



the year of the
HUMANITIES
IN THE UNIVERSITY



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2015-2016



Final report on
The Year of the Humanities in the University
2015-2016

Submitted by:
Don Bialostosky
Chair of the Planning Committee

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Introduction	4
Performing Arts	5
An Interdisciplinary Focus	6
Arts and Humanities Pop-Ups	7
Center for Creativity: the Workshop	8
Being Human in a Digital World	9
The Diversity of the Humanities	10
Embracing a Global Perspective	11
Student Involvement	12
Regional Campuses	13
Humanities Media	14
Acknowledgements	15
Appendices	16 – 29
Appendix A: Being Human in a Digital World Flyer	17
Appendix B: <i>Pitt Chronicle</i> Year of Humanities Profiles	18 – 29

2015-2016

THE YEAR OF THE HUMANITIES IN THE UNIVERSITY

The [Year of the Humanities in the University](#) was first announced by Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Patricia Beeson in October, 2014. In that first announcement, Provost Beeson made clear what was to be a constant theme throughout the year: this was to be the Year of the Humanities *in the University*; that is, a celebration of the way that the humanities mattered across the University, rather than a celebration of the humanities in isolation.

That the Year was a success across the University was evident in several ways, starting with our organizing committee, which was drawn from the humanities, the arts, the social sciences, the natural sciences, the health sciences, and from a variety of professional schools. There were also the more than 120 proposals submitted during the year from nearly every school on campus and every one of the regional campuses. And many of the Year's events made new connections between schools and disciplines. As this report will show, events and programs during the Year explored connections between the humanities and health care, the humanities and the sciences, the humanities and the social sciences, and more.

These events and initiatives have given the University of Pittsburgh a great foundation to build on moving forward. Along with new centers and resources committed to the humanities during the Year, they have demonstrated a fundamental commitment on the part of the University of Pittsburgh to the value of the humanities in our lives and in our world, and those of us involved in the Year look forward to working to make the most of these wonderful opportunities in the years to come.



The Year of Humanities Committee (left to right): Dan Kubis, John Camillus, Alberta Sbragia, Terry Smith, Vivian Curran, Don Bialostosky (chair), Scott Morgenstern, Randall Halle, Sarah Popovich, Jonathan Arac, Maggie McDonald. Not pictured: Geri Allen, Mary Besterfield-Sacre, Arthur Kosowsky, Susan Meyer, Lisa Parker, Lia Petrose



PERFORMING ARTS

The Departments of [Music](#) and [Theatre Arts](#) played central roles in the Year of Humanities, not only as sources of dynamic events and programs but also as interdisciplinary bridges to other disciplines. Several of the theatre department's productions addressed important political questions such as rape culture ([Good Kids](#)) and veteran's issues ([Water by the Spoonful](#)). The Department also helped sponsor one of the Year's signature events, [The Mathematics of Being Human](#), a play that explores the experiences of a math and English professor attempting to team-teach a required first-year course.

The Department of Music hosted several exciting performances during the Year, including [Esma Redzepova](#) ("Queen of the Gypsies"), a concert in which Ensemble Linea (arguably the best contemporary music ensemble in France today) played Pitt student compositions, and a week-long [residency](#) from [George Lewis](#) in the spring. Amy Williams (Music) teamed up with Aaron Henderson (Studio Arts) to create [Cineshape](#), a piece that combined music and film. Williams and Henderson performed the piece at the Andy Warhol Museum as well as locations in Buffalo and Rochester.

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOCUS

Consistent with the Year's goal, most of the Year's programs focused on connections between the humanities and other fields or disciplines at the University. Proposals came from nearly every unit on campus, and were sometimes funded by three or more units. A few of the programs were particularly successful at creating these connections.

The [*What Does it Mean to be Curious?*](#) series, for example, brought faculty from the natural sciences, the humanities, and the creative arts together for a series of informal discussions focusing on the theme of curiosity.



Above: A discussion in the Fine Arts Library from the *What Does it Mean to be Curious?* series. Below (from left to right): participants Aaron Henderson, Paolo Palmieri, Alison Langmead



Above: Health and Humanities conference organizer Abdesalam Soudi (center) with Shelome Gooden and Mario Browne; Below: Panelists from the Honors College panel spoke to a packed house in the University Club.

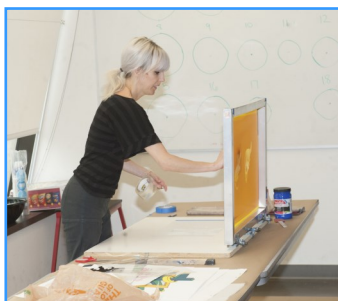
The [*Health and Humanities Conference*](#) and related projects, including a proposal for a certificate in medical humanities, created or strengthened connections between the humanities and health sciences.

A panel discussion hosted by the Honors College and titled [*The Humanities: Can You Afford to Leave College Without Them?*](#), addressed the continuing need for the humanities in today's world. The panel featured Gina Barreca, professor of English at the University of Connecticut; Art Levine, dean of the School of Medicine at Pitt; Fareed Zakaria, host of *Fareed Zakaria GPS* and author of *In Defense of a Liberal Education*; Helen Small, professor of English at Oxford University; and Hunter Rawlings, then-president of the AAU.

ARTS AND HUMANITIES POP-UPS

At a large university like Pitt, one of the most basic impediments to creating interdisciplinary opportunities is physical distance. With units separated by city blocks—or in the case of Salk Hall, big hills!—it can be hard to get people from different fields in the same room, even when those people have mutually supportive goals.

Created by the Year of Humanities organizing committee, *Arts and Humanities Pop-ups* were short creative workshops designed to show the value of arts and creativity in professional fields such as engineering and pharmacy. They also took place in buildings—Benedum and Salk Halls, to be specific—that house the participating professional schools, thus bridging the physical distance between these fields. The schedule below lists pop-ups that occurred during the Year as well as upcoming events in the series.



Screenprinting Workshop



Lighting Workshop



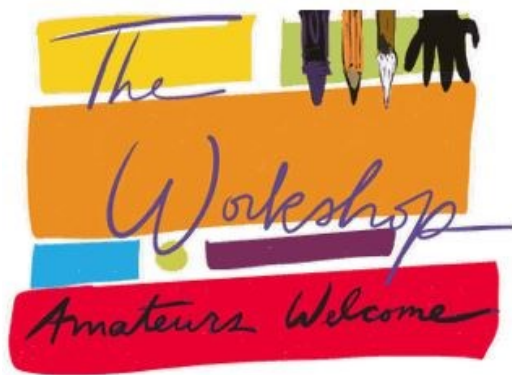
Music Mash-up Workshop

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	WORKSHOP LEADER
October 30	Screenprinting Workshop (see photo)	Benedum Hall Swanson School of Engineering	Lenore Thomas Studio Art
November 20	Lighting Workshop (see photo) artificial lighting	Benedum Hall Swanson School of Engineering	Aaron Henderson Studio Art
November 20	Music Mash-up Workshop (see photo)	Salk Hall School of Pharmacy	Neil Newton Department of Music
February 19	How to Write a Poem Workshop	Benedum Hall Swanson School of Engineering	Jeff Oaks Writing Program
April 1	Dance Workshop	Benedum Hall Swanson School of Engineering	Monica Bell & Irvin Jones Swanson School
Upcoming	Reflective Writing Workshop	Salk Hall School of Pharmacy	Geeta Kothari Writing Program

CENTER FOR CREATIVITY: THE WORKSHOP



Students paint the Center's floor during the grand opening.
Photo credit: Emily O'Donnell



Located down the steps inside the University bookstore on Fifth Avenue, the [*Center for Creativity: the Workshop*](#) is a space where students, staff, and faculty from across campus can come to exercise their creative spirit. The space is full of materials designed to inspire creativity: giant walls and screens that invite painting and drawing; a pottery wheel for shaping clay; musical instruments; typewriters; and more. While the Center hosts some scheduled programming, it also has plenty of open hours for people to take advantage of moments of unplanned inspiration.

With support from Provost Patricia Beeson, the Center was created during the Year of Humanities to allow people from all fields and disciplines to explore ways in which creativity can be a part of their work—or discover ways in which it already is! It was also the perfect location for several events during the Year, such as an Open House hosted by the Staff Association Council as part of their yearlong series on Work/Life Balance.



Chancellor Gallagher gets in on the action.
Photo credit: Emily O'Donnell



Clockwise from above: Benjamin C. Tilghman presents during the *Computational Visual Aesthetics* event; Aaron Brenner presents at UPJ's Day of Digital Humanities; Adriana Kovashka presents at *Computational Visual Aesthetics*.

BEING HUMAN IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Events focusing on digital work took many forms during the Year, including coding schools, programming workshops, and academic lectures. One of the Year's first events was a [*Day of Digital Humanities*](#) at Pitt-Johnstown, featuring two hands-on digital workshops, an installation of digital art and creative work, and a keynote lecture/performance by renowned digital artist Alan Sondheim.

The School of Information Sciences hosted two events during the Year under the heading [*Intelligent Conversations about Digital Computing and the Humanities*](#). These events engaged humanists, social scientists, natural scientists, medical scientists, computer scientists, and information scientists in areas of common interest.

There was also a spring event titled [*Digital Storytelling*](#) that explored issues surrounding the use of sound in composition practice and pedagogy, featuring talks and workshops from Steven Hammer (St. Joseph's University) and Steph Ceraso (University of Maryland, Baltimore County).

As digital tools become an increasingly important part of the way we live our lives in the world, it is important to keep digital technologies in focus at the University, both as a focus of our scholarship and a tool for conducting research and teaching. For an expanded list of digitally focused events in the humanities during the spring term, see Appendix A.



Above: Images from Marcia Chatelain's lecture [#FergusonSyllabus](#).

Below: Clockwise from top left: Ross Gay, Nate Marshall, Lyrae Van Clief-Stafanon, and a packed house for *Poetry and Race in America*.



THE DIVERSITY OF THE HUMANITIES

Several events and programs during the Year demonstrated the important role the humanities can play in creating and supporting diverse, inclusive environments. One of these was an ongoing series of conversations addressing cultural competence that grew from discussions within the Year of Humanities steering committee. These conversations, led by Randall Halle, Klaus W. Jonas Professor of German Film and Cultural Studies, and Susan Meyer, professor and associate dean of education in the School of Pharmacy, featured faculty from across departments and schools and focused on questions of how the humanities and professional schools can work together to promote cultural awareness and competence in our teaching and research.

Plenty of proposed events also addressed diversity and inclusion, including [Marcia Chatelain's](#) lecture [#FergusonSyllabus](#), which detailed Dr. Chatelain's efforts, through social media and other venues, to bring academic voices and knowledge into public debates over race, policing, and violence (see above). One of the Year's biggest events, co-sponsored by the Pitt Press and the new Center for African American Poetry and Poetics, featured national award-winning poets talking to an overflow crowd in the Frick Fine Arts Auditorium about [Poetry and Race in America: How the Humanities Engage with Social Problems](#).

EMBRACING A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



From left to right: Lina Insana, Lina Prosa, Neil Doshi, Anna Barbera (one of Prosa's collaborators), and Ellen Connally, director of the *Lampedusa Beach* reading.

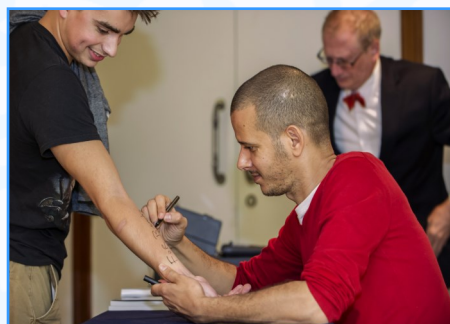
Befitting a university that lists “embracing a global perspective” as one of its core aspirations, the Year of the Humanities sponsored numerous events that were global or international in focus. One of the most noteworthy was the [*Mediterranean Metageographies*](#) series, proposed by the Department of French and Italian Languages, and featuring lectures, conversations, screenings, and presentations of creative work from the francophone and Italian Mediterranean. Speakers included [*Abdellah Taïa*](#), a Moroccan novelist and filmmaker; Williams College professor Katarzyna Pieprzak, who presented her work on the growth of emigrant shantytowns in Casablanca;

and Sicilian playwright Lina Prosa, who authored the *Trilogy of the Shipwrecked*, which looks at the crisis of Mediterranean migration through the lens of the tiny Sicilian island of Lampedusa.

A few of the many other events that brought a global focus to Pitt included the [*Latin American Documentary Film Festival*](#); a [*year-long series focusing on the palace of Versailles*](#); [*an exhibition of Dr. Minglu Gao's collection of contemporary Chinese art*](#); the American Academy of Religion meeting, which took [*Globalizing the Human\(ities\)*](#) as its theme; and the [*Humanizing the Global; Globalizing the Human*](#) series, which created opportunities for faculty from the social sciences and humanities to think together about globalization.



Randall Halle interviews Abdellah Taïa after a screening of Taïa's film *Salvation Army*.



From left to right: Abdellah Taïa and fans; Minglu Gao exhibit in Hillman Library; *Lampedusa Beach* reading

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT: HUMANITIES IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

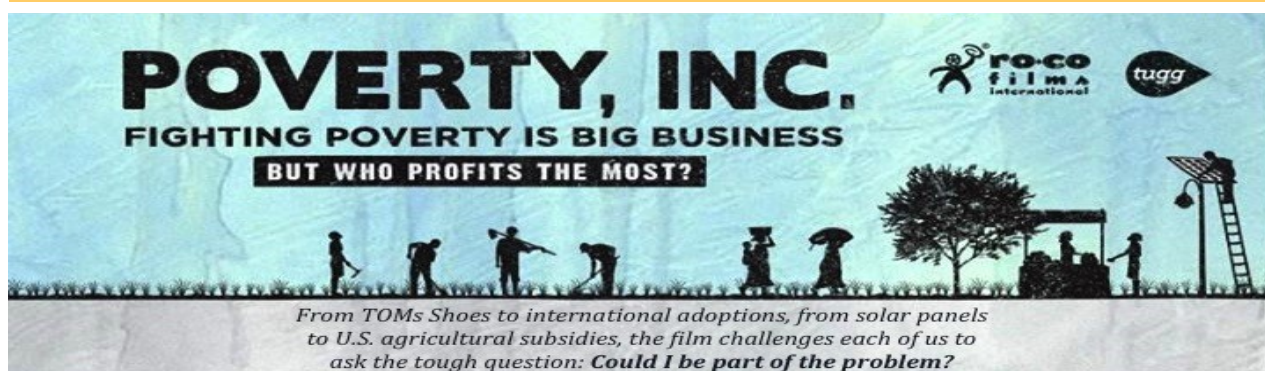
Many events proposed by the division of Student Affairs, or by students themselves, demonstrated the important role the humanities play in students' non-academic lives on campus. A few of the events proposed by the division of Student Affairs included the *Ball Pitt*—a ball pit filled with thought-provoking questions designed to encourage conversation between strangers; the [*Last Lecture Series*](#), in which local leaders speak on a topic they are passionate about and share the wisdom and knowledge of a lifetime; and [*Boxes and Walls*](#), an interactive exhibit designed to present students with situations and circumstances they may not encounter in their everyday lives, encouraging them to think about—and even feel for themselves—others' experiences.

Events proposed by students included an Indian Dance Competition, a performance of the Pitt Ballet Club, a screening of the film [*Poverty, Inc*](#) (including a post-film Q+A with the director), and a lecture promoting health body image by [*Stacy Nadeau*](#), one of the participants in *Dove's* original Real Beauty Campaign.



Above, left to right: In the Hindu Student Council exhibit, students discussed balancing expectations in American and Indian cultures (photo by Emily O'Donnell); former *Dove* model Stacy Nadeau speaks to students in the William Pitt Union (Photo by Jordan Mondell)

Below: Flyer for *Poverty, Inc* film screening with filmmaker Mark Weber.





Clockwise from top: students gather for Pitt-Titusville's Day of Poetry (Photo by Laurie Halse Anderson); a student "advertises" Pitt-Titusville's Day; students gather at Pitt-Johnstown's Western Pennsylvania undergraduate literature conference.

HUMANITIES THROUGHOUT THE REGION

The regional campuses were very active during the Year, with at least four proposals coming from each campus. Some of the events reflected the various strengths and interests represented at the regional campuses. For example, the Greensburg and Johnstown campuses featured events focused on digital technologies, with a [Day of Digital Humanities](#) at Johnstown (see p.8) and a lecture from noted digital humanist [Dr. Wendell Piez at Greensburg](#). Theater professor Kevin Ewert worked with the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford Prison Education to design and perform a theater project in the McKean Federal Correctional Institution.

Many projects also showed the fundamental commitment to the value of the humanities shared by faculty and students across Pitt's campuses. Each of the campuses organized an event focusing on the value of stories and storytelling in our lives, with Pitt-Bradford hosting best-selling young adult author [Laurie Halse Anderson](#), Pitt-Greensburg hosting a Writer's Festival titled [We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live](#), Pitt-Johnstown organizing an [undergraduate literature conference](#) for the Western Pennsylvania region, and Pitt-Titusville hosting a [Day of Poetry](#).

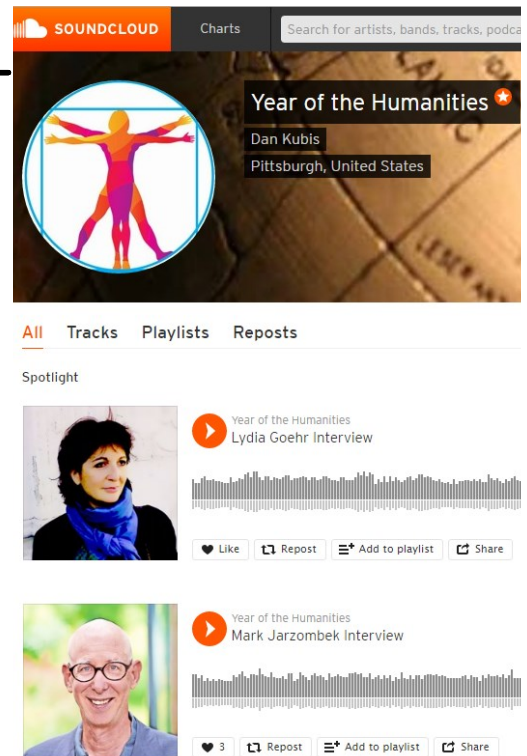
HUMANITIES MEDIA

Digital and social media were a big part of the Year of Humanities, both for publicizing events and giving students a chance to integrate the humanities into their education. The Year's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages grew in popularity throughout the Year, as did the [website](#), which was visited by more than 2,000 users in its best month (March).

The [Year of Humanities podcasts](#), which have received more than 1,000 listens on Soundcloud and iTunes (see screenshot at right), were also a great way of spreading the word about the Year. Hosted by Dan Kubis, the 30-45 minutes conversations focused on ways in which the guests' research was valuable to the broader public, and thus helped support the goals of the Year as well.

In the spring, students in Carl Kurlander's Making the Documentary course worked to create [a documentary about the Year](#). The documentary required that the students collaborate to develop a script, organize film shoots, interview guests, and perform all of the other tasks required for making a film.

The *Pitt Chronicle* also ran [a series of profiles during the Year](#) which featured a number of the Year's committee members who were based in professional schools or the health sciences. See Appendix B for those stories.



The Year of Humanities podcasts, which feature interviews with guests who visited campus during the Year.



Students in Carl Kurlander's Making the Documentary class worked throughout the spring to produce a documentary on the Year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Year of the Humanities in the University at Pitt was a year-long effort that relied on hundreds of people for its success. Nonetheless, special appreciation is due to: Patricia E. Beeson, provost and senior vice chancellor; N. John Cooper, Bettye J. and Ralph E. Bailey Dean of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences; Jonathan Arac, Mellon Professor of English and director of the Humanities Center; Dan Kubis, assistant director of the Humanities Center, who provided indispensable support in that capacity and earlier as assistant to the provost; all the members of the Year of Humanities steering committee; faculty and staff who agreed to lead the pop-ups; members of the steering committee for the Center for Creativity; Steve Anderson and his team(s) in Student Affairs; Maureen Henderson, Jen Florian, Karen Lillis, and Jules Murphy for fantastic administrative support (with special thanks to Jules Murphy for helping design and create this report); members of the CIDDE photography and video team for helping document the Year (including taking all photos in this report (unless otherwise noted)); Carl Kurlander and his students for their work on the Year of Humanities film; Mark Redfern and the Office of Research for their support of the student film; communicators and administrators across the University who helped publicize events; and most of all, everyone at all of Pitt's campuses who proposed, organized, and carried out the Year's events. Thanks.



the year of the
HUMANITIES
IN THE UNIVERSITY

APPENDICES

BEING HUMAN IN A DIGITAL WORLD

EVENTS, SPRING 2016

LECTURE: RUTH MOSTERN

(PITT DIGITAL HISTORY SERIES)

"FROM HISTORICAL GIS RESEARCH TO
A DIGITAL CULTURAL ATLAS ECOLOGY"

March 3, 4 p.m.

Department of History Lounge, 3703 Posvar Hall

Dr. Mostern is a spatial and environmental historian specializing in imperial China and the world. Mostern has authored *Dividing the Realm in Order to Govern: The Spatial Organization of the Song State, 960-1276 CE* (Harvard, 2011) and completed two digital publications, *The Digital Gazetteer of the Song Dynasty* and *Norton StoryMaps*.

LECTURE: PAUL JASKOT

(PITT DIGITAL HISTORY SERIES)

"MAPPING ARCHITECTURE AT AUSCHWITZ:
FROM THE ARCHIVE TO DIGITAL
VISUALIZATION"

March 17, 4 p.m.

Department of History Lounge, 3703 Posvar Hall

Paul Jaskot is a Professor of Art History at De Paul University, and currently Andrew W. Mellon Professor, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Jaskot employs digital methods to study the built environment at Auschwitz.

LECTURE: STEPHEN RAMSAY

(VISITING SCHOLAR AT THE
HUMANITIES CENTER)

"THE ART OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES"

March 22, 5 p.m.

Humanities Center, 602 Cathedral of Learning

Stephen Ramsay is Susan J. Rosowski Associate University Professor of English at the University of Nebraska. He specializes in philosophical issues related to the use of technology in digital humanities, and teaches courses in programming and software engineering to humanities students in both the Department of English and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering.

TALK AND WORKSHOP: MATTHEW LINCOLN

March 28-29

Frick Fine Arts Building

This is the inaugural event for the "Graduate Students in the Digital Humanities" speaker series co-sponsored by the Visual Media Workshop in the Department of History of Art and Architecture and the Digital Media Lab in the Department of English. There will be talk and a workshop on Palladio.

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP: INTELLIGENT CONVERSATIONS IN THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES SERIES

"UBIQUITOUS COMPUTING AND
SURVEILLANCE CULTURE"

April 1, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Third Floor Collaboration Space,

School of Information Sciences Building

This is the second of a pair of problem-based, research-focused workshops called "Intelligent Conversations about Digital Computing and the Humanities." In these sessions, humanists, social scientists, natural scientists, medical scientists, computer scientists, and information scientists will all be invited to come together to work through, and perhaps even solve problems in, particular areas of common interest.

CONFERENCE: "TEXT AS PROCESS: GENETIC AND TEXTUAL CRITICISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE"

April 4-6

Humanities Center, 602 Cathedral of Learning

This conference will include discussion of how to represent literary manuscripts, transcriptions and digitally, and how to discuss the hermeneutics of interpretation of stages (particularly early stages) of literary creation. Examples will be drawn from Latin American, British, French and Portuguese literatures. Participants include Peter Shillingsburg, Sally Bushell, Julio Premat, Anne Hirschberg-Pierrot, Jerónimo Pizarro and Alejandro Higashi.

LECTURE: TIM HITCHCOCK

(PITT DIGITAL HISTORY SERIES)

"THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES IN
THREE DIMENSIONS"

May 4, 4 p.m.

Department of History Lounge, 3703 Posvar Hall

Tim Hitchcock is Professor of Digital History, University of Sussex, UK. A Berkeley and Oxford-trained historian of eighteenth-century Britain, and pioneer in DH in the UK, Hitchcock helped create websites to give public access to 30 billion words of primary sources evidencing the history of Britain.

www.humanities.pitt.edu



THE WORLD OF THE
HUMANITIES
IN THE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
The DIETRICH School of
Arts & Sciences



University of Pittsburgh

PittChronicle
Newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh

[PITT HOME](#) | [FIND PEOPLE](#)



[SUBSCRIBE TO
RECEIVE HEADLINES
IN E-MAIL »](#)



Year of the Humanities Profile: The Science and Art of Care

By Cindy Gill

Issue Date: October 12, 2015

In August, during orientation, a cross section of students studying dental medicine, pharmacy, and public health got some lessons on something else—what it's like to be poor. The incoming students took part in a poverty simulation, a learning tool that uses role-playing and everyday scenarios to reveal the obstacles faced by low-income families. A no-show babysitter for a single parent results in a missed class or workday. A full-time job doesn't cover all the bills, so a family must choose between purchasing food, paying utilities, or buying life-saving medicines. An eviction notice arrives in the mail; more will come—and then what?

"The realities of making those choices and determining priorities—and feeling those pressures—become very real," says Susan Meyer, associate dean of education in the School of Pharmacy. "It's eye-opening, particularly for students who haven't experienced such circumstances."



Professor Susan Meyer, left, with her student, Chelsea Henderson, who is completing a Doctor of Pharmacy degree at Pitt.

One goal of this orientation tool is to develop awareness and sensitivity to the circumstances of others, and the pharmacy curriculum includes instruction that directly addresses the need for cultural responsiveness in the profession. Meyer notes, too, that the provider-patient relationship is, fundamentally, a human relationship. Getting pharmacy students to think about their patients as *people* first is foundational to the profession, she says, adding that health has social determinants, including ease of access to care, potential stress around affordability, and other factors.

"There's far more to patients' lives than the glimpse of them you have when you're interacting with them on a professional basis," she says. "It's important to recognize that. It's about understanding your patients, first, as human beings."

As Pitt celebrates this academic year as the Year of the Humanities in the University, it's helpful to recognize how faculty from every discipline and from diverse professions are part of the humanities endeavor.

Meyers, who is a professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, serves on the steering committee for this year's celebration of the humanities at Pitt. Joining her within that group are faculty from areas as diverse as business, engineering, law, physics and astronomy, human genetics, and political science, as well as colleagues from English literature, music, and other humanities departments.

"We can be better teachers or more effective caretakers if we understand ourselves as human beings and have an appreciation for the arts and humanities and learn from them as well," says Meyer, a licensed pharmacist.

As it happens, she's in an ideal role to share that perspective with both students and faculty colleagues. Her responsibilities within Pitt's School of Pharmacy and its Doctor of Pharmacy program include curriculum development and assessment, faculty development, and some admissions-related work, as well as teaching. Her own background includes undergraduate, master's, and PhD degrees in pharmaceutical sciences with a focus on education and instructional development. Her undergraduate years at Ohio Northern University included courses on religion, philosophy, and other liberal arts woven into the curriculum. She also acquired plenty of experience as a teaching assistant during those years.

"I realized," she says, "that I like to help people learn."

During her graduate years at Purdue University, Meyer took courses in instructional design and development, the measurement of educational achievement, and the science of learning. After graduation, she taught in Rutgers University College of Pharmacy, then built a nontraditional career on the staff of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, eventually becoming its senior vice president. While there, she became enthusiastically involved in an interprofessional endeavor that brought together different professions to jointly develop educational and assessment tools.

Those experiences led her to Pitt in 2006, where she sought to employ her leadership skills and share her expertise with students in a vibrant academic health sciences setting. Now, she's not only involved with several interprofessional working groups and initiatives in the health sciences, she's also active on several Provost-area committees, including the Year of Humanities steering group.

"I learn something every time I'm at one of those meeting tables," she says. "Where else on Earth can you spend time with brilliant people from so many different areas? It's just really fun, and it broadens your exposure."

For Susan Meyer, the art of learning is part of the fabric of the humanities. Right now, she's involved with a working group in the Schools of the Health Sciences to develop an educational resource that will use examples taken from literature and film to produce teachable moments for students in the health professions. So far, sources include the film *Patch Adams*, a documentary about music therapy titled *Alive Inside*, and a young-adult book about a teenager learning to live with a disability after a serious accident. Ultimately, the project, which was funded by a Year of the Humanities competitive grant, will create instructional guides, with trigger questions, for course teaching—a resource that will outlive this year's celebration.

Other activities throughout the academic year include a diverse set of lectures by distinguished guests; panel discussions moderated by Pitt faculty, including Meyer; Humanities pop-ups around various schools on campus; and special funding support in honor of the Year of the Humanities. For complete details, visit www.humanities.pitt.edu.

"All of this gets back to my original point," says Meyer. "You can't be a doctor or a pharmacist ... or a person ... without being human."



University of Pittsburgh

PittChronicle

Newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh



PITT HOME | FIND PEOPLE

SUBSCRIBE TO
RECEIVE HEADLINES
IN E-MAIL »

Year of the Humanities Profile: What Are the Origins of the Universe?



By Cristina Rouvalis

Issue Date: November 16, 2015

Years ago, as a University of Chicago graduate student, Arthur Kosowsky's research was a conversation-stopper at parties. Anytime he would mention he was studying theoretical physics, the partygoers' eyes would glaze over before they would turn away to talk to someone else.

But today, more than 20 years later, when he happens to mention that he's a University of Pittsburgh professor of physics and astronomy, people's eyes light up. "Wow, you do that?" they might say. "What is the story with black holes?" Or, "I just read about astronomers discovering a new asteroid."

Headlines about topics such as the Hubble Space Telescope; the movie about physicist Stephen Hawking, *The Theory of Everything*; and the discovery of water on Mars have done more than make Kosowsky more popular at parties. They have captured the imagination of lots of people who ponder how the universe was formed more than 13 billion years ago.



Arthur Kosowsky
(Photo by Emily O'Donnell)

Looking up at the heavens raises one of the most basic human questions posed throughout the centuries, said Kosowsky: What are the origins of the universe, of us?

Though his research is steeped in advanced mathematics, computer programming, and abstract scientific terms, he views it as a human and universal story about our origins. "In some sense, it is the greatest example of humanistic endeavor in all of history," he said.

"How the universe began and how it evolved, that is fundamentally our modern creation story," he said. "Every culture in the history of humanity has a creation myth. Now we have a story that is not a myth. It is based on observations and science."

As Pitt celebrates the Year of the Humanities in the University, it's useful to see how a range of people from diverse fields draw from the humanities in their work.

Kosowsky serves on the steering committee for this year's celebration of the humanities at Pitt. Joining him are faculty from diverse areas, including pharmacy, business, engineering, law, and political science, as well as colleagues from English literature, music, and other humanities departments.

In addition to courses in advanced physics and cosmology, Kosowsky taught "The History of Astronomy: Stonehenge to Hubble" to a class of mostly non-science majors.

"Astronomy is probably the oldest continually documented human endeavor" dating back to Stonehenge, the prehistoric monument located in Wiltshire, England, he said. "Stonehenge had clear astronomical purpose. It aligned certain ways with awareness of the sky."

From the early Babylonians to the ancient Greeks, people have put a lot of time, energy, and creativity into studying the stars, Kosowsky added. Farmers used early astronomy to determine the growing seasons.

The Pitt physicist grew up in Omaha, Neb., fascinated by science and the sci-fi worlds invented by Isaac Asimov and other writers. But he also was a top English student, winning a writing prize his senior year.

After earning a bachelor's of science degree in physics at Washington University in St. Louis in 1989, he received a PhD in physics from the University of Chicago in 1994 and was a Junior Fellow in the Society of Fellows at Harvard University.

He entered the field of cosmology—a branch of astronomy that studies the cosmos—in the early '90s, a period of astonishing breakthroughs. Before then, "cosmology was considered a little out-there, these crazy guys making up wacky theories. There was no serious doubt that the Big Bang had happened. But we had very little information on the basic properties of the universe."

The field was transformed by many experiments that enabled scientists to research and map out the thermal radiation generated in the aftermath of the Big Bang, called cosmic microwave background. It's the radiation released about 370,000 years after the Big Bang, which makes it the oldest light visible today.

Kosowsky, who has been involved in a related telescope project in northern Chile's Atacama Desert, said the cosmic microwave background holds keys to the origins of the universe. "We can make a map of the radiation, where it was hotter or colder, giving us an image of the universe when it was very young ... It is a baby picture of the universe. We can calculate what the microwave background should look like in any particular model of the universe. By comparing these calculations with maps of the sky, we get precise measurements of the basic properties of the universe."

Though he teaches students hard science, Kosowsky also urges them to develop writing skills so they can advance their careers. "There are people who have been brilliant at equations, but have never made an impact on science because they can't communicate. Other people have made a career, not because they are the ones with the most brilliant ideas, but because they were able to explain an interesting idea well."

He also tells his students that creativity is crucial to doing cutting-edge science.

"Lots of people can do hard math problems who will never end up being top-notch scientists," he said. "Science is really about what questions you ask. There is no formula for that. It is creative like writing a novel or writing a symphony. What is the next interesting question?"



University of Pittsburgh

PittChronicle

Newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh

PITT HOME | FIND PEOPLE



SUBSCRIBE TO
RECEIVE HEADLINES
IN E-MAIL »



Year of the Humanities Profile: Loving the Language of Law

By Cristina Rouvalis

Issue Date: December 7, 2015

Every summer in her youth, Vivian Curran would travel with her parents to their homeland of France. On trips to Paris and the countryside, her mother, Elizabeth, would pick up children's books and mail them back to their home in Philadelphia in a big box. As Vivian would read works such as "La petite sœur de Trott" ("Trott's Little Sister"), she had a realization: The French words on the page went beyond their literal meaning to express deeper cultural subtleties.

"It was a Eureka moment," she said. "Language isn't a passive tool. It is part of a living structure, bound to a rich tapestry of history and society."

That sensitivity to cross-cultural nuances has guided her throughout her life. Now a distinguished faculty scholar and professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Curran specializes in comparative law.



Vivian Curran

To her, the humanities are as vital to the law as tort and motions.

"Comparative law is a form of translation from one legal culture to another. It comes embedded in politics, history, and literature. A constitutional charter has no meaning if it is not carried in the hearts and minds of its citizens. The humanities are as important as anything else in law to me."

As Pitt celebrates this academic year as the Year of the Humanities in the University, it's useful to see how a range of people from diverse fields draws from the humanities in their work.

Curran serves on the steering committee for this year's celebration of the humanities at Pitt. Joining her are faculty in areas such as pharmacy, business, engineering, physics, and political science, as well as colleagues from English literature, music, and other humanities departments.

In her 25 years in the field of comparative law, Curran has watched the field grow rapidly as the world has become more global. "Capital moves with a click of a computer. Judges need to know about other countries' legal systems. When people sue, there are all sorts of legal choices that cross national borders."

The University of Pittsburgh law school offers a certificate in international and comparative law, a popular path for students who want to go into international business, or work at the United Nations or a governmental agency. She said some law students strengthen their credentials with a dual degree from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs.

Curran didn't start out wanting to study law. After receiving a bachelor's of art in French literature from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in French literature and romance philology from Columbia University, she figured she would be a professor of French. It was a natural career path for a first-generation French-American who grew up speaking it. (In fact, her parents also taught her German.)

But then she decided that would be too easy. "I had a feminist feeling that I hadn't proven myself."

She taught French at Trinity School, a private college preparatory school in Manhattan while she earned a law degree at Columbia University. The next move was Pittsburgh, where she practiced corporate law at Rose, Schmidt, Hasley & DiSalle. After a few years, though, she realized she missed teaching. Then, 25 years ago, she landed her job at Pitt's law school, the perfect blend of her interests. "I consider myself truly blessed. This is the one and only career for me."

The vice president of the American Society of Comparative Law, Curran has won international recognition for her work. In 2007, the Republic of Austria honored her for her service as a United States appointee to the Austrian General Settlement Fund Committee for Nazi-era property compensation. "It was the most rewarding experience of my career," she said.

In 2013, the French government decorated her for promoting French language and culture in the United States.

An expert in French law, she has entered her students in moot court competition in which they write a legal brief to a tribunal in Paris. She said she is proud of her team for advancing to the second of three rounds, a tough feat for non-native French speakers. "It is very hard. They don't let me help."

The woman who grew up speaking three languages also started the law school's innovative Languages for Lawyers program, teaching students foreign languages in a legal context. The English for Lawyers program teaches foreign lawyers English legal terms.

"If law students can understand a little bit about another culture and language, it opens them up so much more" to that world, she said. The language school is a draw for the law school, she said.

Though the legal profession is known for logic and analytical reasoning, Curran encourages her students to tap into their creative side as well. "You need rigorous thought to be a lawyer. Absolutely. But you also need a soul if you want to be a thinker. We need people who can think out new problems with creativity."



University of Pittsburgh

PITT HOME | FIND PEOPLE

PittChronicle

Newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh



SUBSCRIBE TO
RECEIVE HEADLINES
IN E-MAIL »



Year of the Humanities Profile: Business Profits from Humane Strategies

By Cristina Rouvalis

Issue Date: January 19, 2016

When John Camillus consults with corporations about business strategy, he never tells them that being socially responsible is simply the right thing to do.

"That would never fly. They would think I was a goody two-shoes," said Camillus, the Donald R. Beall Professor of Strategic Management at the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business.

But he's no Pollyanna. Camillus makes it clear that there is tangible economic advantage in embracing social responsibility. In his consulting with Fortune 500s as well as many other companies, he tells business leaders that incorporating human values results in more profits in the long run, and possibly even in the short run.



John Camillus
(Photo by Emily O'Donnell)

For Camillus, the very soul of business is intertwined with the humanities. With Professor Bopaya Bidanda of the Swanson School of Engineering, he founded the Business of Humanity® Project, which seeks to develop economic and strategic models informed by the criterion of "humanity." The project develops case studies, organizes conferences, and offers graduate courses here and abroad, and has initiated projects to demonstrate the importance of humanity—employing humane strategic criteria and serving humankind in business decisions.

"People's values are critically important to corporations," he said. "The difference between Costco and Enron is extraordinarily telling. Values drive strategic decisions. Moreover, understanding human motivations and behavior is at the core of business functions such as marketing and management control."

As Pitt celebrates this academic year as the Year of the Humanities in the University, it's useful to see how people from diverse fields draw from the humanities in their work. Camillus serves on the steering committee for this year's celebration of the humanities at Pitt. Joining him are faculty in diverse areas such as pharmacy, law, engineering, physics, and political science, as well as colleagues from English literature, music, and other humanities departments.

Camillus also teaches a course called "The Business of Humanity®." Lest some business people roll their eyes at the touchy-feely title, he added the course subtitle: "Strategic Management in the Era of Globalization, Innovation and Shared Value."

He cites as a case study Arvind Ltd., a textile manufacturer in India that has long embraced community values. Camillus said Arvind responded to the increasing incidence of farmers committing suicide because their crops failed and they could not pay their debts. The textile company helped farmers start growing organic cotton, which did not need expensive pesticides and herbicides to thrive. "They hired more than a hundred agronomists to work with farmers," Camillus said. "They eliminated middlemen who preyed on the farmers."

"The farmers are much better off. The environment is better off because the soil is not harmed by pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Arvind is better off as a profitable, globally respected producer of organic cotton denim. Arvind's is a values-driven strategy that demonstrates that the Business of Humanity® works."

Camillus said values-driven business decisions should consider every segment of society. "The world is not only people who buy Bentleys and Jimmy Choo. It is also billions of people who live on \$2 a day."

Awareness of the human condition was impossible to overlook in India, Camillus said. The disparity between the affluent and destitute was painfully evident to him growing up in Chennai, India. He attended the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology in Madras, where he studied mechanical engineering. He then received a postgraduate diploma in management at the elite Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Ahmedabad. Admittance to both institutes was highly selective. Upper middle-class students such as Camillus who could afford the best high school and preparation classes had an immense advantage in getting in, he said. "There are scholarships available, based on means, but getting into these schools is not really possible for the hundreds of millions in India who cannot afford a good primary and secondary education."

After graduating from IIM, Camillus moved to the United States and earned a doctorate in business administration at Harvard University.

He returned to India, young, ambitious, and eager to help his country. He consulted on strategic planning for clients ranging from the cabinet-level of government to nonprofits to major corporations. His work with nonprofits and government ministries on the challenges of poverty and economic development brought a human face to the issues.

Even consulting with corporations obliquely raised issues of humanity. As an advisor to top management, it was politic to make travel arrangements that mirrored the style of the CEO. "I would stay in the very best hotels and take chauffeur-driven cars. Then I would see people living on the sidewalk, going hungry, whose monthly income was less than what I spent on lunch. It was obviously not right for human beings to live in luxury next to such suffering without trying to do something to improve the situation."

Camillus returned to the States as a visiting faculty member at Pitt in 1977 and has never looked back. Beyond the attractions of the academic climate and opportunities at Pitt, the government-declared "emergency" in India in the late '70s, which abrogated civil rights, made staying in the U.S. incredibly appealing.

He has won the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching and Distinguished Public Service Awards. In 2015, he received the inaugural Diversity and Global Leadership Award at the Katz School.

Business schools and universities have a role in producing knowledge and advocating that businesses and the individuals who run them pay more attention to how they can better serve mankind, said Camillus. "Business is a fundamentally human institution," he noted. "Being human and understanding humans are at the heart of what business does."



PittChronicle

Newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh



SUBSCRIBE TO
RECEIVE HEADLINES
IN E-MAIL »

Year of the Humanities Profile: The Art of Engineering

By Cristina Rouvalis

Issue Date: February 15, 2016

As a high school student in Illinois, Mary Besterfield excelled in math and science, but she also had artistic talent. The aspiring artist told her parents she wanted to attend art school. Her father, an engineering professor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, was a practical man, so he struck a deal with his daughter. If she got her engineering degree first, then he would pay for art school, too.

So off she went to engineering school at the University of Missouri-Rolla. When she graduated with a bachelor's of science degree in engineering management in 1986, her father told her he would make good on his art school promise. But the study of engineering had changed the aspiring artist's plans. Instead, she went on to earn a master's degree in industrial engineering from Purdue University and then a PhD in industrial engineering from the University of Pittsburgh.

Though she no longer dabbles in art, Besterfield-Sacre (her married name) still appreciates the arts, and sees a strong overlap between engineering and the humanities.

"The purpose of engineering is to make humankind better," says Besterfield-Sacre, a Fulton C. Noss Faculty Fellow and an associate professor of engineering at Pitt.



Mary Besterfield-Sacre

As Pitt celebrates this year's Year of the Humanities in the University, it's useful to see how people from diverse fields draw from the humanities in their work.

Besterfield-Sacre serves on the steering committee for this year's celebration of the humanities. Joining her are faculty in fields ranging from pharmacy, law, business, engineering, physics, and political science, as well as colleagues from English literature, music, and other humanities departments.

As director of the Engineering Education Research Center at the Swanson School of Engineering, Besterfield-Sacre conducts engineering education research. She says a humanities slant is crucial to educating creative engineers. "We need to have a sense of relevance that will help with the motivation of study."

She also teaches the capstone undergraduate course in industrial engineering, in which students use their engineering skills to do projects in the community, including one at Jeremiah's Place, a crisis nursery for children in the community. Engineering students helped the nonprofit group by developing a database to replace the paper-intake system and by starting an inventory management system.

Besterfield-Sacre is also part of a group of faculty vested in increasing innovation and entrepreneurship in the school of engineering. For example, the Swanson School of Engineering offers a class called “The Art of Making,” a hands-on system design and engineering class that fosters creativity and problem-solving. Freshman engineering honor students and upper-classmen work in groups to solve problems and build everything from a mechanical hand to a motorized vehicle.

Such creative exercises, she says, force engineers to look broadly at the problem.

“Instead of starting at step one, they have to take a step back to zero to figure out what the problem is.”

The Swanson School program also instills a global awareness and social consciousness in students, and has several electives that give students the opportunity to travel abroad. In the fall and spring semesters, a group of engineering students travels to Panama to work with an indigenous community to build water and sewage systems.

In a class called “Engineering of the Renaissance,” two engineering faculty members take a group of about 20 to 25 students to Florence in May to study the connections between art, architecture, and engineering.

“Engineering is hard. Students can get wrapped up in the technical and science aspects,” she says. “But we want to make sure they understand that engineering is part of society.”

The school also explores the link between math and music ability, a connection suggested by the fact that one-third of Pitt’s marching band are engineering students. The school offers a one-credit “Music Engineering” course, complete with a music studio (the Music Engineering Lab) and a state-of-the art recording system. “You don’t have to be musically inclined,” Besterfield-Sacre says. “You just have to have a strong interest in learning it.”

For the Year of the Humanities, the school is offering several fun “pop-up” classes: two-hour workshops on subjects ranging from salsa dancing to photography. Engineering students might not have the time to trek across campus to learn how to move to a Latin rhythm, but they may find the time to dance if the lesson comes to them, she notes.

Looking ahead, the accomplished engineer says that she, too, may once again stretch her artistic side—after her kids are grown.



University of Pittsburgh

PittChronicle

Newspaper of the University of Pittsburgh

PITT HOME | FIND PEOPLE



SUBSCRIBE TO
RECEIVE HEADLINES
IN E-MAIL »

Year of the Humanities Profile: A Philosopher of Bioethics

By Cristina Rouvalis

Issue Date: March 14, 2016

An 8-year-old girl suffers from seizures—dozens every week—and her desperate mother brings the child to a top neurologist. The mother agrees with the doctor's suggestion to have genetic testing done, looking for a genetic cause that would enable her doctors to tailor the treatment.

But instead of genetic links to the seizures, the lab discovers an "incidental finding," a genetic mutation predisposing the child to breast cancer, a trait that could have been passed down from the mother or father.



Lisa Suzanne Parker

And the father's test doesn't reveal a mutation for cancer, but instead it shows something much more shocking—he isn't the girl's genetic father. It's a secret that could shake the foundation of the family. How should it be handled?

Lisa Suzanne Parker weighs such possible scenarios as she researches the real-world dilemmas of bioethics along with her colleagues in the University's Center for Bioethics and Health Law.

As associate professor of human genetics at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health—the first bioethicist appointed in a genetics department in the country—Parker wades into thorny modern issues at a time when genetic testing, gene manipulation, and other issues have created headlines and new boundaries.

To Parker, the questions of bioethics are solidly rooted in the humanities. In fact, she is a philosopher who applies the tools of her discipline to medical research and treatment.

"We help investigators to recognize the questions that can't be answered by data," Parker said.

She added that the study of humanities, especially philosophy, "develops skills to clarify values, ask questions, identify what is at stake," and help investigators decide whether a matter should be an individual decision or a matter of policy.

As Pitt celebrates this academic year's Year of the Humanities in the University, it's useful to see how a range of people from diverse fields draws from the humanities in their work.

Parker serves on the steering committee for this year's celebration of the Year of the Humanities. Joining her are faculty in fields ranging from pharmacy, law, business, engineering, physics, and political science, as well as colleagues from English literature, music, and other humanities departments.

Her research focuses on ethical issues regarding the privacy of genetic information and the way that genetic information can change how people perceive themselves. For example, if a young man finds out he has a genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's, does that cause undue anxiety and alter his feeling of wellness? Should he have access to that medical information?

Parker also provides researchers with ethical guidance on the design of their studies, including compensation of subjects.

In one scenario, a research subject has blood drawn three times over a six-month period. Parker advises researchers to pay after each blood draw, instead of waiting to pay the subject at the end. That way, the subject who would rather drop out of the study won't hold out to the end just to receive the payment.

Parker doesn't talk directly to patients. Instead, her role is to help frame the questions that genetic counselors and their patients may consider.

For example, what happens if one sibling wants to do testing to reveal her genetics-related risk of disease, while her brothers and sisters don't want to know?

Parker helps to shape the national debate on such issues. She chairs the Genomics and Society Working Group that identifies emerging ethical issues and advises the National Human Genome Research Institute, which is part of the National Institutes of Health. She also serves on NIH working groups that develop policy recommendations on the management of research results and incidental findings.

Parker enjoys working on such ethical issues out in the world as opposed to the more solitary study of philosophy. As a college student, she was drawn to philosophy because of its rigor and intellectual stimulation. She excelled in the field and received a PhD in philosophy through Pitt's acclaimed program.

"Studying philosophy has given me a finer instrument for making decisions, rather than making blunt decisions."

Reading literature and watching plays also encourage medical professionals to develop more empathy for their patients and helps them to ask more sensitive questions that go beyond mere symptoms, she said. While a physician with a comfortable life may not undergo pain, poverty, or addiction, studying the arts can help the doctor understand the experiences of the patient, Parker said. A great work of fiction or a moving play can help clinicians understand a patient better so they "don't jump to the conclusion of test results."

In addition to directing the University's Master of Arts Program in Bioethics, she passes on her passion for bioethics to medical students, some of whom earn a concentration in humanities, ethics, and palliative care. "I am excited by the number of students who are interested in integrating ethics and humanities into science," she says.