of development is often confined to European industrial progress and the region's specific experience with it. It is thus unsurprising that the dominant discourse on development is largely based on European knowledge systems.

What has been much less researched is how other definitions came about and their specific contributions to development debates. Dominant narratives minimize other ways of describing and theorizing the world. History often only includes accounts of relatively powerful societal groups or individuals. In the history of ideas, and more specifically in my field, the history of economics, studies are

predominantly about well-known figures such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, while lesser-known figures are rarely cited or analyzed. I find it particularly important to move beyond a narrow European and American focus because political and economic thought is distinct across geographical and historical discursive spaces. My research addresses the gap by unpacking the production and diffusion of alternative discourses on development by focusing on late 19th-century Indian economics.

My research uncovers the largely ignored discursive innovation in Indian economics at the margins of development discourse. It found that India had progressed with its own logic of development, different from those seen in Europe and North America, and foresaw a large part of 20th-century debates around dependency and different development paths. My analysis finds that the school adopts a specific view of development that embodies a distinction between inevitable societal change - progress - and active interventions in society - development. Though the texts often refer to "progress" and "growth" to denote positive societal change, they also place much greater emphasis on negative societal change with words such as "regress," "retrograde" and "degradation." The possibility of regress in an age of modernity, caused by the actions of the

British imperial administration, is an original feature of Indian economics.

This, therefore, helps to illustrate that progress and development are not inherently Western. The processes of positive social change that occurred in the West did not only originate there and will not behave in the same way across the world. Yes, there are universalizing forces that connect the world ever more through, for example, trade networks and migration, but local practices and distinct societal processes have political, economic and social effects long after so-called modern, progressive, or homogenizing forces have materialized.

Marginalized thinkers on the edge of discursive spaces can therefore offer a unique perspective. This distinctive positioning pushed the late 19th-century Indian economists to critique and rework dominant discourse that contradicted their lived experiences. Despite the mainstream idea of progress seeing positive change as a given, late 19th-century India experienced the most severe famines hitherto and was therefore seemingly regressing rather than progressing.

I argue that the physical and social position of scholars both constrains and facilitates knowledge creation. Indian economists had Western educational training imposed on

them, but their vantage point meant that they could imagine both an industrialized West and East. Indian economics could therefore prescribe global industrialization, rejecting the dominant discourse of international division of labor based on David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage, where the East produces raw materials and the West manufactures goods. They effectively



Jute factory, Dhaka, Bangladesh

argued that an industrialized India would benefit the West as their aggregate demand would increase with higher employment and wages in the industrial sector. In this way, the school successfully developed a method of viewing countries dealing with societal

change that included both universalizing and local forces.

My research attempts to revive what one Indian economist, Romesh Chunder Dutt, said in the Review during this period: "The East is the home of poetry, as of philosophy and great religions; to the East belong the noblest flights of human imagination and loftiest aspirations of human

faith." We need to acknowledge that dominant ideas of development inform the imagination of thinkers across the world. However, there are also often overlooked or forgotten marginal discourses, such as Indian economics, that can inform our past, present and future. ■



Michel Houellebecq  
European Pressphoto Agency, Andreu Dalmau



Russell Williams  
Assistant Professor

## HOUELLEBECQ-WATCHING: AN ACTIVE APPROACH TO CULTURAL RESEARCH

*Students of comparative literature at AUP have a unique opportunity to actively engage with the culture they study, even as it is still being produced. Professor Russell Williams acts as a willing guide while engaging in his own favorite activity of Houellebecq-watching.*

Researching and teaching comparative literature involves considerably more than sitting in fusty libraries and pouring over scholarly volumes. As much as I find this work intensely rewarding, my research into contemporary culture requires a more active approach. I'm currently working on a monograph about contemporary French writer Michel Houellebecq. Studying a living author, and so engaging with a subject that is constantly evolving, comes with its own set of critical challenges. My wider research covers topics as diverse as the politics of binge-watching Netflix, what reading means in an

era of smartphones, and how writing changes when we spend our days online. However, a particular focus is the relationship between "traditional" literary novels like Houellebecq's and other forms of culture, such as crime and science fiction novels, film, TV and music. As such, it's vital for me to get actively involved in contemporary culture and I encourage my students to do the same.

Houellebecq is France's most successful living literary export. Patrick Modiano may have won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2014 and Annie Ernaux may get the critical

and scholarly acclaim, but it is the sulfurous Houellebecq – best known for provocative novels such as *The Elementary Particles* (1998), *Platform* (2001) and *Submission* (2015) – who has grabbed the sales, headlines and international translations. Houellebecq is best-known for his prose – he recently won the Prix Goncourt for *The Map and the Territory* (2010) – but he first made his name in literary circles as a poet, making waves for his unsettling juxtapositions of classical French versification and hyper-contemporary themes. My book maps his poetic voice, from his verse through to his novels, and argues that the emotional engagement of the reader is a major preoccupation for his literary work.

French literary culture is unique because mainstream press, television and radio treat authors as they would politicians, scientists or sports personalities. This means that Houellebecq’s opinion is sought out and taken seriously in a way that is not common in the US or the UK. Houellebecq’s predilection for outrageous, even scandalous responses ensures that his face regularly graces the front pages of newspapers and the nightly TV news. This is helped by the subject matter of his novels – which draw on contemporary alienation, sexual frustration and the place

of religion in today’s society. Researching Houellebecq, then, also involves keeping up with his media image: scouring print media, tuning in to literary TV shows and trying to secure a place at his rare and often incendiary public appearances. I once spent an afternoon hanging around a particularly unglamorous supermarket waiting for him to turn up for a live radio broadcast.

Houellebecq is also a cultural polymath in the best French tradition. He’s made a name for himself as an actor and is increasingly known as a visual artist. In 2016, his photographs graced the walls of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in *Rester Vivant* (To Stay Alive), a major exhibition devoted to his images. He’s also starred alongside Gérard Depardieu in *Saint Amour* (2016) and made waves playing himself in the independent movie *The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq* (2014). As important as it is to engage with his existing creative output, you also learn a lot about what the future might hold from listening to what those in his entourage say about him. At a recent opening of a show of his work at the Air de Paris art gallery, critics, journalists and seasoned Houellebecq-watchers all eagerly swapped gossip about what he was up to. The latest rumor, since corroborated, was that he was preparing

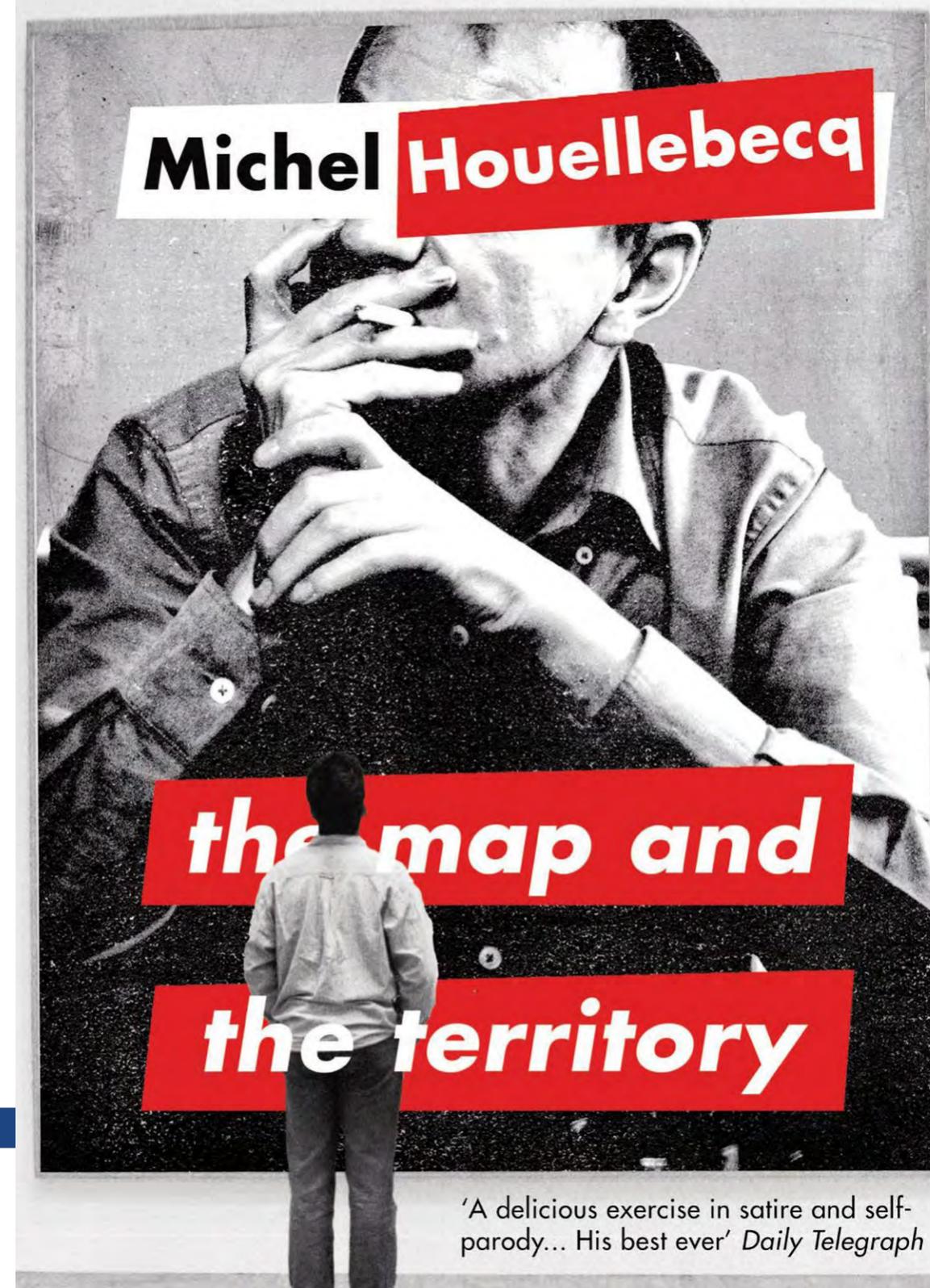
a new manuscript. While we were able to predict his literary moves, we didn’t pick up on the fact he was about to get married for the third time. Images of the star-studded bash, attended by Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, were subsequently leaked on social media.

To study contemporary culture, it is therefore important to immerse yourself within it. Luckily, such extra-curricular activities regularly combine with my interests. When I’m not Houellebecq-watching or hanging around supermarkets, I spend much of my free time attending gigs (of varying quality) in and around Paris. As a keen music fan – and terrible guitar player – I’m regularly to be found watching people fiddling with electronic boxes that emit strange, unsettling frequencies. Like networking with Houellebecq’s entourage, these pursuits allow me to keep on top of cultural trends in a way that informs my teaching, in particular in my comparative literature class, Production, Translation, Creation, Publication. The course aims to give students a practical and theoretical engagement with the contemporary culture industry, helping them to explore their own cultural interests through a collaborative publication while exposing them to dynamic practitioners in a range of different cultural fields. We’ve

recently held fascinating sessions with writer and musician Ian F. Svenonius, with Seb Emina, Editor-in-chief of *The Happy Reader* literary magazine, and with Alice Pfeiffer, Editor of *Antidote* fashion magazine.

Through this active teaching approach, our students engage with contemporary culture while gaining an intimacy with their research subjects that is rarely possible in academia. This is vital when the culture you’re researching is often still being produced. In 2019, all being well, I will publish my monograph on Houellebecq along with a special journal issue I’m co-editing about his work, but as we’ve recently learned, Houellebecq himself will also release a new, and no-doubt controversial, novel that will have to be taken into account in future research. Through my teaching and public events, I hope to give AUP students the tools they need to similarly tackle the challenge of linking their work to their contemporary cultural interests. ■

Cover of Houellebecq’s book  
*The Map and the Territory*



‘A delicious exercise in satire and self-parody... His best ever’ *Daily Telegraph*



Brenton Hobart  
Assistant Professor

## A PLAGUE OF PLAGIARISM

*Renaissance literature is rife with copycats, and their rehashed ideas can be era-defining. Brenton Hobart (Comparative Literature) looks at how common traits in plague writing help shape how we see the disease.*

Catching 16th-century writers in the act of cheating is as easy as catching the plague. I recently wrote a book dealing with the representation of the disease in French Renaissance literature, linked to – but not limited to – the bubonic plague, or Black Death, that swept through Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. It takes into account just about any disease or affliction in 16th-century France, be it physical or psychological, real or imagined.

The work's thesis deals with the global framework that Renaissance authors used when writing about the disease and the recurrent *topoi* (or literary clichés) that consistently appeared in their texts. Notable writers, from François Rabelais to Michel de

Nostradame (also known as Nostradamus), rehashed clichés taken from Classical and Medieval works, as well as from each other.

Tracts are parenthetical narratives acting at once as digressions in the texts in which they were inserted and as complete narrations in and of themselves. I sifted through dozens of plague tracts from antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, underlining their common traits. Often appearing word for word from one text to the next, they paint a gruesome picture. Fathers abandon their sons and sons their fathers, as spouses leave each other for dead. Birds fall from the skies with buboes under their wings. People jump into wells or leap from windows to their deaths. Women

sew themselves up, still living, in their shrouds as men dig their own graves in preparation. The words *beste* (beast) and *peste* (plague) are regularly used interchangeably, and a pestilent beast, as gigantic and formidable as the beast of the apocalypse, can often be discerned hovering over a map of France.

François Rabelais was a doctor and the author of facetious philosophical tales about the giants Pantagruel and Gargantua. Rabelais borrows examples from a host of plague writings – be they medical, philosophical, historical or literary – in the first two chapters of *Pantagruel*. In particular, his description of the Year of the Fat Medlars follows a highly codified framework. The reader can clearly identify

many ideas that are common to other plague tracts: the African origin of the contagion, the movement of celestial bodies, the heat of the summer, the physical signs of disease on individuals' bodies and the acts and gestures of animals and people. One of his greatest influences is the introduction to the "First Day" of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. I like to think he had it open before him, in the original Italian, while drafting the opening pages of *Pantagruel* and certain passages of the war against Picrochole in *Gargantua*. Rabelais, like Boccaccio, wrote



comic tales that also demanded reflection from the reader. This comic aspect makes sense since one of the most important and recurrent medical prescriptions of the early Renaissance was to keep up a smile.

Rabelais wasn't the only one at it. Nostradamus, another physician, was perhaps the most famous secular prophet to have ever lived. Yet that

didn't stop him from lifting word for word from Antoine Le Maçon's 1545 French translation of *Decameron*. In his treatise on women's cosmetics, he mentions the lack of sacred soil available to bury plague victims and the black spots that appear on the corpses of the patients he treats. He also employs the words *violent* and *malignant* (in that order) to describe the contagion. All of these are evident in Le Maçon's text.

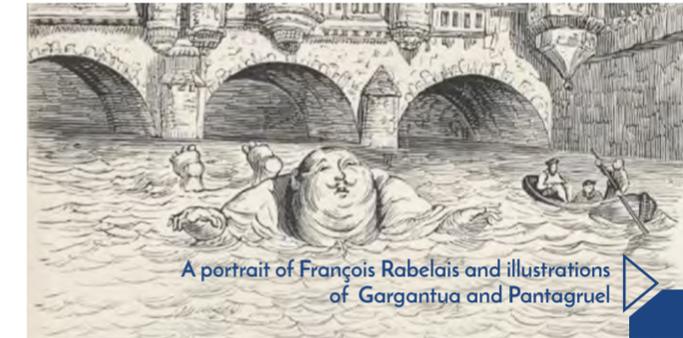
Michel de Montaigne's essay "Of Physiognomy" draws on images from the third book of



Virgil's *Georgics*. Despite being credited as the originator of the essay as a literary form, Montaigne purloins imagery from Le Maçon's *Decameron* and Pierre Boaistuau's *Théâtre du Monde* – which advanced the idea of the world as a stage two generations before Shakespeare. Elements from all these texts later reappear in Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, which follows the aforementioned framework while

revisiting countless reworked ideas. Not one of these authors cites any of the others.

Unpicking these clichés was no easy task. While reading, I often resorted to physically crossing out expansive rhetoric in order to recognize underlying plague tracts. Other obstacles included the lack of formalized spelling in the 16th century and the reduction of certain turns of phrase from one author to the next, as well as shifts in verb tense and the authors' own modifications of ideas to suit their needs.



Plagiarism in plague tracts was therefore quite contagious. Authors regularly reused text from past writing in their creations, thus perpetuating an idea of the plague that may or may not have ever had a factual basis. Of course, imitation in the 16th century was the norm; even Shakespeare's plotlines weren't fully original. But students taking my courses should beware – clever rewording won't slip past me. ■



Madeleine Czigler  
Associate Professor



## FROM READING WEEK TO FASHION WEEK

*For students in Professor Madeleine Czigler's (Global Communications) classes, every week is Fashion Week. Studying fashion journalism at AUP offers a unique chance to immerse yourself in Parisian couture.*

Spring-Summer collection  
presented at Fashion Week

It is a great privilege to teach the Paris fashion scene at AUP. Since the age of Louis XIV, almost 400 years ago, the City of Light has been the center of a fashion universe, a hub for everything from exquisite handicrafts to ingenious design displayed in settings of great elegance and refinement. This tradition is alive and well and within reach of students taking fashion studies at AUP. In the Paris Fashion and Design Template class that I co-teach with urban expert [Professor Justin McGuinness](#) (Global Communications), we visit the locations at the heart of this industry: from Versailles and the Yves Saint Laurent

Museum to fashion houses in the Marais and the Place Vendôme. This field experience affords students invaluable immersion, which fosters understanding of the origins of Paris fashion and exposes them to the craft and culture of Parisian *mode*. The biannual *Paris Haute Couture* fashion weeks are a testament to this ongoing quest for handcrafted perfection. *Prêt-à-porter* fashions, invented in the 60s by designers such as Yves Saint Laurent, have allowed mechanized crafting methods to democratize the fashion scene without compromising its creative *élan*, so vividly on display.

However, since the early 90s, a new globalized phenomenon has entered the scene. Fast fashion based on exploitative labor, and dubious methods of transportation and disposal has been rapidly gaining ground and is flooding the global market. Involvement in the Paris fashion scene is therefore more vital than ever. Students in the Fashion Systems class study issues concerning throwaway fashion. In response to this phenomenon, traditions of craftsmanship are once again strengthening across the city, resulting in a mushrooming of individual *ateliers*, from traditional hand dyeing and couture to upcycling by hand. A historical understanding

of the Paris fashion scene allows students to evaluate this exciting slow fashion movement. They visit neighborhoods such as the Marais and Belleville to find spots where traditional methods are being practiced, reporting their findings to the Civic Media Lab or in publications like [Peacock Plume](#).

A trip earlier this year to the Hyères Festival in the south of France was an exciting opportunity for AUP fashion students to meet young designers and report on their innovative handmade creations. They interviewed artistic directors who sewed clothes from materials such as fishing nets

and electronic wiring. While the use of fabrics was cutting-edge, the execution was based on skills practiced for 400 years. Talent scouts from fashion houses such as Nina Ricci, Chanel and Hermès were present, ready to snatch up new pioneers for their own workshops and thus push the Paris fashion industry ever forward.

Fashion studies at AUP therefore put students in a privileged position to observe and participate in the city's shows and events, taking their studies out of the classroom and onto the catwalks of the Paris fashion scene. ■



AUP students getting hands-on experience during Paris Fashion Week



## SUPPORTING FACULTY RESEARCH

### Our Annual Fund

We hope you have enjoyed this glimpse at just a few of the remarkable achievements of our talented faculty at The American University of Paris. Much of this innovative, groundbreaking work is made possible by the generosity of the AUP community of alumni, parents and friends, which supports the innovative teaching and faculty-mentored interdisciplinary research that is being conducted on and off campus. At the forefront of AUP's research activity are five cross-curricular research centers that are designed to break down boundaries between disciplines and cultures to address some of the big questions of our times:

- The Center for Critical Democracy Studies convenes eminent researchers and public policy experts on democracy from across the globe to discuss contemporary challenges such as Brexit and the changing landscape of global media and information.
- The George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention sponsors research to facilitate a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of genocide and mass violence.
- The Joy and Edward Frieman Center for Environmental Science conducts innovative climate change research, involving students in significant experiments with the opportunity to co-author papers for publication.
- The Center for Writers and Translators promotes literary activity, especially where that relates to the practice of translation (defined in its broadest sense).
- The Civic Media Lab works in conjunction with all our centers to foster student-

faculty collaboration and civically engaged content creation.

AUP is a non-profit university, which means that every cent we take in goes to support students and faculty. Gifts at all levels are transformative for our small institution. Academic scholarships allow us to maintain the cultural and economic diversity unique to our community. An average annual scholarship of €9,500 allows us to compete with other universities worldwide to attract the most talented students.

Gifts from the community enable deserving students to participate in faculty-led study trips via our Coup de Pouce fund – a life-changing component of the academic experience at AUP. Grants of around €400 take our students outside of the classroom and into immersive, contextual learning environments. Last year, 469 students participated in 36 study trips to places like Egypt, Iceland, India and New York.

We invite you to support AUP's faculty, scholarships and study trips by giving to our Annual Fund. You can easily contribute online at: [aup.edu/annualfund](http://aup.edu/annualfund)

## AUP ASCENDING

### Our Capital Campaign

In complement to the Annual Fund, AUP Ascending – our most significant capital campaign to date – launched in May 2017. We are over halfway to our €26m goal, with cash and pledges totaling over €14m to support the three pillars of AUP: the consolidation of our campus, our multidisciplinary centers and our diverse community of faculty and students. These investments will allow us to increase the relevance and depth of our academic offerings and to support the needs and aspirations of our Global Explorers.

To learn more about AUP Ascending or to make a gift, please contact [advancement@aup.edu](mailto:advancement@aup.edu)

To see the impact of gifts from the community in 2017-18 please read our Annual Giving Report at: [aup.edu/support/your-impact](http://aup.edu/support/your-impact)

## SUPPORT AUP STUDENTS & FACULTY

€25

10 of you will support an AUP student's study trip to Europe

10 of you will enable an AUP professor to translate his/her research

€50

€100

10 of you will fund an AUP student's study trip to a global destination

10 of you will support an average annual tuition grant

€250

€500

10 of you will allow an AUP faculty member to pursue additional research

10 of you will support an AUP scholar for a semester

€1000

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# YOUR GENEROSITY THEIR JOURNEY

At AUP, we believe that a student's financial realities should not determine whether or not they receive a world class education. Over 50% of our students receive some sort of financial aid, and we rely on the generous donations of our community of alumni, parents and friends to close the gap of affordability for those in need. Join us in supporting the next generation of Global Explorers with a gift to the annual fund.

