

Institute for the Humanities



AS WE BID FAREWELL to another academic year, we usher in a season of new beginnings with bright futures. **The Institute for the Humanities** would like to share our memories and celebrate our milestones.

On March 4th, the **Institute for the Humanities** hosted **The Junior Faculty Forum**. It was opened with a musical performance by **Dr. Cullen B. Strawn**, Executive Director for the Arts, and featured the exciting research of **Dr. Travis Alexander**, **Dr. Kate Mattingly**, and **Professor Will Truran**. The **Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries** hosted **Professor Richard Butterwick Pawlikowski** on March 24th for his lecture "How do Republics

Decline, Recover, and Fall?"

Office Manager for the **Department of Women's & Gender Studies** and the **Institute for the Humanities**, **Terri Hughes** (w/ **Dr. Anne H. Muraoka**, Director of the **Institute for the Humanities**) received the **Monarch Inclusion Award** at the **Monarch Milestones** reception on April 10, 2025.

The **Gordon Art Galleries** also hosted the **2025 Graphic Design Graduate Gala** on April 17th, featuring works from Graphic Design seniors, including **Tinsley Mirabelli**, **Colby Stephens**, & **Jenna Baloy**. **Joseph Platt**, received **The Robert McCullough Prize for Graphic Design**.

On April 17th, the inaugural **Knowledge and Creativity Expo** took place at the **Chartway**



Arena. It was opened by **Dr. Shuntay Tarver**, Interim Dean of the Perry Honors College and distinguished guests, and included labs and presentations by faculty and students, including **Dr. Andrew Kissel**, **Professor Cathleen Rhodes**, **Dr. Margaret Konkol Kilcline**, **Cáelainn Dazie Robertson**, **Aeve Boucher**, and **Kat Little**, among others.



The **Institute for the Humanities** would like to congratulate our May graduates – **Marina Cortez**, **Sumner Darling**, **Nicole Honeycutt**, **Mary Taetsch**, & **Heather Thurston**. **Dr. Muraoka** would like to thank all the capstone project directors, thesis directors, and committee members for their time, expertise, and kindness in supporting our students and the **Masters of Arts in Humanities** program:

Dr. Marvin Chiles, **Dr. Vic Colaizzi**, **Dr. Jennifer Fish**, **Dr. Andrew Kissel**, **Dr. Amy Milligan**, **Dr. Ruth Osorio**, **Dr. Marc Ouellette**, and **Dr. Lee Slater**.

Congratulations also to **Tiffany Goodman**, who was the recipient of a 2025 – 2026 **Louis I. Jaffe Memorial Scholarship for Art History & Humanities**, and **Danielle Brown** who was the recipient of **The Charles K. Sibley Art Scholarship in Art History**.

We wish everyone a prosperous summer and we will see you in the Fall to start another great year!

Left: **Dr. Cullen B. Strawn**. Right: **Dr. Travis Alexander**, **Dr. Kate Mattingly**, & **Professor Will Truran**.

EVENTS RECAP

The Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries hosted Professor Richard Butterwick Pawlikowski's lecture "How Do Republics Decline, Recover and Fall" on March 24, 2025.



Top: Professor Richard Butterwick Pawlikowski. Bottom: M.A. Humanities students Catherine Earp and C.J. Steines.

EVENTS RECAP

The 2025 Graphic Design Graduate Gala was held on April 17th at the Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries. Joseph Platt was awarded The Robert McCullough Prize for Graphic Design by Professor Kenneth Fitzgerald along with Dr. Szilvia Barta, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design, Professor Will Truran, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design, & Dr. Vic Colaizzi, Associate Professor of Art History.



Top Right: Professor Kenneth Fitzgerald & Joseph Platt. Bottom: Dr. Szilvia Barta, Joseph Platt, Professor Will Truran, & Dr. Vic Colaizzi.

EVENTS RECAP

The 2025 Graphic Design Graduate Gala featured work from students Tinsley Mirabelli, Colby Stephens, and Jenna Baloy, among others.



Top Left: Tinsley Mirabelli & Colby Stephens. Top Right: Jenna Baloy. Bottom: 2025 Graphic Design Graduate Gala attendees.

EVENTS RECAP

On April 17, 2025, Dr. Shuntay Tarver opened **The Knowledge and Creativity Expo** as the Interim Dean of the Perry Honors College. The expo included a table with Dr. Margaret Konkol Kilcline et al. for **Mpark: A Humanities Makerspace**, and Dr. Andrew Kissel's "**Critical Hit!: Using Virtual Reality to Promote Philosophy and Critical Thinking.**" Professors Dr. Travis Alexander and Dr. Anne Muraoka were also present at the event.



Top Left: Dr. Shuntay Tarver. Top Right: Dr. Margaret Konkol Kilcline et al. Bottom: Dr. Travis Alexander, Dr. Andrew Kissel, & Matt Soricelli, M.A. Humanities student.

EVENTS RECAP

At The Knowledge and Creativity Expo, recent graduates C  lainn Dazie Robertson presented "The Horror of Memory in the Southern Gothic," Aeve Boucher presented "Believing in Simulation Theory," and Kat Little presented "Pixelated Pride: Queer and Feminist Studies in Gaming."



Top Left: C  lainn Dazie Roberston. Top Right: Aeve Boucher. Bottom: Kat Little.

Congratulations,
Marina Cortez
for passing your M.A.
Humanities thesis
defense.



Thesis Title: Compulsory Sterilization and Reproductive Injustice in India: The Global Impact of the American Eugenics Movement

Parting Remarks: "My time in the Humanities program has provided me with an experience that will strengthen all aspects of my life, personal or professional. I am truly grateful to Dr. Muraoka for her unwavering support and dedication not only to her students, but to the ethos of the Humanities overall. Now more than ever, it is integral that we recognize and advocate for the Humanities and all that it encompasses, for the knowledge obtained from Humanities courses fosters both the emotional intelligence and critical thinking skills necessary to realizing a more equitable reality."



Congratulations,
Heather Thurston
for passing your M.A.
Humanities thesis
defense.

Thesis Title: Hieronymus Bosch's Dismantled Triptych as a Moralizing Guide for Reforming the Catholic Church

Parting Remarks: "This program has expanded my thought process, professional development, and view of the world, more than I could have imagined. It took my love of art and combined it with activism, education, and provided me with a more in depth understanding of the world around me. I am forever grateful for the students and professors I worked with along the way."



Congratulations,
Nicole Honeycutt
for passing your M.A.
Humanities Capstone
Project.

Capstone Title: The Evolution of the Divine Feminine: How Religious Upheaval Changed Female Devotions

Parting Remarks: "Pursuing this degree has been a great and unique experience for me. The Humanities department is comprised of so many amazing individuals with different backgrounds and interests, which lent insights to some amazing conversations, both in and out of class. I'm hoping that with the aid of this degree, I can find my dream job of working in the archives or collections of a museum."

View Nicole's Virtual Capstone Project [HERE](#).

Congratulations,
Mary Taetsch
for passing your M.A.
Humanities Capstone
Project.



Capstone Title: The Culture of Violence at Old Dominion University: A Call for Change

Parting Remarks: Thank you, thank you, thank you, from the bottom of my heart to Dr. Muraoka for her unwavering support and commitment to students, Dr. Osorio for her encouragement and for always pulling me out of feelings of defeat, and to the Women's & Gender Studies department for their love and mentorship. The community you all have built and welcomed me into will forever inspire me and I am eternally grateful.

MEET:
**Dr. Travis
Alexander**



Dr. Travis Alexander is an Assistant Professor of English at Old Dominion University. His research focuses most broadly on biopolitics and the health humanities. Dr. Alexander examines relationships among health, race, sexuality, and government in the Post WWII era. He frequently turns to American fiction and film to examine these dynamics, embracing critical tools borrowed from psychoanalysis and deconstruction. Dr. Alexander has publications that are forthcoming in several scholarly journals, including *American Literature*, *Criticism*, *Cultural Critique*, *Discourse*, and *Public Culture*.

Can you share how you became interested in the relationship between biopolitics and the Health Humanities and what drew you to American film?

The second part of that question is easier! I watch a ton of movies and find them to be great tools for seeing culture and history in action. They reflect our fantasies and fears, which the medium's combination of visual, auditory, and narrative elements helps it to do. As to the first question, I'm interested in our cultural notions of health and illness, and how those notions affect our governing philosophies and priorities.

Dr. Alexander, can you share a little about your book project, *The Birth of Viropolitics*?

The book examines literary, cinematic, and dramatic responses to the HIV / AIDS pandemic, especially from its 1980s and 1990s phase. I'm interested in texts that exhibit, alongside predictable fears of the virus, a strange fascination with and desire for it. I attempt to show how these texts instance or concretize a broader cultural fetishization of

plasticity – a difficult to grasp abstraction, which, I think was imagined to be embodied in the virus, here HIV in particular.

You often analyze film in your research of the Humanities, Dr. Alexander. Could you recommend a film that you believe illustrates your ideas and theories about biopolitics and health?

Good question! I'd point people to a zombie film like "World War Z."

Dr. Alexander, what advice would you give students interested in pursuing a degree or career in the Health Humanities, particularly students who are looking to explore social issues through film and literary texts?

I would advise students to be open to the idea that cultural and political ideas can be revealed in fun movies, not just boring or "serious" ones! I often teach slasher movies, psychological thrillers, zombie movies, and comedies. They're as full of ideas and cultural diagnoses as any!

Thank you for your time, Dr. Alexander.



**NEW
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
Catherine Earp**

Catherine Earp has been teaching Pilates since 2000, working with a variety of clients ranging from those suffering from chronic pain to those competing in elite physical competitions. During her time teaching Pilates, she has achieved Level 4 teacher-training status, owned a successful Pilates studio, and mentored many apprentices and instructors. In addition to her Pilates certification, Catherine is certified as a personal trainer through the American College of Sports Medicine. Currently, Catherine maintains a private practice as well as teaching at local studios and universities. Earp

has entered the M.A. in Humanities program to find a way to blend the art and the science into a more effective means of communicating the uniqueness of the Pilates philosophy in creative ways.

How do you believe your experiences in teaching Pilates and personal training have shaped your approach to studying the Humanities?

Working with a diverse population of individuals and groups, I have seen firsthand how the full scope of one's humanity shapes their motivations and their behavior. Within the Humanities program, this clarifies my vision for the ways that all of the communications that one receives through art, media, government and culture affects our global economy.

Catherine, can you share any projects or research topics you are currently exploring to blend the art and science of Pilates with communication?

I am investigating the impact of art, communication and language on the manner in which individuals receive and understand direction about their physicality.

We can feel your passion for Pilates, Catherine. Can you describe your very first experience with Pilates?

I took my very first Pilates class, when I was an undergraduate student at St. Olaf College, in 1996. I was struck by the distinctiveness of the instructor's approach; it was like nothing I had ever seen before. Within that experience, I felt physically and mentally challenged but without feeling any pain. It was wonderful and refreshing.

Are you finding any challenges in balancing your graduate studies with your commitment to teaching Pilates? If so, how are you managing to overcome them?

Certainly, time is finite and that is a challenge in delving into the unknown. What keeps me on task and on track and steering clear of being overwhelmed, is very simply, writing out my next step when I finish the days work, so that when I begin again, I know right where to start.

Catherine, if you could only share one thing about Pilates, what is the most important thing you would want someone to know about Pilates?

Pilates is not one set of exercises; it is a philosophy of teaching people to move well.

Thank you for your time, Catherine and good luck!



Master of Arts in Humanities

REIMAGINE YOUR FUTURE WITH THE HUMANITIES AT ODU

Empower Your Career: Build skills in critical thinking, communication, and leadership.

Expand Your Perspective: Explore culture, ethics, and innovation in an interdisciplinary environment.

Make an Impact: Join research teams, internships, and global programs that drive change.

Program tracks

Complete your degree with either a written thesis or an applied capstone project.

Thesis Topic Examples

- Angels in Renaissance Art
- Police and Prisons in Science Fiction

Capstone Project Topic Examples

- Feminism and Exclusion in Virginia Coalitions
- Sexual Abuse in the Black Home and the Church

Tailor your studies to specific interests like:

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- Health & Medicine
- Social & Community Justice
- Arts & Society

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Start taking your graduate courses early as a senior at ODU, saving time and earning credits toward both degrees.



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Strengthen your academic background with interdisciplinary skills that boost your career potential.

Aspiring Teachers

Prepare for a career in higher education and broaden your academic expertise.

Working Professionals

Gain new insights and fresh ideas to apply to your career and personal growth.





MAMA-Girl!

Sept. 27, 2024 - May 10, 2025

Opening Reception: Sept. 26, 2024, 6 - 8 p.m.



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Photograph (detail) by Mark Atkinson