



# The Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center Annual Report 2018-19

The Levitt Center provides opportunities for Hamilton College students to develop the academic knowledge and practical skills needed to understand and address persistent social problems in innovative, effective, and ethical ways. Effective and ethical solutions to social issues require an ability to imagine others' experiences and to respond in meaningful, empathetic ways.

**Social Innovation:** Our social innovation initiatives introduce students to the ideation and creative problem-solving processes, and nurture creative solutions to social problems with mentoring and financial support.

**Public Scholarship:** Our research grants, speaker series, and curricular support create opportunities for academic study and deep understanding of complex social problems, the constraints of action, and possibilities for change.

**Engaged Citizenship:** Our service learning courses, public service internships, and workshops help students understand the needs and circumstances of others, and develop the skills needed to work successfully and ethically with them.

**Transformational Leadership:** Our leadership programming works to develop self-awareness as a tool to confront challenges. It nurtures transformational leaders who follow ethical principles, inspire others, and use creativity and innovation to implement change.

*Photo: Social Innovation Fellows collaborating on their project, later recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative University conference, which hopes to help Vietnamese women access reproductive health education and resources.*

# Letter from the Director

## From the Director of the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center

August 22, 2019.

Oddly enough, this letter would be much easier to write if there were less to write about. As you'll see from the annual report, Levitt-sponsored activities range from the micro (looking at the College's own teaching and learning environments and at local food and social justice movements in Central New York) to the international (archaeology and community development in a former mining town in Transylvania; a study of aging and education in Japan; work on agriculture and food access in Jamaica). Not only does the Center support projects that are geographically ambitious; we have also sponsored projects that deal with a wide variety of topics: the effects of technology on spiritual pilgrimage; the ways in which the concept of 'whiteness' has been used as a political and social weapon; mental health issues on campus; comparative education; voting and the challenges of democracy, to name a few. If you read the report—even if you only skim it—you will realize how inadequate this summary is. We have been blessed again this year with students, faculty, and alumni with vision, who have been eager to take on new challenges, to experiment, and to try to make the world a better place.

Jean Piaget said that the goal of an education is not to increase the amount of knowledge in a person's head, but to create the opportunities for them to invent and discover. The goal of education, he thought, should be creating people who are capable of doing new things.

While we may not pledge allegiance to this quote in the Levitt Center, I think it captures the assumptions we implicitly operate with when we think about our programming, and about what we want to offer to students. And it is the students themselves, I'll add, who push us to think about that work and to think about how to help them invent, discover, and do new things.

I am constantly reminded by my discussions with people at other colleges that we are extraordinarily lucky to have this resource. I want to say how grateful I am for the willingness of the people who work in Levitt to do so much for our students; for the other people around campus—faculty, staff, administrators—who are willing to work with us and support our mission; for the alumni who come to campus to do workshops or who are willing to work with our students in other ways; and for the generous gifts from donors and the College's financial support. One of the great opportunities I have as Director is that I get to learn about the broad base of support we have here at Hamilton and beyond.

*Marianne Janack*

Director, Arthur Levitt Center for Public Affairs  
John Stewart Kennedy Professor of Philosophy

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# Public Scholarship

## Public Philosophy Seminars

Following its inaugural 2016-17 academic year, the Public Philosophy Seminar program has continued to invite speakers to visit the Hamilton community and give Hamilton professors the opportunity to host discussions and lectures that highlight the intersection of academic knowledge and public engagement. The seminars, lectures, and workshops facilitated through the Public Philosophy program serve as supplements to faculty-led initiatives that seek to address value-laden questions from an interdisciplinary perspective and employ methods that require some degree of community engagement. Additionally, the program's design makes explicit the connections between scholarship and service by acknowledging that scholarship and teaching are not immediately transferable and that successful public engagement requires an additional and different set of skills. The Public Philosophy program helped make one interdisciplinary seminar possible this year.

### **Azriel Grysman, Visiting Assistant Professor in Psychology** ***Culture, Evolution, and Group-Level Selection***

To re-evaluate how we think of evolution, Prof. Grysman led this Public Philosophy Seminar that brought together scholars from psychology, philosophy, anthropology, religious studies, and biology. The seminar seriously considered the idea of cultural evolution, which explores the coevolution of genes and culture by emphasizing social learning's importance in human development. This re-conception of fitness and selection orients thinking about these processes on the level of the group and how cultural traits flourish or die out, rather than the traditional focus on the selection of individuals and genetic traits. The interdisciplinary composition of the seminar allowed for wide-ranging and in-depth discussions of the mechanisms of evolution, its logical foundations and implications, and how natural selection relates to social identity. Grysman also invited Prof. David Sloan Wilson to deliver a lecture called "What All Groups Need," which laid out how biological research is incorporating multiple levels of selection within and between groups, as well as the practical applications of these new insights to shift our understanding of *Homo economicus*. One example study consisted of artificial selection of hens for optimal egg production: the researchers found that selecting for the most productive individual hen will make for less productive coops than selecting for an overall more productive coop. This is explained by the fact that more peaceful coops will allow all hens to contribute, rather than favoring hens who bully others and end up fighting more than laying eggs. Further research has applied this basic idea of co-operation as the best dynamic for groups in most species, including humans. An important insight from Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom, the "Core Design Principles" that encourage groups to function most efficiently and manage limited resources through reinforcing socially advantageous traits, has been applied by Wilson to a school-within-a-school for at-risk students at Binghamton High School that encouraged them to collaborate, communicate, and grow together. The academic performance of these students soon caught up with average students, while their enjoyment of school surpassed the average child's. Wilson has also launched an initiative to incorporate these principles into business environments, using mindfulness training and therapy to guide the cultural evolution of the group's dynamics and performance.





# Public Scholarship

## 2019 Public Philosophy Working Groups

**Antton De Arbeloa '21, Maya Figliuolo '21, Savannah Kelly '21, and Diana Perez '21**

**Led by Prof. Sharon Rivera**

**“What are ‘Human Rights’?”**

This group of students, working toward establishing the Hamilton College Human Rights Lab and supported by the Levitt Center, spent the better part of the past year (they began their work last summer) investigating the concept of human rights under international law, especially focusing on the areas where the international community needs to expand its application of these rights. The major obstacle to the application of human rights in international law, although the idea of universal natural rights was first developed in Ancient Greek philosophy, is that different countries and cultures have varying conceptions of the freedoms and restrictions they allow or impose on individuals. These differences create a quandary for a document like the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which aims to protect everyone’s natural rights. However, deeply ingrained cultural practices can be so central to a person’s identity that the larger cultural (possibly repressive) institutions must be preserved. Thus, nations must develop their own institutions to enforce human rights protections in a way that works for them. Three areas where the application of human rights protections is stymied by controversy, international and domestic policy, and other complications were examined by the group: food insecurity, sex trafficking and slavery, and environmental damage and hazards.

The case of Venezuela is a striking example of the need to better apply Article 25 of the UDHR—“everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food:” the combined effect of international sanctions, economic crisis, and policies of the Maduro government which perpetuate food insecurity have led to rampant malnutrition and concomitant popular uprisings and government reprisals. Sex/human trafficking and slavery, while not perpetrated by governments directly, can only occur in environments in which human rights are violated on a grand scale. Additionally, governments typically prioritize detention, prosecution, and deportation of trafficked people with policies that criminalize them as violators of immigration laws, prostitutes, or beggars. These policies that “victimize the victim” expose the victims of trafficking to additional violations of their rights and other vulnerabilities which can trap them in a cycle of re-trafficking. Environmental damage and hazards are often the result of activities designed to benefit a nation’s economy, and are thus condoned by that nation’s government: the Dakota access pipeline is a prime example in the United States of a corporate-governmental alliance which infringed upon the indigenous

population’s rights and threatened to endanger their water quality and land. The standoff between protestors and police ultimately resulted in police brutality against protestors who asserted their rights to self-determination and self-preservation.

The second part of the group’s report covered the current methods of documenting abuses and how the spread of technology has opened possibilities for progress. Particularly positive developments are ready access to information about one’s rights online as well as the proliferation of high-quality recording devices like digital cameras and smartphones, which allow oppressed and censored people to disseminate information about abuses if their governments refuse to acknowledge them or



*Left to right: Antton de Arbeloa '21, Maya Figliuolo '21, Diana Perez '21, and Savannah Kelly '21*



# Public Scholarship

actively cover them up. Social media, as well as connecting protestors as we saw during the Arab Spring, allows people to document abuses and helps human rights watchdog organizations track those abuses. Information and stories can also never be completely scrubbed from the internet once uploaded, making it much more difficult for governments to hide their crimes. As preparation for establishing a digital human rights lab, the group also examined existing labs, mostly at large public universities: most human rights labs are usually, in an academic context, attached to a university's law school and aim to contribute evidence through data/digital analysis to various entities and non-profits working to prosecute human rights abuses.

**Professor Marianne Janack with Honor Allen '21, Dorothy Poucher '21, and Liam Rogers '21**

***Book XI***

John Stewart Kennedy Professor of Philosophy and Levitt Center Director Marianne Janack, with help from Honor Allen '21, Dorothy Poucher '21, and Liam Rogers '21, has launched Book XI, a literary/philosophical online journal. The first issue of Book XI, dedicated to the late Professor Bob Simon—a lifelong science fiction fan—focused on the philosophical insights science fiction stories offer. The stories and poems submitted explore the dilemmas presented by artificial intelligence and biological enhancements, particularly by engaging with how humanity will be challenged to re-evaluate the way they relate to “the Other,” which may become a pressing ethical problem if we succeed in creating artificial consciousness and modifying ourselves in ways that alienate us from how we’ve traditionally understood being human. The focus of the next three issues have also been selected: issue 2 will explore philosophy and humor, issue 3 will focus exclusively on short stories and fiction, and issue 4 will invite submissions that are meditations on objects. Issue 1 features poems by Hal Y. Zhang and stories by Laura J. Denton, David Charpentier, Soramimi Hanarejima, Odin Halvorson, and Riam Griswold, as well as an introduction by guest editor Bruce Simon, Assistant Professor of English at SUNY Fredonia.

**Dorothy Poucher '21, Hillary Bisoño Ortega '21, Kayla Self '21, Laura Rodriguez '20, Nana Kwame Odamtten '20, Alexander Cook '20, Melissa Mouritsen '20**

**Led by Professor Todd Franklin**

**Free Expression Working Group**

Professor of Philosophy and Africana Studies and Christian A. Johnson Professor of Teaching Excellence Todd Franklin helped guide this working group of seven students by asking them questions to help clarify their approach and ideas as they re-evaluate Hamilton's Statement on Free Expression/Maintenance of Order. The project is, in part, the result of the controversy spurred by conservative historian and political theorist Paul Gottfried's October 2017 visit to campus, which brought up issues of free speech and the criteria for disqualifying speakers from coming to campus. The group has had several areas of investigation into freedom of expression on college campuses. They explored how our society conceptualizes and talks about freedom of speech/expression, and how free expression is perceived and discussed on campuses: they examined the policies of NESCAC schools, Ivy League universities, and “Public Ivies”—public universities whose quality of education can be favorably compared to Ivy League schools. The students also examined controversies and hypothetical hard cases under different policies and practices to compare the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches and specifically focused on recent incidents at Middlebury College, Syracuse University, and Reed College. Last fall, the group reached out to interested constituencies (such as students, faculty, and administrators) to promote critical and informed group reflection. Their final step, still in progress, Prof. Franklin described as focusing on establishing partnerships with campus offices and organizations to develop practices/policies that will help freedom of expression be embraced on campus. Their analysis so far has shown that most colleges' freedom of expression policies try to strike a balance between aspirations of free speech and community concerns, some stressing cohesion over fully open communication or encouraging compliance with policies more than the ideals of unfettered speech. Developing partnerships with on-campus organizations has primarily been the students' responsibility over the past year, to better ensure that the new policies are effective through the active and invested engagement of the student body.

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**Prof. Frank Anechiarico and Judge Ralph Eannace with Alexander Black '19, Kylie Davis '18, Kenneth Gray '20, Conor O'Shea '18, Alexander Scheuer '18, Samantha Walther '18, Nico Yardas '18**

**“The Treatment of People with Mental Illness in the Criminal Justice System: The Example of Oneida County, New York”**

Supported by the Levitt Center, Maynard-Knox Professor of Government and Law Frank Anechiarico partnered with Utica Circuit Judge Ralph Eannace and led a group of students conducting three case studies on mental health and the American justice system. Based on the insights they gathered, they recommended several ways to address shortcomings in the criminal justice system’s treatment of the mentally ill.

Samantha Walther authored the first case study, which examined the current practices and interventions at several Central New York correctional facilities, two psychiatric centers, and various Forensic Units at inpatient facilities. The primary shortcoming of these institutions is their use of solitary housing units, which tend to exacerbate mental health issues, self-harm, and suicidal tendencies. Additionally, reducing recidivism is highly dependent on employment upon release, which means we can help individuals stay out of correctional facilities through skill-development and employment programs.

The second study, by Alexander Scheuer, focused on best practices in mental health courts and more specifically on the effectiveness of the Utica Mental Health Hub Court. While mental health courts are too recently integrated into the justice system to have widely accepted national standards for operation and practice, they share common goals: reducing recidivism among mentally ill offenders, treating the root causes of their criminal behavior, and assisting them in remaining crime-free as they reintegrate into society. Scheuer’s study employed a longitudinal analysis of the Utica Mental Health Hub Court and found that the 43 program graduates in the sample years had only a 19% recidivism rate, whereas the national average rate for offenders receiving little or no treatment is 54%.

The third study, authored by Conor O’Shea, investigated interactions between law enforcement and people with mental health issues and revealed that some problems are created by making LEOs the first line of response to mental health crises. Often, police officers are not properly trained to safely and effectively respond to these incidents, and O’Shea suggested implementing Crisis Intervention Teams in all Oneida County law enforcement departments and developing a Jail Diversion Program in which psychiatric professionals co-respond with police to psychiatric emergencies. The 1960s’ deinstitutionalization movement has created a national crisis of people with mental health issues being held in institutions that are ill-equipped to address their needs. This has resulted in the current situation, where over one-fifth of all prison beds are occupied by people with severe mental health issues, even though they make up just over one percent of the wider US population. Released from incarceration without access to sufficient treatment or promising employment opportunities, many people with mental health issues turn to self-medication through alcohol or drug abuse, which worsens their symptoms and makes them more likely to be arrested and locked up again.

There are two broad strategies to address these problems: increasing investment in communities and inpatient or correctional mental health facilities, and preventing people with mental illness from being involved in the criminal justice system in the first place or diverting them from incarceration through specially appointed mental health courts. These strategies are united under an umbrella of changing how we think about the prison system: mentally ill inmates need a fully rehabilitative approach to provide them with the treatment, training, and support to successfully reintegrate themselves into society. The full report has been submitted to Stepping Up, a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental health issues incarcerated in the US, as well as to dozens of leaders of government agencies and NGOs working to ameliorate the crisis of incarcerated people with mental illnesses.

# Public Scholarship

## Scholar-in-Residence Program

Our Scholar-in-Residence program enables us to bring scholars to campus for prolonged interaction with Hamilton College students. Scholars present on topics of intellectual and social importance and engage directly with students in seminars or workshops. This year our scholar-in-residence delivered two lectures focused on global and domestic corruption, the progress the world has made in reducing it, and how to move forward.

**Professor Michael Johnston, Charles A. Dana Professor of Political Science, Emeritus and Visiting Faculty at the International Anti-Corruption Academy**  
**“Corruption and Democracy” Lecture Series**

Prof. Johnston visited Hamilton to deliver two very well-attended lectures on his area of expertise: global corruption. He began his first lecture, “Are we Making Progress against Global Corruption?” by laying out the first principles he keeps in mind when thinking about corruption: 1) Corruption is universal 2) Corruption does not explain all problems 3) Corruption does not negate the good (for example, the value of a strong civil society separated from the state) 4) No society has all the answers for reform 5) Corruption varies from country to country and 6) We must all learn from each other.

The global anti-corruption movement has only really gained prominence in the last thirty years, as the end of the Cold War delegitimized Western tolerance of corruption in other countries (perceived before as the “price of doing business”) and the theory that modernization helps alleviate corruption was disproved by Watergate and the Iran-Contra affair, among other scandals. In 1993, an NGO based in Berlin called Transparency International was established to evaluate and fight global corruption, primarily by “keeping [the] issue on the agenda” through efforts like the Corruption Perception Index. The World Bank started implementing various anti-corruption efforts and was quickly followed by similar efforts on the parts of the EU and the IMF. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Anti-Bribery Convention, signed in 1997, encourages sanctioning businesses that participate in offering or giving bribes and has 43 countries signed on as current members; the OECD Convention goes a long way to address Western businesses bribing overseas governments and deducting those bribes from their taxes as operating costs, which was a legal and accepted practice before its signing.

Prof. Johnston pointed out some bright spots in anti-corruption reforms: beyond the international co-operation represented by the OECD Convention, he highlighted “virtuous circles” fighting against corruption in some developing nations: the 2008 purge of old-school and corrupt officials in the Georgian government after the crisis of the Russo-Georgian War and the ongoing anti-corruption efforts like the UK Bribery Act, France’s Sapin II, and Xi Jinping’s nominally anti-corruption crusade in the Chinese Communist Party. Johnston also highlighted some worrying situations: Brazil has become a volatile and corrupt society under a violent right-wing government, Duterte’s anti-drug campaign in the Philippines covers up his own government’s corruption and provides a rationale for eliminating political enemies, while Orbán’s “anti-corruption” populism camouflages a deeply corrupt system of government. Even progressive and reformist Denmark’s Danske Bank was revealed last year to be operating Europe’s largest money-laundering scheme in history. Johnston claimed that some of the world’s frustrations with the pace of reforms come from a confused definition of what corruption really is. For him, corruption must be conceived of not as a category of behavior, but rather as a systemic dilemma: a problem of setting limits around the acceptable sources, uses, and links between wealth and power. Nominally, this means that corruption can be defined as the abuse of public roles and resources for private benefit. However, almost all the terms in these definitions are disputable: acceptable to whom? Who decides what constitutes abuse of power or how individuals benefit? They are meant to be elastic enough for different nations to examine and evaluate their own corrupt practices and reframe the discussion around corruption in terms of justice and benefits for the many, not the few, rather than in a vague and ineffective top-down reform through “civic virtue.”




# Public Scholarship

Prof. Johnston's second lecture, "What is the Opposite of Corruption?" focused on how what we've gleaned from the progress and failures of the anti-corruption movement can be used going forward. He began by outlining some of the current consensus' shortcomings, such as an emphasis on technocratic and bloodless "good governance," obsession with "political will," and an excessive faith in checking off boxes and promoting transparency, which all neglect the importance of justice in addressing corrupt systems. The consensus also unwisely focuses on specific corrupt acts and crime prevention programs, fails to make the immediate appeals that spark collective action, under-values politics and contention, and lacks a theory of change. Johnston suggested a need for a "change in general mindset," which would help address the ways the West exports corruption to the rest of the world; promoting public policy that better reflects public opinion was also suggested, which requires examining how much we value fairness and representation and how to make government more responsive; this latter suggestion also rests on a better opinion of government, correcting the precipitous fall in trust in institutions that has taken place in the past half-century. He quoted Frederick Douglass as saying "power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and never will," which reveals the push and reaction cycle of reforms and points to a need for "deep democratization," a contentious process moved forward through struggle and compromise.

Johnston then detailed what the target for reform should not be: it should not be zero corruption—which, if not impossible, would present a challenge for measuring corruption—it should not be a complete separation of politics and government, it should not be an excessively efficient government, and government should not be run like a business. Reformers should analyze the cost/benefit balance of corrupt practices, but not go so far as to privatize everything, which has proven to entrench corruption even deeper, as it did in Argentina. He emphasized that in addition to reframing anti-corruption campaigns in terms of justice, we should also start evaluating how corrupt societies are using the criterion of integrity. In a system with integrity, structures and institutions in government and civil society will encourage citizens to

actively participate for reasons of their own, rather than stalling change in apathy or impotence. Addressing corruption is becoming more difficult as economic inequality grows; inequality, while not corrupting in and of itself, can be a key factor in a vicious circle contributing to more corruption: the wealthy have more to lobby or bribe officials, which in turn increases economic and institutional barriers for the poor. Inequality can also distort the legal, political, and cultural channels through which citizens might try to respond to corrupt practices, further underlining the need for deep democratization. The key challenges of this process of deep democratization involve setting up the possibility of meaningful reform by increasing pluralism and creating safe and open politico-economic spaces, followed by reform activism and maintaining accountability mechanisms going forward. While there has been movement in the right direction, Johnston suggested that we need more self-consciously political, contentious, and socially rooted activism; this can contribute to a greater resistance to manipulation by moneyed interests. He concluded by urging the anti-corruption movement to analyze the diverse kinds of corruption that exist and take more seriously the involvement of Western governments and firms in feeding corrupt practices around the globe.



The Levitt Center is pleased to invite you to:

## WHAT IS THE OPPOSITE OF CORRUPTION?

VISIONS OF SUCCESSFUL REFORM

A TALK BY

**PROFESSOR MICHAEL JOHNSTON**

Johnston is the Charles A. Dana Professor of Political Science, Emeritus at Colgate University. Michael Johnston will be presenting this talk as a part of the Levitt Justice and Security Lecture Series.

**Thursday, May 2nd  
4:15 PM  
The Red Pit (KJ 127)**

# Public Scholarship

## Levitt Summer Research Fellows

Every summer, the Levitt Center funds students who wish to pursue a research question of their own design. The students work closely with a faculty advisor on their project, which culminates in a 25 to 30-page research paper and a presentation of their choosing. The goals of the Research Fellows program are to support independent research that aligns with students' academic goals, to create pathways for future research, and to support the development of knowledge and skills that help to understand and address persistent social problems. This past summer, ten students and professors collaborated on research projects as Levitt Summer Research Fellows.

### **Estella Brenneman '20 with Professor Seth Schermerhorn**

#### **“The Millennial Pilgrim: The Influence of Technology and the Questions of Authenticity and Spirituality on the Camino”**

Estella Brenneman traveled to Spain and walked 322 kilometers of the Camino de Santiago, a more than 1200-year-old pilgrimage route to the Church-recognized grave of St. James the Apostle. Preparing for her journey and reviewing literature about the Camino, she decided to focus on the controversial use of technology during the pilgrimage. Among participants under 30 the use of cell phones and the internet is nearly constant; that this constant use has spread to the Camino de Santiago worries many older pilgrims, who contend that the younger generation is cutting itself off from the full and authentic spiritual dimension of the journey. By having in-depth conversations with younger pilgrims while walking the Camino and following their social media accounts, Brenneman developed a method to both directly ask participants about their relationship with technology and religion and observe for herself how they were in fact using this technology. She also limited herself to interviewing “long-distance pilgrims,” who begin their trek earlier than the 100-kilometer minimum set by the Church. She found that, of her interviewees, all but one described themselves as spiritual, but not religious: these pilgrims were motivated by a desire to leave the world behind and do something extraordinary. Brenneman found a diverse range of relationships to technology and social media: most pilgrims she walked with tried to ignore or completely turn off their mobile devices during the day, some posted to social media frequently, and some only posted before and/or after the journey. Many also had a relatively positive view of social media altogether, highlighting its capacity to keep family members informed, assert one’s identity and worth, and connect with or inspire their friends and peers.

Brenneman noticed, while combing the literature, that a prominent non-doctrinaire motivation for medieval pilgrims was that pilgrimages were the only sanctioned ways (besides conscription in a war) to leave your home/village and gain a new perspective or spiritual awakening. Modern pilgrims reflect this need through a temporary abandonment of the cares of the world through changing their relationship to the (now global) village of the Internet. By disconnecting in this way and following in the tradition of pilgrimage, several non-religious pilgrims even reported that they felt the Holy Spirit (conceived of as a vivid sense of community among the walkers). Overall, Brenneman concluded that personal technology is not unduly hindering an “authentic” experience of the Camino—many pilgrims end up reworking their relationship to technology, thus reducing the mediation of their experience. As she eloquently puts it, “[o]n social media, there is the need to present a version of oneself that is better than reality, whereas on the Camino, there is a feeling of really living a better version of oneself.”



# Public Scholarship

## **Samantha Fogel '19 with Professor Marianne Janack** **“An Evaluation of the Impacts of Evaluations”**

While comparing the standard American grading system to the alternative narrative evaluation system (like those practiced at Reed and Hampshire Colleges), the benefits of the alternative system became very apparent to Fogel, who began to change her project into an informed proposal for Hamilton to re-evaluate its grading system. After reviewing the literature on the two systems of grading, Fogel interviewed students and professors on the merits of the two systems. She found that the traditional grading system came from the need to standardize students' evaluations after compulsory education began in the United States, but the “objectivity” of the system has always been questioned, even among teachers, and its efficacy in motivating students academically has never been proven. As education becomes more closely tied to employment and economic opportunity, assessing the learning process of students has been subsumed by quantifying their academic success in a simple way. In fact, grades act as rewards for completing a task and discourage taking pleasure in the activity of learning on its own, but this dilemma reverses when students receive qualitative feedback. The possibility of receiving a bad grade increases feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, and shame while performing an academic activity and consequently makes pupils enjoy learning less and stifles their academic interest and curiosity. Grades also incentivize lack of creativity and performing tasks that are below one's potential to make it more likely for a person to receive a better grade. The traditional grading system is preferred by inflexible and uncreative students, but Fogel suggests that replacing this system with one consisting solely of narrative evaluations will avoid the negative effects of anxiety and limited creativity.

To investigate the impact of narrative evaluations on post-graduate life, Fogel interviewed admissions officials and experts on graduate education. She found that the bias against narrative evaluations disadvantages students pursuing careers in medicine or finance, and can present problems even while applying to law programs or graduate schools. The strength of narrative evaluations is also their downside: the incommensurability of narrative evaluations makes comparing candidates for a job or admission to a school more difficult, especially for larger programs or firms with more applicants. Providing directions for interpreting nontraditional transcripts or adding standard grades and GPA as a supplement to narrative evaluations can mitigate these challenges for graduates.

## **Andrew Wei '20 with Professor Ann Owen** **“Inequality and Bias in the Demand for News”**

Andrew Wei's summer research asked, “how does rising inequality affect the types of news stories people seek out?” To investigate this question, he used an analysis of Google News search trends across states with varying levels of inequality since 2008. Recognizing that the prevailing American story is of hard work, persistence, and individualism, Wei looked at the demand for news stories that highlighted an individual's economic self-betterment. He hypothesized that across the board, an increase in inequality would raise demand for these types of stories, as the wealthy and middle-/working-classes would seek out stories that would reconcile the cognitive dissonance between the idea of American opportunity and the rise in inequality and loss of upward mobility: this makes the wealthy question whether their wealth is all from their own work and not luck, and leads poorer people to despair that they will never rise above their current station. The results of the survey confirmed this hypothesis: higher levels of inequality and unemployment correlate with increased demand for stories that will confirm an ideology of individuality, hard work, and upward mobility. Wei further concluded that the primary motivator is to avoid disturbing economic news and realities in ways that confirm the prevailing meta-political American ideology, which in turn motivates media bias toward these kinds of stories. This creates a vicious cycle where evidence of inequality leads people to seek out stories that confirm the view that anyone can succeed with enough hard work, which leads them to not favor policies that would address inequality, which, in turn, leads back to the beginning and income gaps continue to grow.



# Public Scholarship

**Sandra Saldana '19 with Professor David Walden**

**“The Role of Social Support in Mental Health in Favelas”**

Sandra Saldana’s summer research investigated how social factors impact mental health in Brazilian favelas. During a literature review, she found that feelings of empowerment, connections with friends and family, positive identification, hopes for the future, and feeling like there is meaning in life are all crucial for recovering from severe mental illness. Social support systems can help provide these protective factors, particularly for people exposed to poverty-related stressors (such as predatory loans, drug trafficking, and violent crime), and Saldana narrowed her focus to researching how poverty influences social support practices in the favelas of São Paulo, Brazil. As the country with the highest incidence of anxiety in the world and ranked fifth in rates of depression, Brazil has difficulty providing adequate physical and psychosocial support, especially for its poorest citizens. Many young children in favelas are exposed to violence in the family or join gangs at a young age to recreate an absent father figure’s influence; Brazilian women living in poverty also express chronic fear and lack of control. Involvement in gangs disrupts family dynamics, creates additional stress for other family members about being drawn in to the gang’s violence and business, and leads to cyclical patterns of crime and imprisonment.

Most social support in favelas comes from extended family and neighbors or religion. Close personal connections can help financially struggling families (for example, by providing food) and help take care of single mothers’ children, helping alleviate some of the principal stressors of poverty. Religion offers a sense of meaning and hope and a way to accept their social reality and contextualize their values and world. However, this contextualization through religion is not always positive; while the idea that teen pregnancies are a gift from God helps young mothers be accepted in the community, mental illness is perceived as an act of God, which further entrenches stigmatization of mental health issues and keeps people from seeking treatment. NGOs have also increasingly played a role in filling gaps in the Brazilian government’s social support network in favelas, but not much research has been conducted on their efficacy in improving mental well-being. To explore the lived experience of people living and working in favelas, Saldana organized a loosely-structured interview (to allow for new thoughts and viewpoints she might not have considered) that varied according to whether she was interviewing mental health professionals, residents, or volunteers. She used a phenomenological psychology approach, using the experiences of individual people struggling with and working to address mental health issues in the favelas to draw out the main factors that influence how they navigate their world. While hard to clearly separate from each other, these factors generally fall into two main themes: how poverty affects families and how these effects in turn have an impact on mental health outcomes; and how poverty and mental health are mediated with each other through the community at large. Disruptions in family life lead to problems in the community, which in turn leads to more disruption in families, creating a sense of hopelessness that is a primary contributor to mental health problems. Saldana’s research shows that the mental health crisis in Brazil’s favelas will require interventions beyond directly dealing with individuals suffering from mental health issues.

**Bennett Morrison '20 with Professor Heather Merrill**

**“Knowledge Sharing with the Maliseet of New Brunswick”**

Bennett Morrison returned home to Canada to investigate the educational system of the Neqotkuk First Nations in New Brunswick. Keeping in mind how education has been used as a tool of oppression against North American indigenous peoples, Morrison maintained a critical perspective toward the educational system and relied primarily on the individual experiences of people within the Neqotkuk nation to inform his research. To better understand the situation, Morrison conducted a preliminary literature review concerned with the ethics of research in Indigenous communities, Indigenous epistemology and pedagogical traditions, the history of federal education policies and the history of education for the Maliseet people (the tribe Morrison embedded in and focused his investigation on). The principle guiding Morrison’s field research was that of knowledge-sharing—encouraging reciprocal sharing of information—a part of which included Morrison helping to teach coding and robotics at the Wolastoq Education Initiative Science Day Camp.

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For centuries, the primary repressive apparatus deployed against First Nations peoples has been the educational system, first organized by the Church and later taken over by state-run residential schools. Just like American residential schools, the Canadian schooling system has been used to destroy indigenous cultures, languages, and identities to better “assimilate” First Nations peoples; later, indigenous children were held back through severe underfunding of services. However, indigenous culture and knowledge has proved extremely resilient, as shown by the recent incorporation of indigenous culture and tradition into their schools, including in the Mah-Sos Preschool and Elementary Schools, which are run by the Maliseet people themselves and help First Nations children establish a distinct and strong identity before transferring to state-run middle and high schools in the area. Even state-run public schools are working more with the First Nations to incorporate indigenous pedagogy into their curricula. To connect with the Neqotkuk community, Morrison volunteered with Elephant Thoughts Educational Outreach for five weeks as a part of the support staff for three summer camps. His research focused on the development of the community and incorporation of the Maliseet language into the education of Neqotkuk children. Part of the incorporation of indigenous knowledge involves connecting education to knowledge of the land and the nuances of their language, which can only be presented by tribal elders who often lacked the opportunities to pursue the requisite education necessary to earn a teaching degree. Instead, much of this knowledge is passed down at camps and informal classes. Volunteering to work with the community while conducting his field research was an ethically-informed choice: indigenous peoples generally have an understandably mistrustful and antagonistic relationship with visitors who do nothing but “observe.” First Nations’ oral histories detail the effects on their communities of the racist beliefs, depictions, and policies early observers perpetuated; thus, researchers coming in from outside of the community must design their research in such a way that it benefits the people they are studying, empowers their communities, and does not devalue traditional knowledge. Broadly speaking, Morrison’s predictions made based on his literature review were confirmed: the Neqotkuk have benefited from the Canadian government’s recent attempts to promote traditional Indigenous knowledge practices in schools. Additionally, the crucial infrastructure for teaching the Maliseet language has been developed, which is important because the survival of traditional knowledge is intimately connected to the preservation of indigenous languages.

## **Claire Nicholson '20 with Professor Erica De Bruin** **“Land Hunger: Environmental Migration and Conflict in Bangladesh”**

Claire Nicholson’s summer research project explored the topic of environmental security, or how environmental factors (like scarcity, stress, and degradation) can contribute to or cause human conflict and precariousness, through the phenomenon of migration in Bangladesh. Drawing on historical migration, conflict, and environmental security literature, as well as considering the pre-existing socio-economic and political situation in Bangladesh, Nicholson examined two case studies from the 1970s-1990s. The first case study was concerned with environmentally-motivated and government-sponsored migration of ethnic, linguistic, and religious majority populations to displace the indigenous minority living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The CHT is, historically, a semi-autonomous region in Bangladesh with major ethno-cultural differences from the Bengali Muslim majority. The indigenous tribes mostly speak Sino-Tibetan languages; they practice Buddhism, Hinduism, animism, and Christianity; and they have very different diets and customs. After the Pakistan-India partition, the CHT’s autonomy was slowly eroded by the Pakistani, and later Bangladeshi, governments. These policies led to deforestation, displacement of indigenous tribes, and huge demographic shifts. Indigenous militias resisted this attempt to “stabilize” the country through demographic change and armed conflict broke out that led to thousands of deaths in battles and massacres. The second case study, on migration from rural to urban areas (focusing on the city of Dhaka), brought up other issues surrounding environmental migration. While new migrants were not prioritized or displacing residents in urban areas, and so no armed conflicts broke out, the rapid population growth in the cities has led to the establishment of vast slums and rampant poverty. This has overwhelmed the city’s public services: education, water, healthcare, sewage, and electricity are not readily accessible to much of the urban poor. The lack of legal economic opportunities for poor migrants to the city has also led many to criminal activity—drug addiction and trafficking, prostitution, corruption, and other forms of crime—to support themselves or cope with their situation. This research illustrates the complex challenges presented by environmental migration that will become more pressing as climate change continues to make environmental disasters more common.

# Public Scholarship

**Aoife Thomas '20 with Professor Meredith Madden**

**"The Teaching of American Indian History and Culture in Central New York Elementary and Middle Schools"**

Aoife Thomas employed various methods to qualitatively examine how teaching the history and culture of American Indians (the term preferred by the Oneida Indian Nation) in Central New York elementary and middle schools has changed over time and how that change is reflected in contemporary classrooms. This consisted, first, in compiling and analyzing the changes in relevant New York State standards and curricula; this was followed by fieldwork distributing questionnaires to area teachers. Broadly speaking, she found that education around this subject has made some significant improvements in focusing on specific tribes (i.e. not treating all native peoples as a monolithic Other) and beginning to emphasize tribes' continued existence and struggles for land, rights, and resources (perhaps spurred on recently by the Dakota Access Pipeline protests). Thomas credits much of this improvement to



*Aoife Thomas '20 posing with the border marker on Campus Hill that separated the Colonies from the Six Nations.*

greater inclusion of American Indian primary sources talking about their tribes' histories, traditions, and experiences in modern classrooms. This finding may be a little anomalous, however, as the Oneida Indian Nation has worked for a long time with Madison and Oneida County schools to improve their teaching of American Indian history. The issues of settler-colonialism, 20th-Century American Indian resistance movements, forced abandonment of cultural identity, and the genocidal reality of tribes' "loss of land" (as it is euphemistically put) are rarely, if ever, covered and never engaged with seriously or critically. The mythos of Christopher Columbus is also uncritically propagated, to highlight the most extreme example of "Sugar-Coated Content." Teachers' rationale for these gaps follow two lines of thought: that this content is either too "controversial" or too "graphic" for their students. While the worry that material might be too graphic might be valid for younger children, Thomas observes that Holocaust history will sometimes begin in Kindergarten and points to avoidance of "controversy" as the more prescient excuse. This manifests in reported worries about how students' home and family lives have prepared them to engage with the material, and anxieties about teachers being blamed for perceived anti-Americanism in their students. Therefore, teachers cautiously tend to adhere to the NYS curricular standards that dictate *how* American Indian history is taught, but are hesitant to go deeper and ask students *why* tribes were treated so inhumanely and unjustly or why American Indians' socioeconomic inequality continues to persist.

**Ally D'Antonio '20 with Professor Jesse Weiner**

**"Hyper-Emotion as Disability: Researching Disabilities in the Classical World"**

Noting from her studies that "disability" depends on what a society defines as something that keeps an individual from conforming to preponderant cultural values, Ally D'Antonio asked, "what would be considered a disability under Greco-Roman cultural mores?" Observing that the field of disability studies has been concerned with incorporating the socially constructed basis for "disability," she studied Greco-Roman values and cases where individuals are portrayed as being incapable of actively participating in society. During her reflection, she was lead to conclude that in addition to what we traditionally consider disabilities (including some that classical societies would not be able to conceptualize, such as PTSD), Greco-Roman cultural norms had a non-systematized category of "hyper-emotional" disability. Perhaps the most valued trait in ancient Greek and Roman societies was civic service and responsibility, or the ability to participate in one's



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expected societal role. Thus, physical impairments were only considered disabling if one could not afford assistance or did not have some other talent like musicianship or poetry.

D'Antonio points out that the ability to control one's emotions and emotional responses was highly valued in Greco-Roman philosophy, from Plato to the Stoics and Epicureans; in fact, Galen and Hippocrates (classical forerunners of modern medical inquiry) were early categorizers of hysteria. Classical literature and philosophy are rife with examples of characters experiencing cases of excessive emotion (or hyper-emotion) that cause a failure to fill one's role or a dramatization of this failure through self-harm or recklessness, as seen in the cases of Virgil's story of Dido or Homer's treatment of the rages of Achilles and Sophocles' characterization of Ajax. Lucretius goes so far as to cast love as dangerous to oneself and society, since the fixation on an individual's reciprocity of that love not only wounds the lover but hinders him from productively engaging in society. It is possible to read Dido's suicide as a dramatization of this inability to play one's role: her love for the lost Aeneas brings so much pain that she commits suicide and leaves Carthage without a leader, producing the mythological explanation for the Rome-Carthage feud. Seen through the value system of the Greco-Roman world, we can conclude, as does D'Antonio, that "[h]yper-emotion, whether it be an abundance of love, lust, anger, grief, or fear, was considered a disabling condition in the ancient world. Extreme levels of these emotions were a liability in public and private life and were advised against in varying sources from across centuries."

**Jesse Bennett '19 with Professor Julio Videras**

**"Analyzing the effects of policy on residential photovoltaic capacity in California"**

Jesse Bennett decided to enlist his study of economics to determine the factors that encourage and discourage California home and property owners' installation of solar panels by measuring average installation size. Bennett began by looking at how policies regarding solar panels influence their installation in various California counties. He found that production subsidies and cash rebates, by lowering the cost of installation for the consumer, greatly encourage the spread of photovoltaic cell adoption by individuals and families. However, on the individual level, his model found that rebates are far less effective than subsidies—together and in a wider population, however, the two policies reinforce each other. While acknowledging the limits of his study (it does not account for the influence of other industries' lobbying and is limited to California, a state with some of the most environmentally-conscious policies in the country), Bennett also had some odd findings while controlling for other factors. He found that a larger proportion of Democrats in a county paradoxically reduces the average size of an installation—a finding that raises quite a few questions but whose many factors are difficult to disentangle. Perhaps less surprisingly, Bennett found a strong positive correlation between educational attainment and installation size, indicating a greater chance of environmental consciousness and willingness to spare the upfront costs necessary to harvest as much solar power as possible.

**Eva Lynch-Comer '19 with Professor Vivyan Adair**

**"A Survivor's Healing Journey: From Surviving to Thriving"**

Analyzing a diverse array of literary sources (from memoirs, poetry, and novels to a self-help book), Eva Lynch-Comer's summer research project sought to understand the struggles and healing strategies survivors of sexual assault face and use to come to terms with trauma. Her research found that—like many other aspects of the human experience—the healing journey for survivors is non-linear: many return to the same stage again and again while still making progress. However, this progress is sometimes obscured by this repetition. Dealing with the painful engagement of traumatic memories, grief, anger, and flashbacks can be discouraging to someone going through the process alone. As she continued analyzing her sources, Lynch-Comer came to fully appreciate the inherent value of storytelling in the literature of survival. Sharing and hearing stories can help survivors feel less isolated in their often painful and sometimes frustrating "labyrinthine" journeys of healing, providing a shared experience to build on and connect with which facilitates their ability to effectively heal themselves and each other emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically.

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## Levitt Summer Research Groups

Levitt Research Group Grants support groups of Hamilton students completing summer research projects in collaboration with at least one faculty advisor. The research projects last for 8 to 10 weeks and help to answer an overarching research question. Students and their faculty advisors regularly meet face-to-face to communicate and coordinate research efforts. The grants are intended to encourage both faculty and joint faculty-student publications. We encourage research that will be useful for policy makers or other researchers, especially projects that address local issues. In this way, the grants help to cultivate positive social change. The Levitt Center funded four research groups with 13 students total during the summer of 2018.

**Sophia Coren '21, Lana Dorr '21, Jada Langston '20**

**Led by Professor Colin Quinn**

**“Archaeology as Advocacy: Celebrating Cultural Heritage and Promoting Sustainability in Transylvanian Mining Communities”**

This Levitt-supported research group spent their summer excavating archaeological sites in Transylvania and working with Prof. Quinn’s Romanian colleagues to present their findings to local mining communities. Prof. Quinn’s research focuses on the origins of social inequality in the Bronze Age, but the community-education portion of this project addressed contemporary issues: Romania is the site of the largest gold deposit in Europe and home to immense cyanide lakes (a consequence of the most efficient method of separating gold ore from other rocks and elements), but very little of the profit from mining operations makes its way back to the small villages around the mines. Increasing automation of mining in Romania has also produced dynamics of underemployment and rising poverty analogous to those of Americans in coal country. The structure of the project also allowed each student to pursue her own specific interest. Lana Dorr (prospective Archaeology major) spent much of her time researching the social and political history of mining in the region to better understand the local villagers’ relationship to mining, as well as what opportunities for making mining work better for them or develop their economy outside of it might be pursued. Sophia Coren (prospective Anthropology and/or Psychology major) focused on studying the traditional medicinal plants of the Romanian countryside, relying on local knowledge to guide her (while being actively sensitive to the group’s outsider status) to learn as much as she could about this valuable part of their culture and the local ecosystem threatened by mining practices. Jada Langston (prospective Geology and Archaeology major) took a more global perspective, examining movements that have used archaeology as a tool to advocate for marginalized peoples. She was particularly struck by a movement in Corpus Christi, Texas, which used archaeology and public records to confirm native people’s oral history, de-whitewash the history of the Corpus Christi area, and reclaim spaces as their own. The group also deeply valued the opportunity to engage with and learn from the local community, from working with local archaeologists to experiencing the famous hospitality of the Romanian people and learning about the nuances of the anti-mining protests, which included both environmental and anti-corruption groups. Finally, the project left them all with a profound appreciation for the idea of a “co-creation” of archaeological knowledge and how much researchers depend on the communities they study to inform their findings.



*Prof. Quinn's group in Transylvania mapping the site*

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## **“Hidden Resources: Zoos and Comparative Approaches to Immunology”**

**Andrew Vorrath '20 and Choiwing Yeung '19**

**Led by Professor Cynthia Downs**

This research group worked on a project with two focuses: evaluating local zoos as sites for studying immunology and disease among the animals and organizing lessons for Utica-area schoolchildren aimed at helping them understand their connection to their environment. They specifically designed a lesson for younger children focused on the benefits of raising chickens in one's yard, using simple language and concepts to effectively communicate the more technical knowledge about ecosystems and humanity's connection to them. The overall theme of the lessons was an emphasis on how conservation of ecosystems can prevent the spread of disease both among animals and from animals to humans. As humans encroach upon habitats, animals in those systems tend to be forced together, making disease transfer more likely; the introduction of new species can also lead to disease transmission from reservoir species to humans—for example, bats in Australia harbor the Hendra virus, but this virus never spread to humans before English settlers introduced horses, who served as vector species that eventually allowed the virus to infect humans. Humans' penchant for trying to eradicate large predators also disrupts the natural balance of ecosystems and can lead to large outbreaks. For quite a long time in North America, wolves and wild dogs were considered pests (and still are by a great many people, especially in Western states) who threatened ranchers' cattle and horses and were shot on sight. However, this causes populations of their prey (like rabbits and deer) to explode in all areas not remote from human settlement. Not only do these animals overgraze and upset the habitat's balance; without wolves—who tend to hunt elderly, injured, or outright sick animals—diseases like Mad Cow and Chronic Wasting Disease can flourish in environments where the animals most susceptible to sickness are not culled by natural predators. The parasites and diseases carried by these unchecked populations eventually make their way to people. On the research side, by collecting samples and observing the animals in the zoo, the Downs group made quite a bit of progress in assessing the feasibility of the Utica Zoo as the site for further immunological research. The Utica Zoo helped them gather samples from animals to help compile a database for a nation-wide research project studying the scaling of immunological defenses in mammalian species.

## **“From Rust Belt to Locavore Haven: How the Movement for Local Foods Took Root in Central New York”**

**Nora McEntee '19, Julia McGuire '20, Amarilys Milian '20, and Kaitlyn Thayer '19**

**Led by Professor Steve Ellingson**

Over the summer, Professor of Sociology Steve Ellingson led a field research group of four students to explore the local food economy in Central New York. Prof. Ellingson has noticed the rise of local foods since he came to work at Hamilton in the mid-2000s, and wondered how the system works in an area with such disparate populations, no major population centers to feasibly host a food hub, and an agricultural economy centered on dairy.

Each student chose a different facet of the local food movement to investigate, and distributed surveys and questionnaires at farmers' markets, local farms, and farm-to-table restaurants in Oneida, Madison, and Herkimer counties. McGuire focused on the phenomenon of “locavorism,” in which consumers try (to varying degrees) to eat as much locally-grown and -raised food as possible. Her questionnaires asked farmers' market attendees about their consumption habits: frequency of coming to farmers' markets, their definition of “local” as it applies to local food, and their emotional investment in eating locally. She also observed that there is a distinction between consumers who treat farmers' markets as a task (like grocery shopping) and those who treat them as a leisure activity—the former tend to be very invested in the idea of local food and go to multiple markets; the latter will attend one or two markets close to them for an afternoon out or to pick up food from stalls they particularly like. Across the board, however, most respondents emphasized the community benefits of farmers' markets (supporting local farms, bringing communities together, and raising awareness of the ethical implications of what we eat). McEntee also found these values emphasized among her interviewees, the owners and chefs of local farm-to-table restaurants. She focused her interview questions on their relationships with producers and feeling of responsibility to the community, inspired by her time studying abroad in Italy and Italians' experience of regional identity being deeply tied to food. Many cited “food values” as motivating both their businesses

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and their maintenance of close relationships with local producers: these include placing a high value on quality, transparency, and morality. Buyers in local food markets are better able to vet the quality of food and can visit farms and observe the process of production—both these allow for a more ethical restaurant-supplier relationship. They also saw their businesses as strengthening connections with communities through supporting farmers and educating consumers. Thayer took a more qualitative approach, embedding herself at Kingfisher Farm and compiling her observations in a blog. She also spoke to many local farmers (with both commercial farms and personal gardens), and was most struck by the ways farming strengthens one's relationship with the earth and deepens the understanding we have of how our food is produced. Working on farms helped her appreciate the limitations seasons put on growing local food in a temperate climate like Central New York's, how agriculture depends on place, and the amount of labor involved in farming. Milian looked at local farming from the other side, observing the dynamics between stands at farmers' markets and the effect of CSA (community supported agriculture) farms on expanding the farming community. CSAs are farms where plots are set aside for community members to grow and pick their own produce, helping farms rotate soil and supporting them through land rents. CSAs allow regular people to get involved in farming and understand their work and difficulties. These difficulties have nurtured a culture of cooperation and trust—more established farms help guide new farmers, and farmers frequently share techniques amongst themselves—and a desire to educate the community on the value of local food and local farms, most effectively through participation in CSA programs.

## **"The Situated Nature of Contemplative Places"**

**Matthew Zeitler '20, Rachel Schooler '19, Geoffrey Ravenhall Meinke '20, Anne McClanahan '20**

**Led by Professor Jaime Kucinkas**

This group attempted to explore multiple facets of meditative and yogic practices by collecting interviews with practitioners on- and off-campus. 38 interviewees in total were found between researchers working in the Utica/Syracuse area, Chicago, Santa Barbara, and New York City.

Anne McClanahan's research focused on the connection between mindfulness techniques and practitioners' experiences with stress. She found, in agreement with current research, that mindfulness practices (whether emphasizing the physical or mental awareness of the practitioner) give their followers techniques to recognize and deal with rising stress levels in their daily lives, thus lowering their perceived levels of stress over time. Looking forward, McClanahan envisions a survey dedicated more exclusively to asking interviewees about their levels of stress, past experiences of trauma, and histories of mental health issues. Matt Zeitler chose to approach mindfulness and meditations with a question about how religiosity and theistic belief influence practitioners' experiences. In the transcripts, he found support for theories that highlight the incorporation of spiritual identities into navigation of daily life. Nearly all interviewees spoke about practicing mindfulness in their daily lives, and religious (but not necessarily Buddhist) participants tended to bring meditation techniques into their prayers and reported an increase in their religious feeling, crediting meditative practices with helping them feel more connected to their beliefs. "Spiritual, but not religious" interviewees similarly reported a deepening of spiritual connection and feeling; secular and atheistic participants cast their experience in strictly non-religious terms, emphasizing stress relief, health benefits, and the value of yoga as exercise. Geoffrey Ravenhall Meinke and Rachel Schooler chose to collaborate on a paper exploring the interaction between the spaces, the number of people in those spaces, and practitioners' perceptions of mindfulness and meditation. While they predicted that social context would influence the experience, the results concern subjective experiences and thus vary between individuals. Most interviewees mentioned that they felt an "energy" or sense of communion when participating in mindfulness groups or classes. These groups also helped them to learn proper techniques through listening to teaching and observing other practitioners, as well as providing motivation for some to continue with the sessions. However, for two groups, the specific social contexts they are sometimes in detracted from their experience. Instructors were not inclined to practice in their own studios because they were perceived as experts and often interrupted by students looking for advice or correction. This leads many to prefer solitary practice or go to another studio. Students at the College who took mindfulness classes on campus found that the social dynamics of campus life lingered in the class, distracting them with fears of judgment and a competitive mindset.



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## Course Development Grants

The Levitt Center provides course development grants to faculty who wish to incorporate the theory and practice of social change, using the lenses of transformational leadership and social innovation, into a new or existing course. It is expected that faculty will teach a course in their field of study that helps students gain the academic knowledge and relevant skills needed to address persistent social problems in effective, innovative, and meaningful ways. This year, the Levitt Center supported three courses in the Government, Sociology, and Philosophy departments.

## Faculty Awards for 2018-19



**Kira Jumet, Assistant Professor of Government**  
**“Gender and Sexuality in the Middle East and North Africa”**

Prof. Kira Jumet has developed a course that employs postcolonial feminist theory and texts to explore and critique biases in traditional queer and feminist theory by exposing students to non-Western perspectives and the work of non-Western scholars. This incorporation of other perspectives allows for a space in which the course can explore whether the goals of women’s and LGBTQ rights groups must necessary be universal or if it is more effective for them to be culturally and contextually specific, challenging biases of ethnocentrism and Orientalism and exploring ethical issues around researching other cultures. Using this theoretical framework, students will be tasked with developing a plan of action for an organization or movement in the Middle East and North Africa to introduce considerations of women’s or LGBTQ rights into their movement’s focus. Much of the course’s work will disentangle the intersection of religion and politics in what are mostly Muslim-majority countries and how this intersection influences the state and societal policing of women’s bodies, the marginalization of women and the LGBTQ community in anti-colonial discourses and regional social movements, gender-based violence, the

folklore constructed around rural women, a culture’s conceptualization of masculinity, and how women’s and LGBTQ rights are exploited as political tools of the state.

Prof. Jumet will also be visiting Tunisia to develop a network of activists and other civil rights leaders in the country who will call in to the class and offer their on-the-ground perspectives to inform the students’ classroom experience and projects moving forward. With Tunisia’s president recently proposing the decriminalization of homosexuality and the country’s strong LGBTQ and NGO presence, these activists will offer invaluable insight to the students on the progress they’ve made and any political or social pushback they’ve experienced. She hopes the course will provide a new and safe space for women and members of the LGBTQ community to critically and collectively reflect upon and improve strategies and tactics for social change as leaders who incorporate intersectionality, culture, and political context into their plans. The course also aims to start a dialogue between postcolonial and feminist discourses, a dialogue sorely missed in many academic discussions.

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## **Meredith Madden, Lecturer in Sociology** **“Poverty and Inequality”**

This course led by Lecturer Meredith Madden explores the link between critical pedagogies and academic and social transformation, chiefly considering the link between poverty and inequality in America and how these socioeconomic issues have impacts on individuals’ education, health, and other outcomes, as well as how students at institutions like Hamilton can actively address these issues. Viewing these problems through a sociological lens, Madden hopes students can better identify the causes of poverty and critically approach the impacts of structures and institutions on people’s lived experiences and outcomes. In addition to engaging in critical reading, writing, and dialogue on issues of poverty, students will participate in a semester-long “scholarship in action” project. This project will first involve bringing in speakers from various levels of education to talk to the class about how poverty has shaped their respective fields or life experience. Madden plans to invite teachers at rural schools around Stockbridge, NY and dental health specialists providing low/no cost dentistry to migrant families in West Winfield, NY. As a collaborative final project, the students will then compile and publish an undergraduate journal consisting of scholarly writing, drawings and photography, and poetry and distribute copies of the journal to the Hamilton community, as well as host a public reading at Opus Café to help raise the profile of the journal on campus.



## **Alexandra Plakias, Assistant Professor of Philosophy** **“Disagreement”**

Prof. Plakias, Hamilton Class of 2002, has developed this 400-level seminar to create a space in which to explore the role disagreement plays in intellectual and public life. The fundamental premise of the course is that disagreement is not something to be avoided or feared, but rather welcomed as a uniquely important tool for academic inquiry and social progress—students will be invited to develop the skills to productively disagree by recognizing how important disagreement is in our epistemic, political, and social systems. Through exercises, reading, and discussion, course members will critically reflect not only on the role of disagreement, but also develop ways to disagree in more effective and productive ways. Readings will primarily focus on how disagreement is discussed in the disciplines of epistemology, moral philosophy, and political philosophy, with additional reflections on the role disagreement plays in other subjects, in which conflicting theories drive intellectual development. Starting with examining the Socratic Method and its use of disagreement, the course will then ask epistemological questions about whether one can rationally justify their beliefs in the face of disagreement and look at the limits different discourses (scientific, aesthetic, religious, or moral) impose on disagreement. They will then consider work in the psychology of moral and political disagreement and consider Karl Popper’s paradox of tolerance, as well as ways to productively engage with opposing views and bridge the divide between individuals. Throughout the class, students will submit short weekly assignments and exercises where they reflect on their goals and the progress of the class. In breaking with traditional pedagogy, Plakias will also encourage students to disagree *with her*, whether in their weekly assignments or in class, and to co-operate on the parameters of their final project. As a final oral exam, students will research and present an analysis of case studies in disagreement, inside or outside of academia.



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## Levitt Center Speaker Series

The Levitt Center Speaker Series is committed to enhancing the academic experience of our students by introducing them to a wide array of intellectually challenging speakers. The Series features many speakers with substantial academic and policy experience, an invaluable asset in helping students make connections between the classroom and policies enacted in the real world. Students and other Hamilton community members can engage speakers in thoughtful discussions following each lecture. Our four program areas (Inequality and Equity, Justice and Security, Sustainability, and Public Health and Well-Being), as well as our Transformational Leadership and Social Innovation initiatives, provide a focus for our yearlong lecture series. The Levitt Center also co-sponsors lectures and conversations in conjunction with academic departments and co-curricular centers on campus.

## The Hamilton College 2018 Election Series

**Luke Perry, Professor of Government and Politics at Utica College**  
***The 22nd District Congressional Race: An Assessment and Analysis***

Prof. Luke Perry of Utica College, who is also a columnist covering local and national politics at the Utica Observer-Dispatch, came to the Levitt Center to guide a lunch discussion about the dynamics of the 22nd Congressional District race between incumbent Claudia Tenney and Democratic challenger Anthony Brindisi. After laying out where congressional politics stood—Democrats needed 24 seats to gain a majority in the house, with 83 seats up for election (the highest number of open seats since the 1930s) while incumbent advantage seems to be eroding—Perry pointed out that in the 22nd Tenney and Brindisi are polling statistically evenly in a district in which there are 30,000 more Republicans than Democrats, while conversely there is a popular Republican Congressman in the neighboring 24th, where there are 5,000 more Democrats than Republicans. He then opened the discussion to the attendees, asking what they thought made these districts so peculiarly competitive or demographically counter-intuitive. Many discussants pointed to Trump's possible negative association with Tenney's campaign—however, Perry cautioned against this reading, suggesting that Tenney was in fact cultivating the base, who overwhelmingly support the President's policies and public persona. He instead cited Tenney's antagonistic relationship with the local Republican establishment, and the party's continuous rightward drift that galvanizes the base, but alienates the more moderate party bosses. Perry further suggested that Trump's influence is more of a force on mobilizing Democratic voters, who see the midterms as a way to limit the Republicans', and thus the Executive Branch's, power. Prof. Phil Klinkner, who attended the discussion, put forward that sexism may have a role in the reception of Tenney's most controversial statements. He pointed out that many male politicians say comparably outrageous things but do not suffer the same backlash. It was also suggested that economic stagnation in the region makes these seats constantly competitive, as constituents are often dissatisfied with their current representation as promised economic gains fail to come to fruition repeatedly. This led to a discussion of how economic-cultural populism has played a role in the campaign: Tenney emphasizing the importance of the growth of small businesses and Brindisi criticizing Spectrum Cable's statewide monopoly, price gouging, and failure to develop information infrastructure in CNY. Pressed to predict the race's outcome, Prof. Perry predicted a Brindisi win, while emphasizing that it would be a close and exciting race, so no prediction is sure.

**Matt Luttig, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Colgate University**  
***President Obama and the Racialization of Midterm Congressional Elections***

Matt Luttig, a scholar of public opinion and political psychology in the Colgate Political Science department, presented his research over lunch—his recent investigations have been attempting to answer the question of why the 2010 and 2014 midterm elections swung more heavily than predicted toward the opposition Republican party. Midterm election results are usually predicted with models that take several factors into account: the health of the economy, the midterm effect

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(the trend where an incumbent President's party loses seats in midterms), the popularity of the sitting President, and the number of seats held by the incumbent's party. These factors predicted a heavy Republican wave—the economy was still recovering from the 2008 recession, the not exceptionally high approval ratings of Obama, and the high number of seats held by Democrats (riding popular anger about the Iraq war and the 2008 crash, and thus occupying many reliably conservative seats)—and an amplified midterm effect. However, the results went beyond these expectations. Thus, the question Luttig asked was, “what is the extra amplifying factor?” Luttig considered multiple factors including recent trends in the highly nationalized character of Congressional races, which center voters' decision-making on Congressional approval (at an historical low for some time, which incentivizes switching a district's representation), national issues (like the ACA or immigration policy), and the idea of midterm elections as a referendum on the sitting President. These further factors can be categorized under the political science concept of a “spillover effect,” whereby voters' perceptions of a President washes over his party's nominees for all offices. Research has found that Obama, as America's first Black President, is perceived as a highly racialized figure whose race is “chronically accessible,” meaning that Blackness is one of the first of his attributes to pop up in a voter's mind (though he in fact spoke less about race than any other recent President). Thus, Obama's race, through a racialized spillover effect, became tied to non-racialized policies and candidates' platforms. As there are more racially conservative than racially liberal voters in the US, a highly racialized President in a “referendum” midterm election will favor racially conservative candidates (usually Republicans). Luttig's research comparing the 2010 and 2014 midterms to previous midterms bore this theory out, and suggests that we would do well to abandon the post-racial narrative popularized in the wake of Obama's election. Looking forward, Luttig clarified that “highly racialized” is not limited to one's race, but also to professed racial attitudes. He therefore cautioned against Democratic optimism about a 2018 “blue wave;” he pointed out that Trump's campaign, policies, and public persona are all steeped in appeals to racial resentment (making him highly racialized) and that many voters see this fall's midterm vote as a referendum on his Presidency so far. These two factors together, as his research suggests, will lead to an activation of racial resentment among conservatives and motivate them to (seemingly paradoxically) vote for a highly racialized (White) candidate and stem the opposition's hoped-for gains.

## **Professor Steve Ellingson, Professor of Sociology at Hamilton College** ***Values and Voting***

Prof. Ellingson began this lunch discussion by talking about how his idea for the discussion took form. He was originally approached by the Levitt Center, based on his previous research, to help attendees understand why the stereotypical “values voters” (American Evangelicals) would support a candidate and President who so contradicts many of their professed values. Considering recent events that highlight this issue even more starkly: apropos of the Kavanaugh hearings, Ellingson decided to broaden the question to “what role do values play in politics?” To orient the discussion, he introduced the main ideas of Weberian sociology and sociologist of religion at Notre Dame Christian Smith's *Moral, Believing Animals*, which takes the Weberian understanding of morality as a constellation of collectively agreed-upon assumptions and intuitions and suggests tracking moments of high emotion as a reliable guide to when people's moral values are threatened or otherwise engaged. He then opened the discussion to the room, asking attendees to participate in an exercise of tracing their emotional reactions to the Kavanaugh hearings back to the values they felt were challenged, and how those values would influence their future political action. Many were outraged at the clear systemic injustice and hypocrisy of someone with such questionable moral character even being put up for a hearing; they also remarked on the entitlement of conservatives reacting angrily to a survivor questioning the morality of one of their own who did everything “right” and the blatant disregard for anything that would prevent their ends from being realized—overall, they characterized it as a process that showed a lack of respect and humility before the process and to victims. This led to a discussion of how the hearings revealed the existence of competing structures and ideas of justice or hierarchical validity, solidified anxieties about future rulings, and disappointment over the missed opportunity to challenge the culture around sexual assault. These value implications were summarized in reports of “dread, sinking feelings, betrayal, and disappointment.” Ellingson emphasized the often-overlooked importance of values on both sides of the political spectrum, and presented the hearings as a case study in a reading of politics as a struggle over the moral order, asking attendees to think outside of their assumptions and entertain seriously the idea of when life begins, and teasing out the nuance which



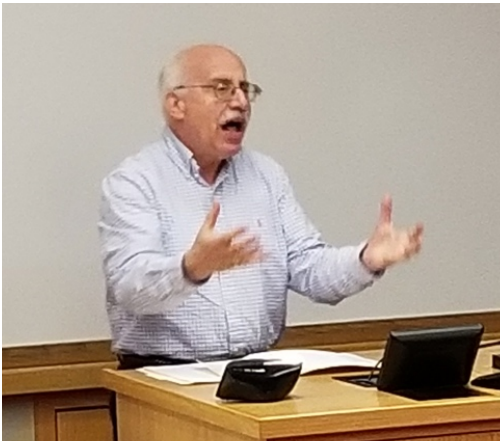
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places this question as one of legal personhood (not biological life)—a distinction usually lost in the highly emotionally-charged debate around abortion. The discussion then broke into small groups of four-to-six to more intimately discuss the issues raised. Noticeably, some of the younger discussants emphasized the need for the left to realize that a stance of moral and procedural righteousness has failed them: the Democrats need to think more strategically and ruthlessly to push through policies that matter in people's lives (protecting abortion rights, helping alleviate poverty, introducing better healthcare plans), rather than be too hung up on finger-wagging over etiquette. They stated that the latter strategy has clearly not worked for them, but other generations of participants were a bit surprised at the idea that liberals should take a page out of the conservative playbook to be more effective.

**Glenn Altschuler, Thomas and Dorothy Litwin Professor of American Studies at Cornell University**  
*The Midterms are Over, Now What?*

Prof. Glenn Altschuler of Cornell University hosted a lunch discussion and lecture for the Levitt Center, both of which reflected on the immediate aftermath of the 2018 elections and what to expect going forward. Altschuler is particularly concerned about polarization in American politics, and worries that ideological purity and resistance to cooperation will continue until an extreme external shock to the system, like a global recession or undeniable climate crisis, intervenes. He is also worried by the Democratic Party's institutional resistance to younger generations of leaders, but sees a promising strategy in the House Democrats setting an agenda of upholding ACA protections, introducing infrastructure bills, and proposing a repeal of corporate tax cuts; while also "driving Trump crazy" with constant subpoenas and requests for testimony through their rightful oversight capacity. While these bills would not make it past the Senate or the President's desk, this agenda is a powerful didactic tool to show that the House is pursuing the business of legislation and establish a clear alternative to the Republicans going forward. There will also be a challenge to the Democrats as they attempt to pivot from their midterm strategy of resisting a coherent national platform (to make candidates more adaptable to various local electorates) to establish this legislative agenda and develop a policy platform for 2020. However, he cautioned against much of the Democratic base's pipe dream of impeachment: retrospectively, the Clinton impeachment shows us

how counterproductive the process can be. In today's even more polarized climate, impeachment would play only too well into the Republicans' hands—this is especially insightful when we realize that most Republican House incumbents who lose (in primaries and elections) are moderates, which is in large part the reason for the party's dramatic rightward shift.



Looking ahead to the 2020 Presidential election, Altschuler cited the Obama and Trump victories against their more experienced rivals as evidence that the electorate doesn't necessarily care that much about experience: "outsider status" is an advantage, since most Americans detest politicians. Thus, Altschuler thought of the ideal candidate as a charismatic middle-aged Governor (since they don't have a voting record that could be held against them) or younger and newer Congressperson (in the vein of Obama pre-Presidential campaign). In his view, American voters are more attracted to

strong personalities than policies; of course, the best possible challenger would wed a magnetic personality with sound and socially beneficial policies. Altschuler also attempted a brief explanation of Trump's appeal: to his voters he represents strength, authenticity, opposition to political correctness, an "America first" attitude, and—most importantly—an anti-establishment and anti-elite image. He closed his talk by outlining two possible scenarios for the President going forward. First, the Mueller investigation could continue picking up speed, but there will likely be no indictment on Trump; however, Democrats could use any damaging information that comes out to inundate the administration with even more subpoena, records, and testimony requests. Second, the anomalously long-lasting sunny economic situation (which has not translated into a high Presidential approval rating) could end in a recession in late 2019 or as the campaign heats up in early 2020. Altschuler predicted that this would force an embattled Trump to abandon his re-election campaign. Why? He can't stand the possibility that he could lose.

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**Mariam Durrani, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Hamilton College**  
*Weaponization of Whiteness*

The 2018 Election Series concluded with a lunch discussion led by Assistant Professor of Anthropology Mariam Durrani on “the Weaponization of White Identity Politics in the 2018 Election.” Durrani began by describing her main areas of study, which includes immigration and the discourse around it; in the wake of this year’s midterms, she said, we can see talk of “immigration” as a clear “proxy for something else” in the country’s discourse in the news, social media, and political rhetoric. As she sees the emergent trends, Durrani proposes that this “something else” is the activation and mobilization of a systemic white identity politics that has historically been present in this country, but is becoming more conscious of its status as a type of identity, instead of as an unself-reflective and taken-for-granted normal baseline for political discourse. The term “identity politics” was first coined by the Combahee River Collective, an organization of black feminist women, in their 1974 statement wherein they described the “interlocking systems of oppression” around race, class, gender, and sexuality and called for a strategy of deriving political discourse and action from one’s own identity—the idea being to reveal and combat how these interlocking systems operate by highlighting their repressive effects along different axes and vectors of identification. The goal is to empower all marginalized people to be perceived as fully human, which these systems of oppression implicitly deny through the limits they impose and the practical rights they prohibit from their subjects based on their Otherness. Durrani then moved on to show how this radical feminist project and tactic for the liberation of marginalized people has been co-opted and appropriated into colorblind racism and reverse racism, which both take as their central axiom the assertion that racism ended with the dismantling of Jim Crow Laws and the passages of the Voting and Civil Rights Acts. This attitude was brought out by Trump at a press conference when Yamiche Alcindor, a reporter for PBS and a black woman, asked him about his self-characterization as a “nationalist” and how that relates to white-nationalist sentiments and movements in America—she was prevented from finishing her question, loudly interrupted by a dismissive “that’s a racist question.” We can clearly see the pervasiveness of racial thought in the current administration, and this situation shows how the appropriation of identity politics allows white men to feel aggrieved, while cementing the status of non-whites as “only conditionally Americans.” Durrani has also noticed a trend of misinformation and fear-mongering that (in both rhetoric and policy) has subsumed many socio-economic issues (like immigration, crime, poverty, etc.) under a nebulous idea of national security, as well as the disturbing trend of “Both Sides-ism” most evident in the administration’s response to Charlottesville.

Turning to the media, Durrani pointed to the massive spike in ads about immigration during the 2018 midterms, as well as the news media’s unwillingness to move beyond assessing the effectiveness of this alarming rhetoric, while stressing that the media should instead engage in a more productive moral critique. She went on to discuss *Deep Roots*, which explores the pervasive and damaging impact of slavery on southern politics, economics, and society. Strikingly, *Deep Roots* points out how chattel slavery became most engrained in areas where mineral and soil deposits from glaciers led to soil rich enough for cash crops like cotton and tobacco—slavery is literally tied to the soil of the American South. These same areas now have some of the highest poverty and incarceration rates in the nation. This led to a brief concluding thought on how a white male mass murderer like Dylan Roof was taken for a burger on the way to jail verses how completely unthinkable that would be for a black man who did far less—or even nothing—wrong highlights just how misguided it is to believe in the end of American racism or some systematic “reverse racism.”

## 2018-2019 Speakers

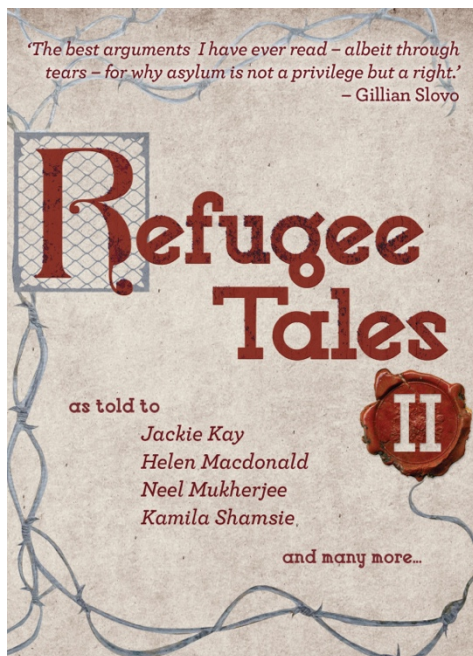
**Neda Maghbouleh, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto**  
*The Limits of Whiteness*

Assistant Professor of Anthropology Mariam Durrani invited Professor Neda Maghbouleh to lead this lunch discussion in the Levitt Center Conference Room to outline her current research and recently published book, *The Limits of Whiteness*. Maghbouleh conducted a five-year field study of Iranian-American teenagers, observing the dynamics of their childhood

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homes and paying close attention to both the parents' racial ideologies and the teens' individual choices and experiences. Maghbouleh observed a generational split: when teens were bullied with racial slurs associated with Arabs, and their parents (raised under the Shah's [at the peak of a decades-long current] Iranian/Aryan supremacy and erasure of internal ethnic specificity to consolidate power) would say, "well, tell them Iranians are the original white people." The teens, however, realize there is something wrong with this: they don't fully experience themselves as "white," and see no reason to thus identify or push white supremacy. This split continued as many went off to college and experienced subtle institutional racialization, and was further complicated as many took trips to visit Iran in hopes of re-discovering their roots, but found out that many Iranians considered them too American, whereas in America they were consistently othered as too Iranian. Maghbouleh also embedded for two years as a counselor at a summer camp where Iranian youth were guided to critically investigate and reinvent their identities in a space that would accept and encourage cross-cultural exploration and racial ambiguity. During the Q&A session following her talk, Maghbouleh clarified why she believes Iranians have not had the same prosperous outcomes and levels of assimilation as similar immigrant groups like the East and South Asian communities. This, she argues, is due to the odd liminal whiteness of Iranian-Americans, whose identity has been rendered unstable by a series of exogenous shocks have changed American society's perception of them, like the American Embassy in Tehran hostage crisis from 1979-1981 and Iran's connection to the bombing of US barracks during the Lebanese Civil War. Furthermore, recent events like the September 11th attacks and the WTC and USS Cole bombings before it have colored many people's opinions of Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent in general (even though the Iranian government, much less its people or émigrés, had nothing to do with these acts). This tension and feeling of being other has fostered radical artistic and political activity among younger Iranian-Americans; post-Muslim ban, this precariousness of their white identity has kept even older Iranians open to interracial solidarity with Latinx, Arab, and other marginalized groups. Many of the teens Professor Maghbouleh studied have gone on to work as political activists and legal advocates for immigrant rights.

## David Herd and Anna Pincus *Refugee Tales Workshops*



Anna Pincus and David Herd led a discussion on their organization Refugee Tales, which aims to collect the stories of undocumented immigrants in the UK to educate the public and advocate for the end of indefinite detention of migrants. The talk included a reading from *Refugee Tales II* telling the story of a 60-year-old migrant who had spent half his life working in the UK and was awoken by border agents late at night, handcuffed and taken to the police station without the chance to gather his paperwork or helpful evidence. The man was held without trial for three years. Detentions of this kind can last up to nine years; in 2017, 27,000 people were held in removal centers scattered across the country. Detainees experience byzantine obstacles in the way of gaining their freedom: pervasive lack of legal representation, manipulation by the court, and regulations implemented to prevent them from proving their eligibility for citizenship. Pincus laid out the immediate justification for the project thus: "People come to the UK to seek sanctuary and they find themselves in indefinite detention. In such a hostile and dehumanizing environment, just being a listener is a revolutionary act. People felt invisible, like their stories weren't being heard. We had to find some way of responding to that need." To spread the stories, the group takes inspiration from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, walking through the countryside and sharing the

stories they hear from people with direct experience of the UK asylum system with communities throughout the country. In this way they can make refugees, migrants, and detainees more visible and real to people who may not give them a second (or first) thought by intimately communicating the lived experiences of migrants and what indefinite detention means for all people in the system—especially how it can affect the lives of innocent people. Herd remarked that he sees

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the project as “reclaim[ing] the landscape of England.” Summarizing the impact of the stories themselves on positive political change, Pincus said that “the visceral power of the tale does the work for us: it’s a tool for us to have conversations with parliamentarians [that] shows the deep and transformative power in the simple act of sharing stories.”

**Robert Freeman, JD**

***Government Transparency in 2019: Meaningful or Meaningless?***

Robert Freeman, Director of the New York State Committee on Open Government, returned to Hamilton for the second time to host an informal lunch discussion on his experiences working to help citizens access information about the operations of state government. He began the discussion by saying he has “the best job in state government” ensuring public access to government information through legal advice and publicly available guides to filing freedom of information requests, as well as helping citizens know their rights while attending public meetings and court proceedings. As Director, Freeman has overseen the writing of around 25,000 legal opinions in these areas. While the Federal Freedom of Information Act has been emulated by around 100 other nations and every US state has some version of the FOIA, only a handful of states have dedicated government agencies for helping citizens understand the process of filing FOI requests. The way the NYSCOG is set up, Freeman has been “blessed with independence” through his office’s close relationship to news media, which protects him from the Governor’s office interfering. Most of his decisions are based on “common sense:” he asks himself what would happen when the government discloses a piece of information—if there’s no harm incurred to the public or upon an individual citizen, it should be released. Of course, the only way this philosophy can work in practice is through the absence of political pressure. Since he started as Director of the NYSCOG under Mario Cuomo, Freeman sees the internet as a potentially dangerous factor that could erode privacy and become a way to exercise soft power over arrestees, for example through unwarranted disclosure of arrests. These problems are complicated by the fact that the right to privacy in the US is not protected constitutionally it is a statutory right based on court precedents and legislation passed throughout the country’s history. The widespread adoption of the internet may give us a reason to expand our definition of a “public record:” public officials and police departments deleting social media comments is a first amendment issue and illustrates that we might need to reconceptualize government pages as virtual open meetings. Freeman also cautioned against an indiscriminately positive view of information coming out of government: we ought to consider whether the disclosed information is pushed out by the agency, and thus something they want the public to know, or pulled out by freedom of information requests, which can indicate that it’s something the government would rather keep hidden.

**Professor Quincy Newell, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Hamilton College**

***The Story of Jane***

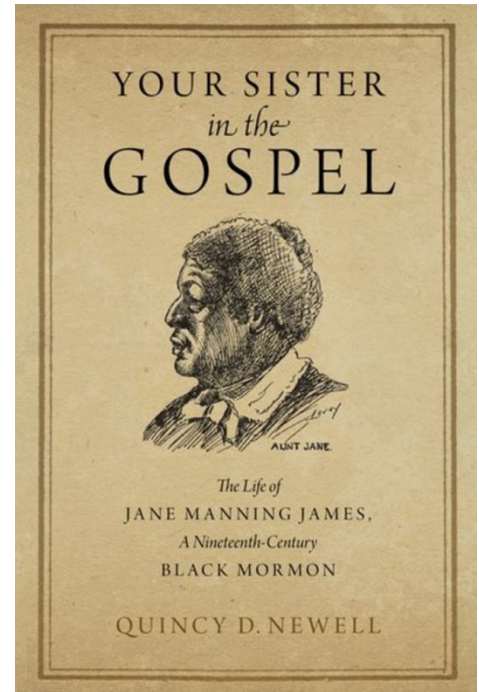
On the day her new book, *Your Sister in the Gospel*, officially appeared in stores, Professor Quincy Newell presented a talk on the book’s subject, Jane Manning James. Newell was drawn to Manning James’ story because it complicates our typical historical narratives of African-Americans, women, religion, and the American West. Our contemporary reading of 18th Century history charts a path of liberation for African-Americans and women and their ties to American religion—Manning James, through her commitment to Mormonism despite its prohibition of full participation of women and African-Americans, seems to make a journey from freedom (she was born free in Connecticut) to a form of “slavery” in the socially conservative and regressive Latter-Day Saint movement. After a short time living as a servant to a wealthy white family and looking for something more than was offered at the New Canaan Congregational Church, Manning James wrote that she was “fully convinced” by a missionary of the superiority of the Mormon Gospel.

Mormonism is usually depicted as a story of white men, with good reason: black people were excluded from the most important positions and rituals: priesthood authority (from which women are still barred) and access to the Temple. However, Jane’s story highlights the often-neglected side of Mormonism which celebrates direct experience of the Divine. She believed she could perform healings, experienced vivid visions, and spoke in tongues—these were accepted parts of early Mormonism that balanced the “privileged truth” (or doctrine) of the Temple leadership. Through this lens we can



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better understand why Mormonism would appeal to someone excluded from the Temple: Jane found a movement that would accept and celebrate her spiritual gifts and energy and a way to see her story as parallel to Joseph Smith's, whom she lived with in Illinois before his assassination. Manning James never participated in any social reform movement to further women's rights: she focused her energy on being a "good Mormon woman," and despite being pious, involving herself heavily in the community, and raising eight children, she was never fully accepted. She was given a patriarchal blessing from John Smith (nephew of Joseph) that reassured her she would be a "Mother in Israel," the highest status in the community women could achieve. But the white supremacist attitude of the Church community prevented her from being perceived as anything other than someone with a "checkered past," a prejudice against black people reinforced by her first son, who was conceived out of wedlock. She was eventually granted the honorific "Aunt Jane," but historical evidence suggests that this was not the typical application of the title: in Manning James' case, it was used to mark her subservient role, rather than celebrate her as a pious and important full member of the community. It was a nominally "inclusive" gesture that pointed out her otherness. After the death of Brigham Young, an inveterate racist, Jane Manning James petitioned repeatedly to be spiritually adopted by Joseph Smith, who she claimed had personally offered an adoption to her before his death. Being sealed to your family members is extremely important in Mormonism: it ensures that your family will be together for eternity and there is a direct connection between kinship relations and salvation. Hundreds of white women have been sealed to be daughters of Smith, but Jane was refused this honor, and hence her salvation. The compromise the Mormon leadership developed for African-American Mormons was that they would be eternal "angels," which everyone understood to really be an eternal servant. Manning James was also sealed to Smith explicitly as a "servitor" to the Prophet without her knowledge or consent (as she was not allowed into the Temple). She saw this as progress, but not enough. In 1979, this sealing was undone and Manning James was endowed and sealed to her family. The importance of family to Mormon theology brings up new questions of religion, gender, and race in America.



**Michael Klosson '71**

***The Global Refugee Crisis: Millions Left Behind, States Failing in their Responsibilities, What to Do***

Two-time visiting Linowitz Professor Michael Klosson '71 addressed students, faculty, and staff about his work with Save the Children, an international NGO whose mission is to alleviate the suffering of children in regions experiencing crises. Klosson began by describing how his 27 years in the Foreign Service and time as ambassador to various countries prepared him to better understand the dynamics of the very dissimilar countries he works in now. To head off being lost in the statistics and the worry that "numbers numb" us to the reality of these refugee crises, Klosson presented the stories of families and children in various camps he's visited. He described the "everydayness" of the dreams of Rohingya children and parents in Cox's Bazar, where 700,000 refugees live in makeshift towns. Fathers insisted that their children—after their two-hour school day dictated by limited space and resources—immediately do their homework; when asked, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" the kids gave answers like teacher or doctor, despite the trauma and desperate want they've experienced. A huge facet of Klosson's concerns when working with Save the Children is that there must always be a vision and plan to promote refugee children's futures through education and other means beyond their immediate basic needs in times of crisis. After personalizing the phenomenon in this way, Klosson went into the numbers: 68.5 million people are currently displaced, 25.4 million of those are refugees, 10-15 years is the average time of displacement (meaning this crisis will not go away anytime soon), and 2 people are displaced every minute. After this description of the scope of the crisis, Klosson went into some of its driving factors: conflict and repression, ethnic cleansing, and—increasingly—climate change and related environmental problems which heighten already dire circumstances by

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adding famines and loss of homes and livelihoods. The world can alleviate the suffering caused by these dire circumstances mainly by mobilizing resources for organizations like Save the Children; \$25 billion dollars has been requested by the United Nations, but only 40-45% of this request has been raised. Save the Children uses its resources to address many facets: from providing for nutritional needs and helping refugees find new ways to earn livelihoods (thus helping them preserve some independence and the sense of dignity it gives them) to providing child-friendly spaces for kids to play and for specialists to assess and work toward healing trauma. Not-so-directly, Klosson called for global political leadership to stop conflicts and help people who are already displaced: this includes a full follow-through on the UN's "Global Compact on Refugees," which pledges to commit resources and organize better systems for refugees to be placed in schools and jobs. Another improvement could be brought about by strengthening local capacity and infrastructure, so that emergencies will not so easily overwhelm countries without adequate resources to address them. Finally, Klosson emphasized the need for humanitarian organizations to collaborate with development actors to provide more long-term solutions for the refugee crisis and raise the potential for recovery and resilience in affected countries.

**Marc Randolph '80**

***Social Impact and Leadership***

Hamilton alumnus and co-founder of Netflix Marc Randolph '80 visited campus and hosted a discussion in the Levitt Center for students, faculty, and staff. The discussion focused on his experiences in start-up companies and consulting as well as in working with social ventures and non-profits. Randolph began by talking about the difficulties he had separating his for-profit thinking from his non-profit work and realizing that they are very different worlds, especially that social innovation puts a higher emphasis on what's changeable instead of encouraging paradigm-shifting ideas. He started his non-profit work investigating the factors that help first-generation college students succeed, and now works primarily with 1% For The Planet and the National Outdoor Leadership School. The former certifies companies financially committed to helping the environment by donating one percent of their sales to environmental causes, what they call an "earth tax." NOLS, headquartered in Lander, WY, teaches courses in outdoor skills, wilderness medicine, and environmental ethics in expeditions and traditional classroom settings. Most attendees' questions centered on his work at Netflix and getting a start-up off the ground, but Randolph did address the difference between start-up and traditional non-profit organizations' institutional rigidity and resistance to change: nonprofits are more answerable to major donors and other NGOs or government agencies, whereas start-ups have much more freedom and flexibility in their approaches to problems and establishment of a distinct corporate culture, especially in their early days. He also talked about his two guiding principles when consulting: "innovate or die" and to always ask "who is this for?"—the first establishes a dynamic corporate culture, the latter focuses the company on who they are serving. Randolph also keeps in mind a Jeff Bezos saying, that there are two-way doors and one-way doors: most decisions can be tested on a small scale, and then rolled

back if they are counter-productive. Many start-ups work this way, constantly testing and cycling up new models, whereas more traditional companies treat decisions as always irrevocable and are wary of trying out new ideas in practice. He also discussed Netflix's work culture, comparing it to a sports team, rather than a family—everyone is expected to contribute as much as possible and be competitive—and the importance of establishing and sticking to a business culture, so businesses can foster authenticity and trust with staff and customers. Randolph also encouraged a student who asked how to get started with a new business to start working on building the business or starting a smaller venture now, saying "it never gets easier to start than right now."



*Randolph '80 talking  
to Hamilton students*

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**Everita Silina, Assistant Professor of International Affairs at the New School for Social Research**  
***Topography of Europe's Refugee 'Crisis:' Politics and Social Relations Along the Balkan Route***

Everita Silina, Assistant Professor of International Affairs at the New School, delivered a talk about her experiences traveling with her students on the route refugees and migrants take into Europe from Turkey. This route runs from the Aegean islands of Greece, starting with Lesbos, to the Greek mainland, then winds through the Balkan nations of Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kosovo. She described the often-horrific conditions in some of the five “hotspot” Greek islands where refugees are held while their asylum requests are processed, a situation developing out of a desire to try and preserve the tourist industry upon which the island economies and the Greek economy rely. On the hotspots, asylum requests for Syrian refugees are prioritized, while others are held in limbo for up to a year before having their requests approved or being told to return to their homeland or be forcibly deported to Turkey. This is all part of Greece's Externalization Policy that keeps refugees out of the country until their asylum is granted, like the early-90s detainment of Haitian refugees by the US at Gitmo. Silina also highlighted the route's historic role as one of the oldest migration routes in Europe: Odysseus' island-hopping journey, St. Paul's missionary travels through the region, influxes of people during the Crusades, and the huge displacements of Muslim and Christian populations during Ottoman wars, rule, and final collapse of the Empire in 1923. Professor Silina emphasized the group's focus on investigating the “topography” of the crisis, namely how structures and spaces are used and undergo change, as well as how these spaces influence migrants and the communities around them. She illustrated her profound understanding of the dynamics of space and peoples on the Balkan Route with a slideshow of pictures she and her students took throughout the journey. Other problems have emerged as well. Not only are inter-ethnic tensions high in camps, but in many Balkan nations there is an antagonistic relationship between citizens and NGOs—the citizens wonder why NGOs aren't concerned with their plight, so money for refugees will often be partially redirected to unrelated projects, and city governments sometimes anger their residents by funding refugee relief instead of helping the austerity-stricken locals.

**Michelle D. Schenandoah, JD & LL.M**

***Samuel Kirkland Birthday Lunch: “Rematriation and the Journey of an Oneida Woman”***

At the 4th annual commemoration of Samuel Kirkland's birthday, Michelle D. Schenandoah—member of the Wolf Clan of the Oneida Indian Nation—gave a lecture on her journey as an Oneida woman and her current project, *Rematriation Magazine*. Organized by the Shenandoah-Kirkland Initiative and the Chaplaincy and sponsored by the Levitt Center and other campus organizations, this community lunch celebrated Kirkland's vision to connect with Haudenosaunee culture and the Oneida people. She began her talk by describing who she is, which means knowing where she is coming from: her great-grandmother brought the original Oneida Land Claim forward, her late grandmother Maisie Schenandoah was an Oneida Nation Wolf Clan Mother, and her mother is the Oneida Nation Faithkeeper Diane Schenandoah. She is also descended from Chief Skenandoa, Samuel Kirkland's friend and Revolutionary Oneida general interred in the Hamilton Cemetery. Growing up as the child of Oneida leadership, Schenandoah attended Land Claim meetings, and was struck by how the room went respectfully silent when the attorney came in the room: this early experience stuck with her and she eventually graduated from New York Law School with a JD and LL.M in taxation, and continued to live and work in NYC. One morning she was in a car accident while bringing her son to school and sustained a concussion that prevented her from working for two years. Her injuries made her unable to plan and bring back certain memories, but eventually she realized that this opened new possibilities. She started serving as the president of the board of directors of the Seven Dancers Coalition, an organization for indigenous professionals all over New York State. One day, she pitched an idea she'd been thinking of for a while. While commuting on the subway, she had noticed other women reading magazines catering to their racial or ethnic identity and began asking herself where a magazine for indigenous women was. The three focuses of *Rematriation Magazine* Schenandoah outlined are to reclaim identity, change the narrative around indigenous women, and accomplish these two goals by creating a space for them to tell their own stories. To Haudenosaunee women, rematriation means “Returning the Sacred to the Mother,” which Schenandoah sees as an avenue to address intergenerational trauma and bring indigenous communities back together: Haudenosaunee society is heavily matrilineal,

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like most Native American tribes, so the disempowerment and abuse of women directly damages their communities. Recently, this new platform for indigenous women's voices has led to a discussion sparked by and running parallel to the broader "#metoo" phenomenon. In their conversations (some of which can be found at [rematriation.com/metoo](http://rematriation.com/metoo)), their focus has been on how to deal with sexual violence as a community, and this means coming to terms with the idea that "abusers are people we love: fathers, brothers, elders." To address the symptoms of intergenerational trauma—including epidemics of suicide, substance abuse, child and sexual abuse, and hopelessness—Schenandoah highlighted the power of indigenous women to connect back to the land and strengthen their communities by re-embracing their traditional role of working to bring back and preserve communal bonds. She ended her talk with a call for Hamilton to reach out to the Oneidas, whose land Hamilton College stands on, and work to establish scholarships and build trust for Oneida and Haudenosaunee students. She recommended always keeping in mind as Hamilton community members walk on campus that their relationship to Oneida land should extend to the Oneida people.

**Kyle Bass**

***Made out of the Past: Slavery, Creative Imagination, and the Writing of "Possessing Harriet"***

Associate Artistic Director for Syracuse Stage, Burke Endowed Chair for Regional Studies at Colgate, and playwright Kyle Bass spoke at Hamilton's third annual Gerrit Smith (BA 1818) Birthday Celebration to describe his writing and production process for "Possessing Harriet," a play set in Smith's Peterboro house. This event was co-sponsored by the Levitt Center, COOP, Chaplaincy, Writing Center, and Days-Massolo Center.

Bass introduced his talk's specific focus as analyzing his own journey as a playwright who tasked himself with "inventing" historical figures as fully-formed characters, clarifying his idea of "making out of the past" as crafting something new out of what is at hand—in this case, crafting it out of historical facts. He later elucidated on this notion by likening historical facts to a "ribcage" which serves as the structure for a greater, richer truth. Bass portrayed himself as something of a mediating element between history and stage: he transforms the historical facts and records about Gerrit Smith or Elizabeth Cady Stanton into the characters "Gerrit Smith" and "Elizabeth Cady Stanton." This is a way to undo history's tendency to elevate these figures above their humanity, obscuring the complications and emotions which drove and influenced them. Bass also discussed his own motivations and personal connection to this story. The broadest motivation for the play is to address slavery, to which the history, present and future of the US is deeply tied, and "uncover what shapes us" by dramatizing slavery and the individual and collective struggles against it.

Bass's personal connection comes through his maternal great-great-grandfather: Toliver Holmes, who escaped from slavery in 1863 and—in the "mythical memory" of his family—rested under a tree, awoke to a snake slithering onto his head, and ran for three nights until he reached the foothills of the Adirondacks. Holmes summarized this ordeal as "my feet carried me most of the way, God carried me the rest," which is still a saying in Bass' family when they meet each other after a long trip. While Holmes never even learned to read or write his name, his legacy in the family was secured by his actions: soon after his escape to the North, he enlisted in the Union Army—probably to liberate his still-enslaved parents. To symbolize his place in the creative vision of the play and physically place Bass's family history in the setting, a photograph of Holmes in his uniform was placed in an open drawer on set. The cast and crew, according to Bass, drew tremendous inspiration from the inclusion of this photo on set, reminding them with a real presence the struggles and history they were dramatizing. Considering his family and American society as a whole's (unfinished) confrontation with the evils of slavery and racism, Bass considered it "obscenely and criminally irresponsible not to write" a work that would allow the "past [to] tell us something about our present." To sum up the play, Bass described it as "driven by Smith's idealism," but also his place as the drama's "complicated moral center." All in all, "Possessing Harriet" is a play encouraging us to examine how we and those before us have subjectively seen and told our own history.



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**Tatyana “Peuo” Tuy**

***Past, Present, and Future Refugee Experience in America***

On the evening of April 5th, Tatyana “Peuo” Tuy visited Hamilton and gave a presentation and public reading. Tuy is a Cambodian-American spoken word poet, activist, creative workshop leader, and founder of the Cambodian-American Literary Arts Association; she is the author of the poetry book *Khmer Girl* and will have another poetry collection published soon. She was born during the last year of the genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge and was brought with her family as they walked for three or four days to the Thai border to flee the regime and invading Vietnamese Army. During their four-year journey to the US, Tuy’s family lived in refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines and eventually settled in Lowell, Massachusetts, which has the second-largest Cambodian community in the US.

Like many other families, Tuy’s did not escape the genocide intact: one of her sisters, two of her brothers, and most of her aunts and uncles were unable to leave Cambodia. Tuy asked the audience what the difference between a refugee and an immigrant is; a student answered that refugees are forced by external forces or circumstances to flee, while immigrants voluntarily seek out a new life and opportunities in another country. First generation immigrants and refugees often go through an experience like Tuy’s, who described her desire to be “an American-only girl.” Combined with the gang violence, PTSD, and teen pregnancy she saw in her community and dealing with her own trauma, this desire to be “American” led to periods of depression and self-hate manifesting itself in Tuy bleaching her skin—a disturbing phenomenon still going on in much of Southeast Asia and India. To combat these feelings, she adopted a philosophy of positivity: appreciating the beauty of the ocean and her ability to visit her family still in Cambodia and embracing her body and identity. Writing poetry gave her an avenue for re-evaluating her experience as both Cambodian and Cambodian-American.

She concluded her presentation with readings and brief explanations of some of her poems, the first of which was “Her Story Begins . . . in the Land of the Killing Fields,” a nightmarish and fractured dream-poem about the killing fields. Next, Tuy read “The First Decades of the Diaspora Experience,” which conveyed her affinity for and participation in hip-hop culture, as well as describing the violence and trauma in the poorer parts of Lowell and how hip-hop helps people deal with that trauma. “On Our Living Room Floor” is a poem based on three nested flashbacks which capture the culture clash



Tuy and her siblings experienced when transitioning from their public-school days to their evening home life, where their mother insisted on speaking Khmer and wearing sarongs, and her parents’ efforts to insure they remained in touch with Cambodian culture. This poem also captured her feelings of rebellion but also a sensitivity to the quiet way her parents alluded to their lives before Year Zero and the profound sense of loss they felt, and led into “American-Only Girl” dramatizing Tuy’s early sense of needing to fully assimilate into American culture and frustration with her Cambodian heritage. Perhaps her most moving poems were dedicated to mother and her late father: “My Revolutionary Mama” expresses her appreciation for all her mother taught her and her efforts to preserve a connection to their culture, while “Hasbro Neon Lite-Brites”—written after her father’s death—imagines another dimension where her family can be reunited watching early morning cartoons, playing, and being open and honest about their lives, something her taciturn father found difficult while he was still alive.

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## **Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul and Empire Fellow Monique Owens** ***2019 Women's Justice Agenda Forum***

Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul and Empire Fellow Monique Owens visited Hamilton as a part of their state-wide tour presenting the 2019 New York State Women's Justice Agenda to college campuses. Hochul introduced the forum by quickly detailing the history of the struggle for women's rights in New York State, the birthplace of the women's rights movement and an important meeting place for abolitionists and civil rights activists. Despite this history, Hochul went on to detail that there is much more to do. The Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which would guarantee equal protection of gender under federal law, has not yet been ratified—

there is a serious need for citizen pressure to move policies forward. Under the current administration, states must run along parallel tracks to better protect women's rights and cannot depend on the federal government to correct states who are lagging. The NYS Women's Justice Agenda is working to analyze and approach persistent issues in a systematic way, particularly through economic and healthcare policy. They aim to address the gender pay gap by prohibiting employers from asking about workers' previous salary, supporting access to child care, promoting opportunities for women to have high-paying jobs, and expanding family leave. The Women's Justice Agenda will also be focused on reducing maternal mortality, preventing domestic violence and harassment, and addressing the many institutional problems which produce the violence against women the #metoo movement has revealed.



## **Natalia Arno** ***Human Rights and Democracy in Russia***

While visiting Hamilton, Founder of the Free Russia Foundation Natalia Arno spent time with Professor Sharon Rivera's Govt 112W class and held a lecture in the Red Pit. Her discussion with the class focused on specific issues relating to authoritarian states' uses of propaganda, while her later lecture detailed her own experience working to promote democracy in Russia and the current state of human rights in Russia. She presented three topics to the class which opened a spirited debate—whether universities should de-platform high-profile foreign journalists who disseminate state-sponsored propaganda, if foreign news organizations that are at least partially state-run or -founded should be required to register themselves as foreign agents, and whether libel and defamation laws should be strengthened to guard against the spread of disinformation about public figures by foreign propagandists. These three propositions highlight the contentious intersection of protecting speech with the dangers presented by the new ease and speed with which (dis)information can be disseminated around the world. While these complicated issues were not completely settled, one student—Michael Spicer—observed that “Arno left the students with a very powerful message: ‘Don’t take democracy and freedom for granted; people in Russia are ready to die for them.’” This workshop was developed and moderated by four students working in Prof. Rivera's Human Rights Lab, operating with Levitt Center support: Antton De Arbeloa '21, Maya Figliuolo '21, Savannah Kelly '21, and Diana Perez '21.

Ms. Arno's lecture later in the day, “Human Rights and Democracy in Russia,” began with Arno engaging directly with the audience, asking them what they know about Russia, eliciting responses ranging from Tolstoy and Russian Ballet to a long history of authoritarianism and the popularity of tracksuits. She, in turn, listed some of the most common things Russians think of when asked about America: the American flag, burgers, the Pentagon, Uncle Sam, and Hollywood. Arno spoke to

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her own desire to be proud of Russian culture and not have Russia's image abroad marred by its government's practices. She also mentioned how her work has changed; when she first visited the US in 2006, Russia was not a focus of American foreign policy, but today her foundation is being consulted more and more by US government and non-governmental institutions. To contextualize her lecture, Arno pointed out that Russia is nominally a Federal Presidential Constitutional Republic, just like the US, and that democratic norms like rule of law, free elections, freedom of speech/religion/press, and checks and balances don't function the same way in Russia as they do in the US. Investigating the failures of these institutions means looking at what Russia has become today: a centralized and authoritarian oligarchy where around 200 people (Putin and his circle) hold complete governmental and economic power. For five years, the opposition party has been denied participation in elections; Arno cited a particularly flagrant instance where 130% of signatures for an opposition politician's petition were invalidated. Russia is also ranked 149th in the world for press freedom, with recent Duma bills threatening to isolate Russian citizens' Internet from the rest of the world. Rampant corruption also infects every part of life and gets in the way of projects to improve Russian politics and society. Considering this clearly undemocratic situation, many Russians ask themselves, "why is Putin seen as legitimate abroad?" Arno's personal interest in human rights and democracy was sparked by an incident in her own life: her grandmother suffered a stroke, but the ambulance drivers who answered their emergency call refused to take her to the hospital without a bribe.

Eventually, she became involved with the International Republican Institute and travelled across Russia, from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok, leading workshops to train people as activists for democracy: this resulted in her being labeled a CIA/State Department asset by Russian media. Shortly after Putin's 2012 "return" to power, Arno came home to two FSB agents outside her door who held her at gunpoint and told her she had 48 hours to leave Russia or she would face 20 years in prison. By the next day, she had sent her son on a plane to Oregon and was on her way to Lithuania. She has continued



her work on exposing Russia's mafia state in Lithuania and Poland, and then here in the US through the Free Russia Foundation. She closed her remarks with a reminder that ethnic, gender and sexual, and religious minorities are those most under threat in Putin's Russia and her insight on the perennial question asked by Chernyshevsky and Lenin, "What is to be done?" Russians will need to build their own democracy, establish values, and go after criminal behavior—Americans can help by staying informed and engaged with the political process, as well as hold Western firms accountable for their work with and defense of Russian oligarchs. Russians and Americans must both have the conviction to stand on their own principles, above all.

**Professor James Angel**

***New Innovations in Financial Markets and the Policy Stakes: Cryptocurrencies and Beyond***

James Angel, Associate Professor at Georgetown's McDonough School of Business, delivered a lecture focused on the development and potential of cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology for finance. Opening the talk, Angel described the explosion of cryptocurrencies that came shortly after "Satoshi Nakamoto" published a paper detailing the blockchain technology that became Bitcoin, their continuing volatility, and pointing toward some of the public policy questions that emerge from the blockchain's existence and increasing popularity for innovations in financial technology. Angel made the case that the rise of cryptocurrencies was made possible by the 2008 financial crisis and resulting lack of trust in institutions: the appeal of the blockchain is that it does not require a trusted third-party intermediary as its distributed ledger technology creates an open and public log of all transactions. Bitcoin addressed two problems for a digital currency: how to pay for goods or services electronically without a trusted intermediary like a traditional bank and without "double spending"—creating a new copy of the sent code, which defeats the purpose of payment. This open ledger works through "miners," computers with dedicated processing power for verifying transactions. Each verification produces a small chunk of the Bitcoin code, through which a whole coin can be claimed through "a nonce," a proof-of-work protocol where



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computers guess a random number. Bitcoin also has a built-in anti-inflationary mechanism, although it is in the end a solely arbitrary limit of 21 million Bitcoins with a programmed slow-down in the rate of transactions over time. These factors are what make cryptocurrency revolutionary: it allows a system of completely decentralized verification (a “trust protocol”) through a public registry, which opens new possibilities for transparency and efficiency in many applications. After the explosion of blockchain technologies, two main types have developed: utility tokens, which buy a service or good, and security tokens, which establish partial ownership in a venture. After laying out the basics of blockchain and cryptocurrency technologies, Angel described the current use cases for Bitcoin 1.0 and their drawbacks. As a payment mechanism, Bitcoin is clunky and slow, since it is limited to seven transactions a second and this presents problems for scalability. As a store of value, it is too volatile and the idea of micropayments (monetizing the internet on the consumer’s end) is not viable, since no one wants to pay more for access to content. Remittances paid across borders are hindered by the “last-mile problem,” the complicated process of converting Bitcoin to traditional currency. These drawbacks have led to many viable competitors like Ethereum, Ripple, Monero, and Litecoin, and even some parodies like Dogecoin.

The proliferation of cryptocurrencies has highlighted the importance of financial regulation of the sector to protect consumers, prevent fraud, mitigate systemic risk, promote growth, and work to achieve social goals like financial inclusion and environmental concerns. Perhaps the most immediate problem emerging from cryptocurrencies as they exist now is the immense amount of energy used by miners. 4.3 gigawatts of power is required to run the proof-of-work protocols cryptominers use; a large nuclear reactor produces 1 GW of power, and even if miners’ primary source of energy is renewable or carbon-neutral, their exceptional rate of consumption necessitates other parts of power grids offsetting this consumption with carbon-emitting sources. This high rate of energy consumption could be mitigated by popularizing another mining protocol, such as proof-of-stake. Cryptocurrencies also present challenges to public safety: they facilitate the use of ransomware, drug- and human-trafficking, and the evasion of taxes and currency controls. Initial coin offering bubbles also have elicited hundreds of fraudulent offerings. Angel concluded by summarizing the policy choices regulators must address issues around cryptocurrencies: 1.) do nothing 2.) ban cryptocurrencies outright 3.) regulate through anti-laundering and “know your customer” rules 4.) accommodate crypto’s disruptiveness with regulatory sandboxes or 5.) supplant cryptocurrencies with an alternative created by the central bank. Prof. Angel predicts that the last option will be most common and most practical.

## **Prof. Papa Demba Fall**

### ***Migration and Entrepreneurship***

In this presentation over lunch, Prof. Papa Demba Fall of the Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar highlighted some of the misconceptions many Americans and Europeans hold about African migration and illustrated its actual dynamics by introducing his research into Senegalese patterns of migration and the philosophy of Senegal that underlies them. Contrary to conventional European and American belief, most African émigrés move to other African countries; in Senegal, around 80% of emigrants leave for another African country. Philosophically, Fall traces much of Senegalese expatriate mindset to the teachings of Mouridism—a pacifistic anti-imperialist order of Sufi Islam—and its founder Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, who called on Mourides to “make a tributary of all that is well-being and benefit of the heritage of the SIX coasts of the planet to my abode the blessed Touba [the Mourides’ holy city which the Cheikh founded].” This mindset centers Senegal as the homeland, but has developed into a philosophy of emigration emphasizing a “life shared between two spaces” where economic and religious





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cultures are exchanged and serve each other. Many African countries share a similar idea of immigration as a mutually beneficial exchange rather than as a burden on the “host” country: for example, Senegalese immigrants have been an invaluable boon to Mauritania, whose housing and infrastructure systems were underdeveloped due to lack of construction experience among the general population—experienced Senegalese construction workers filled this void. Fall also highlighted the tight-knit Little Senegal neighborhood in Harlem (across Morningside Park from Columbia University), which illustrates both the entrepreneurial spirit of Senegalese immigrants to the United States and their deep connection to their homeland. He summarized the Senegalese émigré mindset as “1.) the Homeland is the arena, 2.) Work as if you’ll never die, [and] 3.) Pray [to] God as if you’ll die tomorrow.”

**James Kahn, John F. Hendon Professor of Economics and Professor of Environmental Studies**  
***The Demise of Ecosystems: Economic Activity or Bad Policy?***

Professor James Kahn delivered a well-attended lecture that focused on his research into sustainable development, management of resources, and environmental economics. He prefaced his remarks by saying that much of his work at any one time is inspired by “fights I’m having or things I’m mad about;” currently, his ire is directed at zero-growth advocates, who believe that the best way to combat environmental damage and climate change is to reduce global economic growth as much as possible. He also pointed out that this difference in opinion is mirrored in an intra-party debate within the Democrats about the feasibility of being both pro-market and pro-environment. Prof. Kahn suggests that instead of aiming to reduce growth, we should use government policies to correct market failures that often are a result of rent-seeking, which is when someone tries only to increase their share in wealth, and not increasing the total amount of wealth in existence. All told, there are four intersecting avenues for addressing environmental concerns: public policy, a change in societal values, zero-growth, and a change in the balance of economic activity.

Changing the mix of economic investment in, say, fossil fuels vs. renewable energy is a complicated endeavor: the short-, medium-, and long-term consequences need to be considered. However, the current situation is “perverted:” there are exorbitant benefits for the very few, but the damage wrought is ultimately spread to the entire globe and disproportionately hurts lower-income people. The high cost of lobbying, widespread corruption, and subsidizations of large corporations has fueled this behavior in the US and abroad and led to serious environmental degradation with concomitant macroeconomic costs. Subsidized industrial production of corn in the South and Midwest and accompanying loss of wetlands and increased emissions have created the largest “dead zone” in the world—an area where oxygen levels in the ocean are too low to sustain life—in the Gulf of Mexico. The environmental degradation created by mountain removal coal mining practices was made possible by changing two words in the Clean Water Act: “waste” became “stone,” and “objective” became “result,” which allowed for the rampant dumping of waste into Appalachian waterways. The Mountain Valley Pipeline in West Virginia is another example of damaging rent-seeking behavior: there is no net benefit to the economy, it will result in raised prices on the consumers’ end, and it threatens the Allegheny and Blue Mountains, two National Forests, and the Shenandoah River.

This behavior is also international: the Aral Sea in between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan has almost dried up because of irrigation projects started before the fall of the USSR that have led to the Uzbek cotton industry to control the second largest monopoly in the world. Institutional/corporate corruption was partially responsible for the safety failures that caused the Fukushima nuclear disaster, while Guanabara Bay in Rio de Janeiro is full of raw sewage and garbage because the wealthy refuse to allow new taxes that would overhaul the sewage treatment system in the city, even though every dollar spent on sewage improvements reduces national healthcare costs by four dollars. Rent-seeking behavior and corruption have mutually reinforced this cycle: the economy is shrinking over all, so the wealthy possess a zero-sum mindset that says any resources not going to the rich are being actively taken away from them; corruption has made meaningful change impossible, especially because no one in the public trusts the government. In the long term, the world needs to change its value system to place environmental concerns over personal enrichment when the two interfere with each other.

# Public Scholarship

**Professor Ann Owen**

***Women in Economics & STEM***

Professor of Economics Ann Owen led a presentation and discussion in the Levitt Center about recent research on the causes and consequences of the under-representation of women in Economics and STEM fields. The overall message of her talk was that economics research into this phenomenon ought to begin devoting more energy to studying the role bias plays in under-representation. Usually, economic studies tend to make bias the last explanation for a phenomenon. The talk first described the explanations typically supplied by scholars, then illustrated how adding bias as a factor can enrich our understanding of under-representation, and finally how under-representation of women has an impact on Economics and STEM disciplines and on society.

The traditional explanations for under-representation of women in these fields fall into several categories—however, none of them fully explain it, and raise more questions. Prof. Owen began by describing how the fundamental, basic economic models simplify agents and environments so much that discrimination and bias are completely excluded as factors. In Econ 101, students are taught the “perfect competition” model in which the prices of labor and commodities are tied solely to their availability and demand; this model prevents agents within it from arbitrarily adjusting prices, which would translate to economic discrimination. This blind spot helps demonstrate how behavioral and psychological economics can enrich the field. There is also a problem with the culture of academic and professional environments dominated by men; Owen described an “expectation of brilliance,” where the implied question to women is “are you smart enough for this?” Due to our culture’s perception of genius or brilliance as a male trait (Prof. Owen used the Google image search for “genius” as an example), women going into interviews or workplaces where a “special aptitude” is considered necessary are held to a higher standard and their credentials are viewed with more skepticism. Owen also noted that women have greater grade sensitivity, which she has researched among Hamilton Econ students and found that the probability for female students to choose economics as their major jumps if they receive an A in their intro course. There is no such probability jump for male students. A major thread in the presentation proposed that implicit and explicit biases play a larger role in the under-representation of women than traditional economic research has acknowledged, and detailed what the long-term consequences of unaddressed under-representation of women in economics and STEM fields could be. Numerous studies have been conducted that back up the hypothesis that bias plays a role in the representation of women in STEM and Econ. Women and men are described in different ways by hiring personnel on internet forums, blind auditions for orchestras have increased the probability of women being given chairs by 20-30%, and researchers submitting identical applications to jobs found that applications with a masculine name were more likely to be contacted for an interview. There are biases against women in academic careers, as well: one study conducted two identical online courses—in one, the “instructor” had a woman’s name; in the other, the “instructor” had a man’s—found that the “male” instructor was evaluated by students as better and faster than its “female” counterpart.

Owen concluded by laying out why the under-representation of women in STEM and Econ matters and some potential costs that may attend trying to correct it. Under-representation imposes constraints on productivity and innovation: there has been a slowdown in STEM research productivity, which speaks to the need to have more people in the field. Women scholars in these fields also tend to have different research interests and policy preferences, which can allow for new directions of research and approaches. Diverse groups also have some inherent benefits: they have comparatively better problem-solving abilities, use their individual talents more efficiently, and have higher morale and better communication than homogenous teams. Prof. Owen also offered some strategies to encourage women getting involved in STEM and Econ: call out explicit bias, be aware of your own implicit biases, take more time filling out evaluations, reflect on the assumptions embedded in one’s field, promote a growth mindset (for example, substituting “just work hard” for “you have to be a genius”), and making effective use of active learning strategies like group learning in classrooms.

# Social Innovation

## Social Innovation 2019 Post-Graduate Fellowship

The Levitt Social Innovation Post-Graduate Fellowship provides funding to graduating seniors or recent graduates (Hamilton alumni who have graduated within three years) to develop and implement social innovation ventures that address persistent problems in disadvantaged communities. The projects may be implemented as a nonprofit, a socially directed for-profit enterprise, a new program connected with an existing organization, or some other appropriate model. We consider both national and international projects but give preference to projects implemented in Oneida or Herkimer counties. We also look for proposals that use novel approaches and that are scalable and sustainable.

### **Bridges to the Future** **Christina Florakis '19**

This year's Levitt Post-Graduate Social Innovation Fellow, Christina Florakis, is creating Bridges to the Future, an intervention program that is based on her senior thesis, which examined intra-group dynamics and how to promote intercultural understanding and perspectives through a combination of sociological and psychological techniques. Bridges to Future will apply her findings to improving communication between a country's citizens and newly-arrived refugees from different cultures. One key avenue to facilitating intercultural understanding could be through Florakis' plan to create a new youth program that will invite local and refugee youth to participate in group discussions and community service projects in a spirit of equality. If this youth program proves to increase group cohesion and identity, help with integration efforts, and decrease prejudice—as Florakis predicts—she plans to partner with an NGO to continue the program. This project has a personal connection for Florakis, too: her paternal grandmother fled Greece as a refugee, and the opportunity to help people in a similar position is very meaningful.

The Post-Graduate Social Innovation Fellowship is something of a capstone for Florakis' time at Hamilton serving others and helping the community. As a first year, she participated in the Levitt Leadership Institute, was a Social Innovation Fellow during her sophomore year and co-founded the Shenandoah-Kirkland Initiative, a student organization spreading awareness that Hamilton was founded to provide a space for American Indians and settlers to learn together while also connecting the College today with the neighboring Oneida Nation and other indigenous groups. She drew much inspiration

from the Levitt-supported Adirondack Program to reflect her priorities and goals, which she summarized to Libby Militello '22 in a Hamilton News article as “want[ing] to do this work because it makes me feel useful—it's tied with a sense of belonging and purpose.”





# Social Innovation

## Social Innovation 2018 Post-Graduate Fellowship

### FreshLife

#### Arthur Williams '16

Arthur Williams '16 was awarded last year's Levitt Post-Graduate Social Innovation Fellowship, a \$25,000 grant to help him address the socioeconomic and ecological issues surrounding his native Jamaica's agricultural sector. Noticing a marked disparity in the agricultural sector's large labor force and much smaller share of GDP, as well as the difficulty faced by working-class Jamaicans seeking access to locally-farmed and healthy produce; Williams established FreshLife, a socially-conscious enterprise that confronts the many factors contributing to these problems. FreshLife more directly connects small farmers to the communities they serve by allowing customers to conveniently order fresh produce via the FreshLife mobile app or website, facilitating both a steady demand for farmers and consistent access to healthy dietary options for consumers. Further addressing the institutional problems facing small farms, FreshLife invests 40% of profits in its "FarmLife Fund" for collateralizing loans, thus helping small farmers (who often have poor financial records and credit history due to the instability of their industry) become more attractive to lending institutions and receive the capital needed to start or expand their farms. Finally, FreshLife's Farmer Resources Section and partnerships with local agencies increase farmers' access to information on adapting to climate change and practicing techniques to increase yields and avoid diseases in their crops.

Reflecting on his Fellowship experience, Williams appreciated the opportunity to learn what it takes to establish and operate a business, which he acknowledged cannot be produced in a classroom setting. He learned the importance of effective management, emotional intelligence, and leadership, as well as the vital need to understand how important human capital is in executing the vision of a company or other enterprise, as well as ways to support and develop the skills of executives and staff and incorporate their insights into one's business plan and day-to-day operations. Furthermore, his experience running FreshLife has shown him how much he still has to learn and has inspired him to pursue an MBA and become an entrepreneur and business leader.





# Social Innovation

## Social Innovation Fellows

The Social Innovation Fellows Program is a Levitt Center program designed to prepare and support students who aim to use innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to address persistent social problems. These innovations can be implemented in a variety of ways: through a for-profit business, a non-profit or student-run organization, an improvement to an existing institutional process, a new network of existing organizations, or some other method. Whatever the approach, these innovations aim to bring a creative, entrepreneurial, and groundbreaking approach to solving social problems. The program includes a weeklong workshop with Anke Wessels, who teaches an award-winning course on social innovation at Cornell University. This year's Social Innovation Fellows were: Matthew Albino '19, Jiaheng Cai '21, Craig Engert '21, Jiin Jeong '21, Amar Kassim '20, and Soha Kawtharani '21.



*Risper Kirui's students*

### **SmartStart Risper Kirui '19**

With continued support from the Levitt Center, Kirui continued her SmartStart program in Londiani, Kenya, a rural village where children often lack resources to make smooth transitions to advanced grades. This leads to them falling behind in necessary academic skills. Kirui has developed a centralized space equipped for the needs of early learners who attend after-schools or weekend programs. A primary motivation of the space is to foster academic engagement and curiosity by allowing children to explore their interests, have access to materials they cannot find at school or in the home, and work collaboratively with their peers.

### **Education and Today's Nepal Ishan Mainali '21**

Growing up in what he calls a “Kathmandu bubble,” Ishan Mainali '21 only heard vague explanations for his homeland's socio-economic troubles. After coming to Hamilton and becoming involved in the Levitt Center's Social Innovation Lab, he grew more confident in possessing “the knowledge and vocabulary to think about social

problems and . . . potential innovative solutions.” Partnering with Build Nepal, and co-sponsored by the Levitt Center Social Innovation Fund and the Renyi Leadership Fund, Mainali returned to Nepal over the summer in 2018 to investigate the issue of educational inequality. He focused his project on the disparity between urban and rural communities' access to education opportunities and infrastructure. After a harrowing 22-hour journey delayed by mudslides and off-road travel, a hike, and a ride in a food-laden flatbed jeep, Mainali arrived in the mountain village of Khungkhani.

His objective in the village was to observe how community members work together and interact. To accomplish this, he collaborated with his research partner Sagar Shah to teach critical-thinking skills in the village school, Shree Shanti Madhyamik Vidhyalaya. They met their students, then began their English class with a lesson based on a more Western, Socratic pedagogical style than is typical in Nepali classrooms. At the start, many of their students were taken aback by the change from rote instruction, but they soon grew more comfortable with it. Mainali noticed that students in younger classes were keener on their question- and critical-thinking-based approach. As the villagers grew more comfortable, they began peppering the pair with questions: where are you from? What are your plans in the village? How long will you stay?

# Social Innovation

The welcoming yet genuinely curious questions left Mainali with a “weird feeling that [he] felt both as an outsider but also a member of the community. The love and affection they had for us was unreal.”

He noticed the disconnect between his own and the villagers’ educational expectations and pathways: while Mainali was always on a straightforward path from finishing school to college, the villages also see education as an invaluable asset—but not to continue their education further. Historically, they have lacked those options. The village schoolchildren are expected to graduate secondary school, stay and help their families until coming of age, and finally go to another country as migrant workers to send money back to their home village. This idea of education as a minimum requirement to join the workforce is partly dictated by economic necessity. Although valuable medicinal herbs grow wild in the forest, most poor farmers aren’t equipped to domesticate them or can’t afford to risk part of their plots for an uncertain future gain. Therefore, the default option is to grow the crops their ancestors cultivated, so they can at least earn a stable—if very modest—income and help feed their families. This incentivizes young people to become migrant workers to assist their families the best they can. Through his experiences in rural Nepal, Mainali has begun to untangle the complexities of educational inequality and inequality in general, as well as gained insight into how he can rethink future projects with these factors in mind. He was also able to immerse himself in ways of life he’s never experienced, but wants to understand and appreciate.



## Social Innovation Team

The Social Innovation Team is dedicated to increasing the understanding of and opportunities for social innovation at Hamilton College and beyond. The students on the team are primarily responsible for designing, administering, and staffing the Levitt Center Social Innovation Lab, as well as creating social innovation programming.

### Sleep Deprivation Study

The Levitt Social Innovation Team, following up on last year’s organization of the College’s first Town Hall, has turned their attention to examining the state of mental health on campus with their Mental Health Roundtable. During the 2018-2019 year, they focused on examining the problem of sleep deprivation at the College, and how it has an impact on students’ mental health. This project was open to participants’ perspectives, as organizers solicited and carefully considered suggested questions for the survey, which will be administered in the Fall of 2019. The Social Innovation Team is confident that their efforts will shed light on how the intersection of campus life, the pressure students feel to over-perform academically and socially, and lack of sleep negatively affect students’ mental well-being. Hopefully, their findings will provide insight into possible solutions to ameliorate these issues that they can present to the administration and mental health professionals at the Counselling Center. Members of the Social Innovation Team have weekly meetings to educate themselves and each other, as well as plan their programming. They also advise students who have projects through the Levitt Center to further efforts to make a creative and innovative difference at Hamilton and in the broader community.

# Social Innovation

## Hamilton Students Present Commitment Projects at 11<sup>th</sup> CGI U

The 11th annual Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U)—held at The University of Chicago on October 19-21, 2018—included among the more than 1,000 students chosen to attend this past year several Hamilton students working on the same project, developed through the Levitt Social Innovation Fellowship: Aurora Cai '21, Michelle Chung '20, Hyein Kim '21, Kimberly Ly '20, Tiffany Ly '20, Anna Mowat '18, and Ngoc Ngo '20. Students attending CGI U make Commitments to Action in five areas: Education, Environment and Climate Change, Peace and Human Rights, Poverty Alleviation, and Public Health. The CGI U allows socially-engaged students the opportunity to connect with each other, develop their skills, and meet potential partners to help further their projects. On the last day of the conference, attendees participate in a Day of Action performing service projects in the local community.

The Levitt Center is proud to have supported several students traveling to Chicago to be recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative University for their commitment projects. Ngoc Ngo '20, Tiffany Ly '20, and Hyein Kim '21 were honored as part of a session on supporting girls' education around the world. Kimberly Ly '20 and Michelle Chung '20 also collaborated with them on their project, but were abroad at the time of the conference and unable to attend. Their Commitment to Action aims to increase Vietnamese women's access to reproductive health education and resources. Vietnam currently has the highest abortion rate in all of Asia, with 40% of pregnancies estimated to be terminated each year. A major factor in this high rate of abortion is the dearth of reproductive health education and resources in many parts of the country, which has contributed to the employment of abortion as the primary method of contraception. When abortion seems like the only option, having multiple abortions over time becomes much more likely, which presents serious risks to women's physical and mental health. The group plans to partner with the American Center at the US Embassy in Vietnam to develop ways to integrate reproductive health education into the Center's programming to help mitigate the social stigma around conversations about reproductive health in Vietnam.

Anna Mowat '18 and Aurora Cai '21 also attended last year's CGI U conference: Mowat was honored for her participation in a group that utilizes physics-based modeling to help homeowners lower their heating bills and energy consumption, while Cai was recognized for her project that seeks to help the children of rural migrants to Chinese cities access English language education programs.



*Students at the 11<sup>th</sup> CGI U*



# Social Innovation

## Hamilton Represented at HELIO 2018

Hamilton paid for one student, Kyra Richardson '21, to the Human Ecology Lab and Island Odyssey (HELIO), where she joined 23 students from other colleges and universities around the world to the Japanese island of Osakikamijima so they could participate in a two-week program focusing on ways to incorporate human ecology into Japanese higher education. Human ecology is an interdisciplinary academic field that examines the relationship between humans and their natural, social, and constructed environments. Richardson was supported by the Levitt Center and the Renyi Leadership Fund.

HELIO students attend training sessions and workshops, meet with local communities, and work together in cross-cultural teams to reimagine the future intersection of people, higher education, and ecosystems. The program tasks participants with collaborating to design a new Japanese “college” in the local community that they ultimately pitch to local/regional government members and community leaders. Richardson greatly appreciated the opportunity to immerse herself in the culture, which her Hamilton Japanese classes prepared her to do well, and to spend time “interacting purposefully and closely with small communities that outsiders do not typically visit. We didn’t just ‘see’ Japan—we truly got to know it, its people, and their stories.” In addition to working with other students and interacting with the Osakikamijima community, including local artisans, the group visited sites in Hiroshima and around Fukushima: this allowed Richardson to “become close to the faces and the environment behind real-world issues. This . . . makes the demand for change much greater—once you get to know everyone and all they have to offer, you truly want to work to make a difference for them.”





# Social Innovation

## Innovator-in-Residence Program

Through our Innovator-in-Residence program, we bring entrepreneurs and innovators to campus to share their expertise through lectures, workshops, and meetings with students. Innovators-in-Residence hold office hours in the Levitt Center Social Innovation Lab and usually remain on campus for 2-4 days. During that time, they typically lead several lectures/workshops, hold individual consultations with student innovators, and meet informally with groups of students over meals. We have been lucky enough to work with returning alumni and community partners who are enthusiastic about sharing their expertise with Hamilton students. This provides students with a great opportunity to receive expert advice and develop their own ideas.

## Innovation Workshops

This year, the Levitt Center continued working with our two Innovators-in-Residence Cyrus Boga and Melinda Little, who led workshops and discussions and met with students individually to clarify the logistical steps taken to implement social innovation initiatives.

Cyrus Boga '90 is the CEO of Novamaya, an education startup serving college students who have a desire to create programs and businesses that promote social change; he is also the CEO of Blue Campus and its affiliate Campus Properties LLC, ventures with a unique approach to off-campus student housing that connects them to internships and community partners.

Melinda Little is a social entrepreneur: she founded the Community Store—the first community-owned department store in New York; was the co-founder of Independent Means—the leading provider of family-centered financial education programs and products in the US; and coordinates Point Positive—an investor group focused on investing in and supporting promising and scalable startups in the Adirondack region.

### **Cyrus Boga**

#### **Social Entrepreneurship & Career Preparation**

In this workshop, Cyrus Boga drew on his experience working in socially innovative enterprises to explain the advantages the socially innovative work presents for people's career going forward. The importance of seeking out and taking seriously the feedback of community partners and one's clients especially helps develop the valuable inter-personal skills that employers and colleagues look for in a worker.

#### **Designing Your Social Innovation Project**

Boga also presented a workshop which introduced students to the logistical challenges and strategies related to planning and implementing a social innovation venture. The workshop had a special focus on how best to provide a sustainable and valuable service to communities and grow the venture's scope and effect.

# Social Innovation

## Innovation Workshops (continued)

### Melinda Little

#### Designing a Theory of Change Workshop

During this workshop, participants used the work of Nell Edgington and the advice of Melinda Little to develop a Theory of Change for a nonprofit of their choice. Accounting for the increasing competition around funding, this workshop highlighted the need for nonprofit organizations to take an honest and comprehensive accounting for how much their programs have influenced the community with which they are working.

#### Crowdfunding Lunch Workshop

In this informal lunch discussion, Melinda Little fielded questions from students currently working on or planning the implementation of their own socially conscious initiatives. Drawing on her experience writing grants and other more traditional modes of funding social innovation projects, Little transferred that experience to clearly communicating an organization's needs and goals while navigating crowdfunding platforms.



Melinda Little during her Designing a Theory of Change workshop

# Transformational Leadership

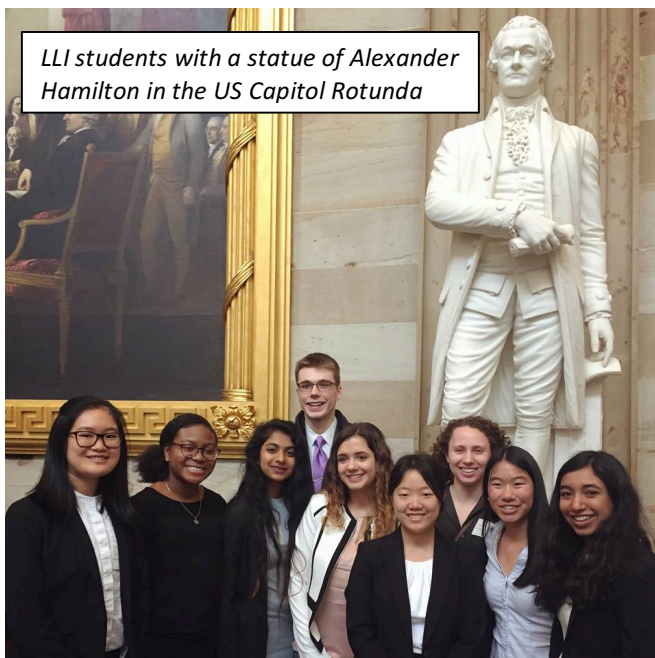
## Levitt Leadership Institute

The eighth annual Levitt Leadership Institute, a two-week intensive training program with the mission of helping students recognize, develop, and put into practice the leadership skills integral to creating personal and social change, took place over Winter and Spring Breaks on campus and in Washington, D.C., or at the Highlander Institute in Tennessee. Twenty-five students participated in this year's LLI program. The Institute's first week consists of workshops and seminars on campus where students have the space to explore their own skills and attitudes while hearing from and working with a diverse group of experts, leaders, and activists working for societal change. Skills developed during this first week include active listening, interviewing, influencing without using authority, social change, and collaboration—following this week of shared learning and practice, students can select one of two tracks which supplement for-credit classes and give them a chance to implement their skills in the real world, in addition to developing their interview skills with local business and community leaders.

Students pursuing the Washington, D.C., track spend their first week of spring break engaging with and interviewing leaders in government, public service, NGOs, and other organizations. These experiences are paired with tours of the city in order to deepen students' understanding of historical views on leadership and the socio-cultural contexts that inform them, providing them with a perspective that emphasizes the need for informed, proactive, and transformational leaders. LLI students in DC met with senators and representatives—as well as local D.C. activists—who stressed that future leaders should cultivate critical and creative thinking, which is required to navigate and promote change within the US government and engage in the broader democratic process.

Students who follow the Highlander track spend this first week of Spring Break at the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee, an organization with a long history of grassroots organizing and building movements. Working together with organizers and activists in Appalachia, students at the Highlander Center can see people fighting for justice, equality, and sustainability in a way that emphasizes supporting communities' collective action so they can take control of their own futures. The workshops led by the Highlander staff focus on methodologies of activist organizing including popular education, participatory action research, and intergenerational learning. The Highlander Center also encourages students to teach and learn from each other in difficult conversations about race and examine how one's

position in society motivates actions and preconceptions that need to be self-critically reflected upon.



*LLI students with a statue of Alexander Hamilton in the US Capitol Rotunda*

**LLI 2019 Washington, D.C., Participants:** Frederick Anderson '21, William Andriola '21, Tatum Barclay '22, Acacia Bowden '20, Rachel Fein '21, Amy Harff '21, Raven Haub '19, Gianni Hill '21, Amar Kassim '20, Kathryn Kearney '21, Brooke Kessler '22, Peri Kessler '22, Amanda Kim '21, Matthew Knowlton '21, Alexander Kurtz '21, Ioannis Makridis '22, McKenna McLean '21, Anna Neumann '21, Celia Reistrom '22, Natalie Rodriguez '22, Nicole Taylor '19, Phillip Tran '20, Celine Yam '21, and Samantha Zachar '21

**LLI 2019 Highlander Participants:** Allison Babbitt '21, Zachary Bell '19, Estella Brenneman '20, Claire Goldstein '22, Isabelle Lepasant '21, Madeleine Lepasant '19, Anna MacDonald '20, Riley Nichols '21, Patricia Shiebler '21, Vincent Sorrentino '20, Haley Tietz '19, Maria Valencia '21, and Evan Weinstein '19



# Transformational Leadership

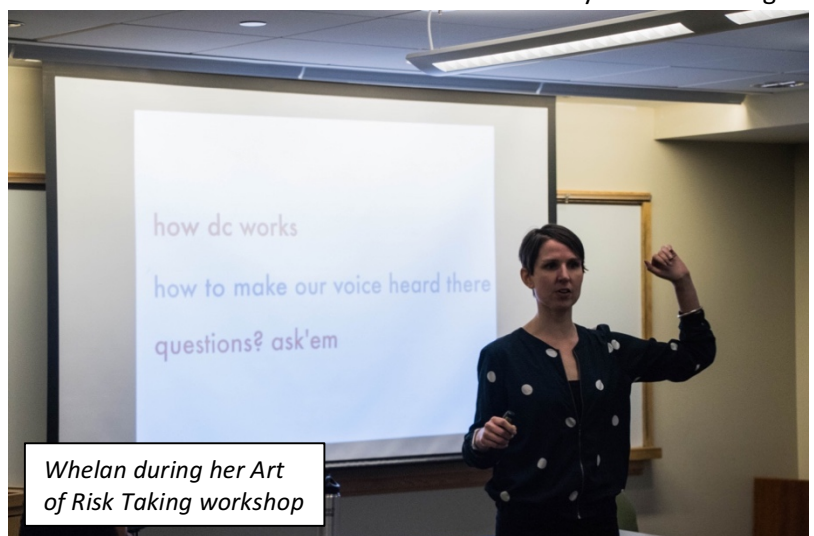
## Leadership Workshops

**Prof. Susan Mason, facilitator for the Levitt Leadership Institute**  
*Leading with Emotional Intelligence Workshop*

In these well-attended dinner and lunch workshops, Levitt Leadership Institute facilitator Susan Mason guided students and staff through an exploration of the changing corporate landscape and the growing importance of empathy and emotional leadership in being an effective leader. The workshops began with a general introduction to the topic followed by an icebreaker in which attendees were asked to give their names and describe their current mood. Next, Prof. Mason gave some more details of what leadership can mean, differentiating formal authority and influence as well as talking about the importance that building and maintaining relationships has always played in effective leadership. The attendees were then split up into groups of four-to-five and asked to collaborate on listing what they were taught about leaders growing up and qualities they thought the ideal leader would have. After sharing their thoughts with the rest of the workshop, Prof. Mason gathered them back together to begin her main presentation. She contrasted the traditional top-down leader/follower relationship based on command and control with the evolving contemporary conception of a “transactional” interaction, wherein a leader is as informed and guided by their followers as the other way around and emphasis is placed on collaboration, consensus, and team-based practices. But this new model can only function with trust and empathy between the collaborators, which are both downstream from effective communication. Mason went on to describe the differences between different generations of workers and their changing concerns and desires about their working environments and presented a summary of the findings of research into emotional intelligence. Shockingly, she described the difficulty executives and management she presents to have with identifying emotions that everyone in the room recognized quickly. Mason closed with a short information session on the Levitt Leadership Institute and description of the course she piloted this year, “Ethnography of Leadership,” which included a field-study component in which students were responsible for setting up interviews with D.C.-area alumni.

**Caitie Whelan**  
*The Art of Risk Taking & Maximizing the D.C. Experience*

Caitie Whelan, founder of the Lightning Notes—a daily email newsletter service that aims to reorient readers’ relationships to the world and how they interact with it and view themselves, visited Hamilton to hold an interactive workshop on “The Art of Risk Taking.” She also hosted an informal roundtable lunch discussion with students interested in studying and working in Washington, D.C., in which she recontextualized her ideas in the context of the D.C. lifestyle. Whelan began her workshop by inviting attendees to share where they come from, then asked “what are the most powerful resources you have as students or as people?” This elicited several different responses, from being able to expose oneself to new and diverse people and perspectives—including by studying abroad and having the opportunity to attend workshops—and their own unique strengths as individuals. Whelan suggested that the overarching principle that ties these resources together is a person’s ability to grow and change. She cited Mae Jemison, the first black woman astronaut in history, as someone who exemplified what we can do with our infinite potential and finite time. To change one’s mindset and cultivate the





# Transformational Leadership

ability to change and grow, Whelan outlined three rules she tries to follow: take risks; properly handle fear, failure, rejection, and criticism; and live meaningfully. This led her to relate her career journey and how it has led to her philosophy on life. She worked for several years co-founding and co-directing the Merasi School in Rajasthan, India, which provides educational opportunities to the marginalized Merasi community of lower-caste musicians and helped to socially and politically empower the community. Whelan then transitioned to working for the US Congress, eventually becoming a Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to the House of Representatives. After six years of working in government, Whelan realized that her career trajectory promised huge amounts of influence and power, but also made her profoundly unhappy. This caused her to reevaluate what she was doing and eventually quit her job to pursue her dream of becoming a writer. Family, friends, and colleagues asked Whelan “Are you out of your mind?” This led her to more firmly believe in defining her own success to live a more fulfilling life.

After this introduction, Whelan shifted to the more student-driven portion of the workshop and asked participants to ponder the first question on their worksheets, “How do you define success for yourself?” Responses ranged from financial independence and self-love, to making a difference in at least one person’s life, self-fulfillment and -actualization, and committing oneself to civic engagement. Whelan then offered her own definition of success, simply “waking up and looking forward to the day.” For the next portion of the workshop, she introduced the concept of risk, clarifying that she was not thinking of risky or dangerous behavior, but rather of taking a step outside of one’s comfort zone, something that is unique and incomparable for everyone. This was a way to transition to Whelan advocating to take “small risks” every day to develop tolerance/capacity for risk and challenge oneself to grow. She then asked participants to write down five small risks they could see themselves taking; going to events on your own, making phone calls for appointments, and speaking up in class or when disagreeing with someone were all mentioned. Next, they moved on to “medium and large risks,” like accepting or asking for help, changing one’s lifestyle or habits, and putting happiness above financial gain or prestige. This brought up strategies for keeping oneself accountable for following through on risks and dealing with fear, failure, rejection, and criticism. Whelan suggested only holding oneself responsible for the act of taking the risk, not for its results—this allows one to examine what holds them back from opportunities to grow and change. For many people, fear in general or fear of failure, rejection, or criticism specifically can blend into other barriers like shame, pride, and self-doubt. These significant obstacles can paralyze many would-be risk-takers; for Whelan, fear of the unknown is perfectly reasonable, but we cannot let it prevent us from acting. She recommends keeping in mind that failure is something to be accepted and learned from, while rejection and criticism offer chances to examine how one can support themselves and figure out how best to respond to criticism. To elaborate more on how best to respond to criticism, Whelan suggested proactively reaching out to others, evaluating their criticisms for yourself, not taking it personally, critically examining the values that led you to the project, and remembering to be a friend to yourself. She concluded with a reiteration of three main tools to use: “define success on your own terms; spend time with people you want to be the average of; and treat yourself right.”

## LEAP (Leadership Experience and Preparation) Program

LEAP is a leadership program for first-year students that began as a Commitment Project developed by a group of LLI students in 2013. LEAP participants aim to develop six key skills: self-awareness, organization, negotiation, active listening, public speaking, and networking. Over the past five years, LEAP has taken different forms as a residential learning program or a more traditional course-based program, and has confirmed its place as a valuable addition to Hamilton’s curriculum. In all its forms, student leaders also serve as mentors for participating first-year students. This year, the quarter-credit LEAP courses were led by Lindsey Song '20 and Lukas Puris '20 in the fall, partnering with Professor Kathryn Doran’s Critical Thinking (PHIL 100) class; and led by Kathryn Kearney '21, Savannah Kelly '21, Matthew Knowlton '21, and Gabrielle Wierda '21 in the spring through Susan Mason’s COLL 110 class, which offers LEAP training for first-year students.

# Engaged Citizenship

## Summer 2018 Electoral Politics Internship Group

### GOVT 200 “Electoral Politics”

#### Led by Prof. Philip Klinkner

James S. Sherman Professor of Government Philip Klinkner created and leads this hybrid course that combines on-the-ground experience working for congressional campaigns with political and electoral theory to illuminate the real-world dynamics of congressional campaigns. Twenty students participated in the summer internships working for either the Tenney or Brindisi campaign for New York’s 22nd Congressional District. This work was paired with a more traditional political science class, providing them with the data and theoretical framework to make sense of what they saw. After the summer, these students continued the class into the fall. Students phone-banked, knocked on doors, and assisted with managing and facilitating other programs for their respective campaigns like researching and analyzing news stories. These experiences allow for new perspectives on the connections between individual people, national political trends, and more local races, as well as present an opportunity to observe how campaigns influence or create voting behavior. Canvassing door-to-door, the GOVT 200 interns witnessed first-hand how polarized political discourse has become, reflected on their own values and how candidates represent them, and gained a greater appreciation for how political campaigns are organized and run. Topics covered by their class meetings included examining issues connected to campaign financing, community organizing, media influence, lobbying, demographics, and overall strategies for running effective campaigns (especially in a competitive district like NY-22). Many students grew so invested in the campaigns they worked for over the summer that they continued to volunteer up until election day to further enrich the insights gleaned by their continued participation in GOVT 200 throughout the fall semester. This program also gives its students the opportunity to better get to know the Mohawk Valley and interact with the communities around Hamilton.

## Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty

The Levitt Center is proud to announce a new partnership with the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty. Hamilton has now joined 25 other colleges and universities to create poverty studies programs and provide students with the opportunity to pursue full-time public service internships in communities across the country. SHECP encourages students and faculty to engage directly with the complex social problem of poverty while supplementing this academic work with on-the-ground work for non-profit organizations trying to tackle issues around social and economic needs, including healthcare, housing, nutrition, education, legal services, and community-building. Their placement process keeps students’ intellectual interests in mind while placing them in internships, giving them the opportunity to gain professional experience and develop skills that will help them in future civic involvement and public service. Students live with fellow interns in the communities they are serving and receive a stipend for living expenses over their eight-week-long service programs, which are bookended by conferences to prepare them for and provide time to reflect on their experiences. Seven Hamilton students are participating in this summer’s SHECP internships, working with Domestic Violence programs, Public Defenders Offices, and at other programs for marginalized communities and people in cities as disparate as Poughkeepsie, NY and Austin, TX.



*Hamilton SHECP interns at the opening conference*

# Engaged Citizenship

## Levitt Public Service Interns

Levitt Public Service Internship Awards provide funding for students who have secured an unpaid summer internship that focuses on some aspect of public service. Thanks to this program, students explored careers in public service by working with a government agency, nonprofit, or non-governmental organization. During the summer of 2018, the Levitt Center funded seven students' public service internships.

### **Elizabeth Foot '20**

#### **Project Peanut Butter in Malawi**

Elizabeth Foot spent her summer volunteering with Project Peanut Butter's malnutrition clinics in Malawi. Foot, with a few other volunteers, assigned children to different food treatment programs based on the severity of malnutrition they evaluated during pre-treatment screenings. She was also responsible for entering improvement data from each day's clinic, tracking enrollments, packing supplies, centrifuging for analysis blood samples collected as part of the project's study, and teaching new volunteers these tasks. Project Peanut Butter has been operating in Malawi for over ten years and enrolls children from six months to five years old; more recently, PPB has opened feeding clinics in Sierra Leone and Ghana. Volunteers go to a clinic each day and return to each clinic every two weeks, which made a great impression on Foot, since she has been considering furthering her post-Hamilton education by going to nursing school and has been interested in public policy and international health for some time. As Foot explains, "The best part about this experience was how it touched on every interest of mine. Seeing a lot of the same kids every two weeks was amazing, since it allowed me to build some form of a relationship with the children and their mothers—it was so satisfying. I've never liked the idea of a 'help group' going in and staying for a bit, then leaving; but PPB has been around for so long, with the nurses and drivers being local Malawians, that the communities we see know us and know how much sustainable good this program is capable of."

### **Micaela Caterisano '19**

#### **Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services in New York**

Micaela Caterisano worked for the nonprofit organization Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services, which assists Rochester-area refugees in finding jobs and housing, among other things. She worked on the marketing team for a small enterprise founded by RRRS to create job opportunities for local refugees. This enterprise teaches refugees how to sew and provides the necessary materials to create bags, backpacks, and purses out of recycled cloth. In this role, Caterisano had a hand in creating a website and various social media pages for the venture to promote the sale of these colorful bags. Additionally, she was involved in researching a pathway through which men and women who had graduated from international medical schools could become licensed doctors and health professionals in the United States. Summing up her experience, Caterisano said, "I was able to work closely with some amazing people, and I feel as if I was really able to make even the smallest difference in the lives of the people I worked with in the short period of time I was with them."

### **Taylor Kim '19**

#### **Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities in Hartford, CT**

Taylor Kim interned at the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities as a legal intern supervised by Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp and Human Rights Attorney Spencer Hill. She participated in building a case investigating discrimination in the workplace, making use of and becoming familiar with anti-discrimination law in the CT General Statute in the process. Additionally, she conducted the reconsiderations, case assessment reviews, and mediations involved in the case. She also assisted in facilitating the Commission's summer events such as Kids Speak, a human rights symposium for middle and high school children across the state; and acted as the PR director communicating with various

# Engaged Citizenship

local news sources to promote Kids Court, a writing and public speaking competition for finalists in a statewide essay competition.

## **Charlotte Freed '20**

### **Middlesex District Attorney's Office at Malden District Court, Massachusetts**

Charlotte Freed interned with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office at Malden District Court in Massachusetts. She worked with Victim Witness Advocates in the office to guide victims of crimes through the criminal justice system and serve as a liaison between victims and prosecutors. In a typical day, Freed spent the morning in the district court observing arraignments, trials, and pre-trial conferences involving the defendant, the defense attorney, the prosecutor, and the judge. In the afternoon, she often helped the Victim Witness Advocates and the Assistant District Attorneys by writing letters to victims informing them of the case in which they were involved. The internship program through the District Attorney's Office included several off-site trainings, such as visits to the county prison and the police department, and talks with several departments in the office—this gave her a well-rounded view of the criminal justice system. Freed said, “this internship gave me limitless opportunities to advance my career in public service and was an eye-opening experience in which I saw the ways [that] the system can be both dysfunctional and restorative for the defendants and victims involved.”

## **Olivia Northrop '19**

### **Arabesque in Cairo, Egypt**

Olivia Northrop spent 6 weeks living and working in Cairo at the non-profit Arabesque, a socially-conscious venture founded by alumnus and Social Innovation Fellow Hady Hewidy '17 to empower traditional artisanal communities in Egypt. Her focus was to work on researching potential vendors for the artisans, as well as write grants and reach out to possible partners. Northrop was also able to visit the St. Catherine region and see some of the handiworks being made. She noted that a very valuable part of the experience was to have the opportunity to live in Egypt and work as a local, giving her insight into how companies abroad work and grow.

## **Christina Plakas '19**

### **Arabesque in Cairo, Egypt**

Christina Plakas spent her summer interning for Hady Hewidy '17's Arabesque in Cairo, Egypt. At Arabesque, she helped to establish business relations with boutiques and gift shops in the United States that might be interested in Arabesque's products. She familiarized herself with Arabesque's product line and the stories of the artisans who create them to edit Arabesque's website content. Christina also shadowed client meetings, studied Arabic, and learned some of the basics of accounting. Christina is interested in pursuing a career in human rights and was intrigued by Arabesque “because it meant that I could once more study in the Middle East while helping out with a fair-trade marketplace that focuses on helping artisan men and women sustain a livable income from the sales of their handicrafts.”

## **Gareth Coalson '19**

### **VOCEL in Chicago, IL**

Gareth Coalson spent his summer interning at VOCEL in Chicago, IL. VOCEL is a language-focused early education program based on the West Side that assists both children from 6 weeks to five years and caretakers involved in these children's lives. VOCEL's mission is rooted in language development, social-emotional support, and play-based learning to bridge the 30-million-word gap (the difference between the average number of words a professional/upper-class family's child hears by age three and the average number of words a child in a household on welfare hears by the same age). At VOCEL, Coalson mainly worked with the toddler and pre-kindergarten classrooms assisting with language development. He also worked with and shadowed clinicians working in the "New Moms" program and the child parent academy, where parents



# Engaged Citizenship

learn techniques and practices to develop their children's language and social/emotional skills through classes, discussion groups, and family support services.

## VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is a service-learning program in which students volunteer to help offer free tax help to low- and middle-income families, made possible through a partnership between the Levitt Center, the Hamilton College Economics Department, and the Mohawk Valley Asset-Building Coalition, a network of over 30 community agencies in the local area. Students who wish to participate in VITA must take Policy, Poverty, and Practice, a quarter-credit economics course taught by Lecturer in Economics Margaret Morgan-Davie that addresses income inequality, tax policy, and government policies to alleviate poverty. Student volunteers are also required to complete IRS TaxWise training (certifying them as tax preparers) and participate in cultural competency training. This framework provides students with the practical and theoretical knowledge needed to prepare tax returns and understand the importance of the service they are performing. Student volunteers commit to a minimum of 15 hours of volunteer time at the Resource Center for Independent Living, a tax preparation site in Utica, where they work one-on-one with tax filers with the support of the site staff. VITA students become more aware of their civic duty and increasingly proficient in the language of tax returns, while also being able to make a positive impact on families within the local community. This year, eight students participated in the VITA program through Morgan-Davie's ECON 235 course.

## Project SHINE



### Project SHINE

Project SHINE is a service-learning program that connects students with the opportunity to act as English coaches to refugees and immigrants in the Utica area. Through Project SHINE, students provide a valuable service to the community's newest residents and gain a deeper understanding of the needs and circumstances of others through working directly in the community. Every year, students come back with stories of how their experiences have broadened their horizons and introduced them to new people, as well as a profound appreciation for a person's ability to learn without the many resources their peers have access to.

Students must participate in Project SHINE through an academic course. This requirement provides students with an academic framework through which to understand their volunteer experience, while also enabling faculty to develop courses that foster ethical, informed, and engaged citizenship. Over the past 6 years, students have participated in SHINE through courses in Anthropology, Arabic, Chinese Language, Communications, English and Creative Writing, Government, Religious Studies, Sociology, Women's Studies, and Writing departments.

SHINE volunteers worked with adult refugees at the BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) site and the new Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees in Utica. Thirteen students participated in SHINE in the fall, and 29 volunteered in the spring.

# Levitt Center

## 2018-2019 Levitt Center Council Members and Levitt Center Staff

- **Frank Anechiarico**, Director of the Justice and Security Program and Maynard-Knox Professor of Government
- **John Bartle**, Director of the Inequality and Equity Program and Associate Professor of Russian Studies
- **Ashley Bohrer**, Truax Post-Doctoral Fellow in Philosophy
- **Steve Ellingson**, Director of the Sustainability Program and Professor of Sociology
- **Margaret Gentry**, Special Advisor to the President on Experiential Learning and William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Women's and Gender Studies
- **Marianne Janack**, Director of the Levitt Center and John Stewart Kennedy Chair of Philosophy
- **Chaise LaDousa**, Professor of Anthropology
- **Herm Lehman**, Director of the Public Health and Well-Being Program and Professor of Biology
- **Ruth Lessman**, Levitt Center Office Assistant
- **Sebastian Lissarrague**, Community Service Intern
- **Celeste Day Moore**, Assistant Professor of History
- **Quincy Newell**, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
- **Todd Rayne**, Director of the Sustainability Program and J.W. Johnson Family Professor of Environmental Studies
- **Simon Stanco**, Levitt Center Media Fellow
- **Sharon Topi**, Coordinator of Leadership Programming
- **Chris Willemssen**, Associate Director of the Levitt Center
- **Joel Winkelman**, Community Based Learning Coordinator
- **Wei Zhan**, Assistant Professor of Economics

## Guest Mentors

A special thanks to our guest mentors who make their knowledge and expertise on transformational leadership and social innovation available to Hamilton students.

- Cyrus Boga, Innovator-in-Residence
- Melinda Little, Innovator-in-Residence
- Susan Mason, facilitator for the Levitt Leadership Institute
- Margo Okazawa-Rey, facilitator for the Levitt Leadership Institute
- Anke Wessels, designer and facilitator of the Social Innovation Fellows Program

**The Levitt Center is fortunate to have a large staff of dedicated and talented student workers:**

**Special Projects:** Gianni Hill '21, Brooke Kessler '22, Emnet Sisay '22, Hudson Smith '21

**Social Innovation Team:** Alma Bradley '21, Tatiana Bradley '19, Cesar Manuel Guerrero Domenech '20, Kennard Fung '21, Mariani German '19, Jonathan Gerstein '21, Soha Kawtharani '21, Hyein Kim '20, Amari Leigh '21, Kimberly Ly '20, Tiffany Ly '20, Ishan Mainali '21, Ngoc Ngo '20, Vishal Patel '19, Tyler Spector '19, Jinghong Wang '19

**Leadership Team:** Matthew Albino '19, Acacia Bowden '20, Craig Engert '21, Sarah Kaiser '19, Nicole Taylor '19, Kirubel Tesfaye '21, Ashley Thayaparan '21

**LEAP directors:** Kathryn Kearney '21, Savannah Kelly '21, Matthew Knowlton '21, Lukas Puris '20, Lindsey Song '20, Gabrielle Wierda '21

**SHINE Drivers and Dispatchers:** Aimee Booth '22, Rachel Dawson '19, Niamh Fitzpatrick '20, Grace Jones '19, Hannah Lasher '19, Tiffany Ly '20, Julia McGuire '20, Geoffrey Ravenhall Meinke '20, Jonelle Menner '22, Amarilys Milian '20, Ricardo Millien '20, Natalie Rubin '20, Maria Saenz '19, Holly Sauer '21, Mary Tracey '20, Anna Zhang '20



# The Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center Annual Report 2018-19

*The mission of the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center is to strengthen and support the study of public affairs at Hamilton College.*

*The goals of the Center are:*

- *To enable students to engage in public affairs through research, service-learning, lectures, discussion, and practice.*
- *To foster creative, ethical, and informed responses to public issues by providing opportunities for students to engage with the local community, develop leadership skills, and explore careers in public service.*
- *To support interdisciplinary collaboration and discussion; and to encourage faculty to address public affairs in their own research and in collaborative research with Hamilton students.*

*Students participate in an exercise led by Margo Okazawa-Rey during the eighth annual Levitt Leadership Institute.*

