

**Letter from the
 director**

Welcome, Spring 2009

This has been a winter of many discontents for Michigan and the nation as a whole, but, hopefully, all of us can look forward to brighter days, beginning with the very welcome arrival of spring!

Among the highlights of the year for the MA in Liberal Studies program was the nomination of Laura Zimmerman for the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs' (AGLSP) first national "Confluence Award for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Writing." A short item on her nomination and an abstract of her paper appear on page 4. Another high point came in Professor Phyllis Rooney's fall 2008 course, "Gender, Feminism, and Knowledge" when students had the opportunity to meet Dr. Laura Kramer of Montclair State University. Photos of Dr. Kramer's visit appear on page 8.



Winter majesty fades to the emergence of spring beauty.



Can Summer be far behind?

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Director's letter, cont.

Exciting plans are afoot for the first regional graduate liberal studies conference to be held in May of 2010 at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. As plans evolve, they will be posted on the MALS website. Please start thinking now about presenting your own work at this first-ever regional event which will bring together graduate students from UM-Dearborn, Oakland, University of Toledo, and Findley College, among other regional institutions.

I hope to see you at the MALS Spring Celebration on Friday, April 24, 2009; details are on page 4.

Enjoy our beautiful Michigan spring and summer weather!

With warm wishes to you all,

Linda Benson

Fireside Chat about the MALS Program with Lori Heublein



As Lori Heublein began her final semester, I asked her to share some of her thoughts with me about her experiences in the MALS program at Oakland University. We met on a very cold afternoon in the Oakland Center where she shared how she approaches this semester with mixed feelings. She is really sad that her time here is nearly over, yet excited to see the fulfillment of her hard work.

The love of learning was instilled in Lori by her family. She comes from a long line of educators. Her grandfather was a math professor, her aunt a teacher, her mother a fourth grade teacher and her father a teacher of theology. Lori received her undergraduate degree in Music/Performing Arts/Vocal at U of M Flint and planned on being a music teacher. She soon realized that this was not her calling and decided to attend Oakland University to pursue a Master's degree in English. However, after a year and a half of study she felt she was in the wrong program and approached Professor Natalie Cole who directed Lori to the MALS program. Lori found this program a perfect fit.

Lori started working part-time at the Palace of Auburn Hills when she was sixteen and has worked her way up to a full time position in Human Resources with the Center Plate Company which is in charge of the Palace concessions. She now travels for the company, helping open stadium concessions in major cities such as Toronto. Her friends often look skeptical and raise their eyes when she tells them about her Masters program, but her bosses have been very impressed. They find the broad spectrum of the interdisciplinary studies fascinating and impressive and have witnessed Lori's creative thinking on the job.

"We in the MALS program are thinking outside the box," says Lori, and that should really impress everyone. "We are taught by professors who take on an extra load of planning a single interdisciplinary class that (in itself) is 'outside the box.' The breadth of classes is phenomenal and the variety outstanding. And everyone in the program is so supportive."

"I would never have taken a class on politics, but couple it with literature and I was right there. Who would think of putting 'The Nuclear Age' with religion? It was fascinating. And I never thought I would take a class on China, but how could I not be intrigued by 'The Silk Road'?"

"Another bonus I found is the freedom we are given to explore 'Out there' ideas and still keep in the parameters of the class. One art professor allowed me to compare the artist David to the composer Beethoven. It was a stretch, but they were both transitional artists, just not in the same medium. It was fun and challenging and I felt great when it was done – like I really had accomplished something."

When I asked about her thesis Lori said, "One bit of advice I would give any MALS student is don't procrastinate." Lori is in the process of narrowing down her subject and choosing a solid focus. Her topic will entail delving into the life of the poor during the Industrial Revolution in Manchester, England. Her research will involve exploring historical writings, old newspaper articles, and the writings of Elizabeth Gaskell. Lori's educational background and continued thirst for learning is what brought her to the MALS program and, though she will no longer be an enrolled student, she will continue to be a lifelong learner.

Winter Break in Rome

By Kathleen Fabian
MALS Graduate Assistant

Over winter break twelve Oakland University students accompanied Art History Professor Louisa Ngote to Rome. Their purpose was to photograph various pieces of art and architecture to include in a book for a class project in “Rome-Building a City”, a course in Art History. I was privileged to join them and work alongside them in this endeavor. Our hotel was centrally located and we were able to walk, take the bus, or subway to all of the sites that we needed to see.

Rome is such an eclectic city with the ancient and new blended in such a way that I felt like I was on a treasure hunt searching for those glimpses of the past. Every corner one turns there is another sight to behold. Buildings such as the Pantheon are surrounded by tall city buildings and modern day traffic; churches are butted up against the next building; and the visitor may miss a beautiful sight if one is not observant. Plazas with fountains by famous artists like Bernini, Della Porta, Moderno, Fontana and others are everywhere.

As I walked into St. Peter’s Square I was not prepared for the overwhelming moment of emotion. I have seen pictures and television images of this square many times, yet the massiveness and majesty could never be captured by a camera. Both the inside of St. Peter’s and the inside of the Pantheon give unique experiences of space. To realize the magnificence of these structures, how much work and planning it took to create these spaces, and the endurance of their beauty is overwhelming. The Forum, the Palatine, the Colosseum and Trajan’s Market are among the monuments excavated from the early Roman Empire and located near the Capitoline Museum where the Equestrian Statue of Mark Aurel resides. Archeological digs are still going on all over Rome. Museums abound and each one has its own special treasures. Of course, the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel were included on our must see list. The food was good, the people friendly, and the experience – priceless.



Trevi Fountain



Archeological Dig by Trajan Market



Part of our traveling group



MALS Springtime Celebration

April 24, 2009

Current students in the MA in Liberal Studies program are
cordially invited to attend this year's
Spring Celebration
Friday evening, April 24, 2009,
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Students interested in applying to the program for admission in the fall of 2009 are also welcome to attend.

This event will feature a buffet dinner and a short program beginning at 6:00 p.m. In addition, the gathering will honor faculty who have served on the MALS Executive Committee as well as professors who have taught for the program or will be teaching for MALS in the coming academic year. Information on courses and activities for 2009-2010 will be available.

Please RSVP by April 20, 2009, to Graciela Osterberg at 248-370-2154 or osterber@oakland.edu.

AGLSP Writing Award Nominee Laura Zimmerman

Oakland University's MALS program has nominated Laura Zimmerman's paper, "Telling Stories Without Words: The Role of Art in Charles H. Red Corn's *A Pipe for February*," for the first national "Confluence Award for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Writing." This award will be given for the first time in 2009 by the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs (AGLSP). The winner not only receives \$500 but also will have the pleasure of seeing his or her article published in the AGLSP journal, *Confluence*. The award ceremony will be part of the association's annual conference, which will be held in Orlando, Florida in October 2009.

Laura's paper was written for Professor Gladys Cardiff's course, Contemporary Native American Writing, in the winter semester of 2008. The abstract she wrote for her paper concisely delineates her interdisciplinary approach to understanding the place of Native American artists in America. She writes: "Interweaving the fictional Osage Indian artist John Grayeagle in Charles Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* with examples from Kiowa and Pueblo Indian artists as well as non-Native ones, 'Telling Stories Without Words' explores the complex relationship between art, literature, anthropology, sociology, and history. As we are drawn into Grayeagle's quest to capture the essence of his people in his paintings, we are led to examine the dichotomy of classifying art by Native artists as something other than American or Western. Do curators and historians segregate art created by Indians as an exotic subclass of lesser importance and impact? Why is art viewed this way while works by respected authors such as Gerald Vizenor, M. Scott Momaday, and Leslie Silko – who happen to be American Indians – are assimilated into mainstream literary criticism?" She concludes her abstract by asserting that " 'Separate but equal' exhibitions of American Indian art perpetuate the myth that the art and artists are exotic and require special 'handling.' "

If you have an exceptional paper you would like to submit to this national competition next year, please contact the program director and watch for details on the competition on the MALS website in the fall of 2009.

**Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
Oakland University
Fall 2009**

**LBS 500 – Introductory Colloquium
Wednesday, 6:30 - 9:50 p.m.**

Bandits, Pirates, & Highwaymen

Linda Benson

Professor of History and Director of MALS



**What is behind our fascination with bandits and pirates?
Why is the highwayman of poetry and legend a romantic figure, despite his
penchant for theft and robbery?**

This course explores the lives and times of the world's most infamous brigands and thieves, and examines the processes by which myths and legends romanticized and transformed villains into heroic, celebrated figures. Beginning with the ideas in Eric Hobsbawm's classic study, *Bandits*, we will investigate the lives of Blackbeard the pirate, China's infamous Zhang Yi, the Australian Ned Kelly, and the notorious Jesse James, among others. These colorful figures not only offer an introduction to the world of banditry and piracy but also provide a vehicle through which we will cross disciplinary boundaries to explore notions of law and justice; the fate of civil society during periods of extreme social dislocation; the divide between "barbaric" and "civilized;" the link between "social bandits" and revolutionaries; and the ways in which legends persist, even in light of convincing historical evidence to the contrary.



Dick Terpin

**Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
Oakland University
Fall 2009**

**LBS 512 Elective
Wednesday, 6:30 – 9:50 p.m.**

ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Weldon Matthews, History



The course examines the origins and development of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process. The readings and class discussion will focus primarily on the Israeli and Palestinian dimensions, in addition to American diplomacy. These issues will be examined against the background of Great Power and Super Power rivalry, British imperialism, and inter-Arab relations.

Don Matthews received his Ph.D. from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. He specializes in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab nationalism, and imperialism and the Cold War in the Middle East. He is the author of *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine, 2006*.

WINTER 2010

**LBS 512 Humanities Elective
Tuesday, 6:30 – 9:50 pm**

**History of Mexico
Professor Mary Karasch
Department of History**



Aztec warriors as shown in the [Florentine Codex](#).

This course examines the scope and achievements of pre-Columbian civilizations, the impact of the Spanish conquest, and the emergence of a multi-racial society in Mexico. It also examines the events leading to the country's political independence and the nation-building processes of the 20th century.

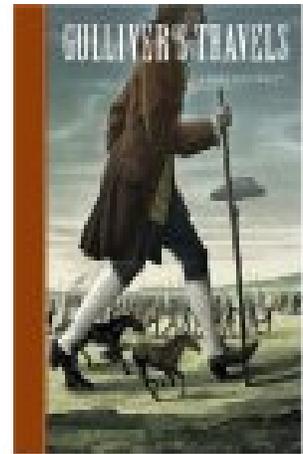
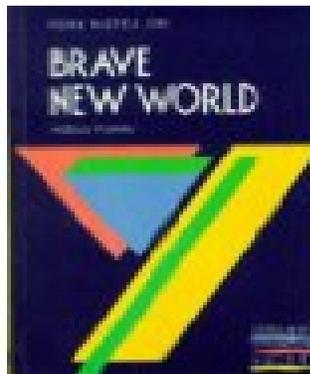
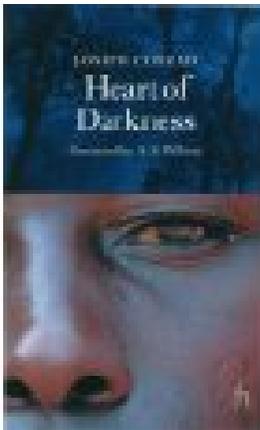
Professor Mary Karasch, Department of History, is a specialist in the history of Latin America. An internationally recognized scholar, her research and publications focus on Brazil, but she has also traveled extensively in Mexico since the 1960s and taught the history of Mexico for more than twenty years.

New Course

Winter Semester 2010
 LBS 503
 Core Seminar in the Social Sciences
Politics Through Literature

Time and location TBA

Paul Kubicek
 Professor of Political Science



This interdisciplinary seminar examines fundamental ideas in political theory through works typically classified as literature. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*, for example, serve as vehicles for exploration of the world of politics by tracing the development of plot lines and characters as well as the creative impulse that links the world of politics with literature.

Class sessions will provide ample opportunity for debate and discussion, as well as lectures that provide context for the political theories and theorists whose ideas are reflected in each work under discussion. Be prepared to read widely as we venture into the realms of politics and literature, exploring ideas that have been the basis for political and social change and which remain part of a greater national conversation that extends into the present day.

Professor Kubicek is the current Chair of the Political Science Department at Oakland University. Recipient of a Fulbright Scholar award, Professor Kubicek earned his PhD at the University of Michigan.



On November 11, 2008, MALS and the Women and Gender Studies program co-hosted Dr. Laura Kramer, Professor Emirita from Montclair State University. A feminist scholar, Dr. Kramer is the author of *The Sociology of Gender* (2005). In addition to lecturing in Professor Phyllis Rooney's fall 2008 course, LBS 500: Gender, Feminism and Knowledge, she also shared her personal experiences facing gender discrimination, particularly in the earlier part of her academic career.

Photos: above left, Professor Kramer; above right, students attending the lecture:
Below left, Professors Rooney and Kramer; below right, Professor Jo Reger, Director of the Women and Gender Studies program with Professor Kramer



East German Nostalgia After the Fall of the Berlin Wall

By Erin Johnson

The following article is condensed from a paper written by Erin Johnson for LBS 501: United Germany and its Discontents: Issues of Memory, Identity, and Community (Winter 2008) taught by Professor Barbara Mabee. Notes and references have been removed in order to accommodate available space.



(c) 2002 Stephan Pastemaci, Dailysoft.com

November 9, 1989, was a fateful day in numerous ways. The night the Berlin Wall came down was both a beginning and the beginning of the end. It was a beginning for the citizens of East Germany as they were now finally able to experience freedom in a way that had been denied them. They were no longer required to abide by the restrictive rules placed on them by their strict government and could experience the longed for pleasures offered by the West. However, the date would also mark the beginning of the end of their country, the German Democratic Republic. Within a year, united Germany would rise and East Germany would no longer exist. Almost just as quickly, the East German people would begin to wonder if they should have been more careful in what they wished for.

The unification of Germany took place so quickly, and included so little of the East German way of life, that a sense of longing for the lives they once knew began taking hold of the now former East German citizens. This feeling of nostalgia, or *Ostalgie* as it has been dubbed, grew out of frustration and confusion. If East Germans had been able to see something of themselves in this new country – their laws, their culture, their values – or if the process had been more gradual they would not have had to retreat into their memories to find these things. The East German people were thrown into a situation where they no longer recognized the country in which they lived. Almost everything had changed and most of them struggled to learn a new way of life. Many lost their jobs or homes as West German developers bought up East German businesses and buildings. Women, in particular, faced a difficult reality in the new version of Germany. Most of the things they had been accustomed to in the GDR – guaranteed employment, child care in the workplace, being considered an equal member of society - disappeared. East German writers also gave voice to the feelings of nostalgia East Germans experienced. Those feelings of nostalgia seem somewhat contradictory given since so many people risked their lives to escape from the GDR. [But] as much as the East Germans desired a more free society, they were nonetheless overwhelmed by the feelings of loss that developed after the fall of the Berlin Wall and unification.

Unification had not been the main goal of the October protests in Leipzig. The protesters wanted more freedom but did not want to abandon socialism altogether. What they had hoped for was a democratic socialist society, a type of hybrid between capitalism and socialism. Once the wall came down, however, the opportunity to unite the country was seized by then-West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. “Because of the West German takeover strategy, both the old socialist identity, which was often transformed into adaptation, cynicism, and retreat into the realms of privacy, and the newly emerging democratic revolutionary identity were lost.” In the rush toward unification, this “third way” was forgotten. The GDR became part of the Federal Republic of Germany, leaving some feeling as if their country had simply been colonized by the West. There was further evidence of this by 1991, when East Germans were beginning to feel relegated to a lower social standing, with 84 percent reporting they felt like second-class citizens and many expressing resentment toward the West. “This situation, which contrasts with everything East Germans had expected when they voted for unification, creates a context in which nostalgia for the past emerges. It seems that, in the very moment the GDR society dissolved, a new identity formed a romanticization of the past mixed with the former experience of security and equality.” This phenomenon occurred despite the fact that numerous East German citizens risked their lives on a regular basis to escape the oppression of the GDR. It is part of what made the East German situation unique. They wanted freedom, yet once they had it, they longed for the days when they didn’t. Ultimately, what they had wanted was freedom in their country; not freedom in someone else’s country.

After unification was complete, the problems began to emerge. The East Germans were now faced with uncharted territory. They learned things they had been told by their government were lies. All of the Western products flooding store shelves no longer had the same appeal. The separation between East and West was so thorough that they even had

East German Nostalgia cont.

completely different histories. There was little common ground between them and their new Western countrymen. It was during this confusing time that the *Ostalgie* first started.

It was not long after the *Wende* and unification that the people of the now defunct East Germany began to look back at their lost country with a sense of longing. Most of what they had known in the GDR had vanished. To outsiders, it may have appeared as if East Germans had nothing worth saving or preserving and that was why they were escaping in droves. However, it was the only life anyone born after 1949 had ever known. They did not have luxuries but they had many things those in the West did not - employment was guaranteed, group activities were provided for children, and women were encouraged to both work and raise children. For ex-GDR citizens the past held more promise than the present, and their futures seemed very uncertain. East Germans often lost out on jobs to the more qualified West Germans. Shopping became an overwhelming experience for the East German due to the sheer volume of products available, most of which they did not recognize. Given the almost total upheaval faced by the ex-GDR citizens it is not difficult to understand why they would have looked back fondly on their previous lives.

This feeling of *Ostalgie* somewhat contradicts the images broadcast around the world in 1989 of East Germans gleefully dancing on the ruins of the Berlin Wall and the traffic jams caused by those making their way West. Easterners did flock to the West and further restrictions on travel had been lifted; they eagerly bought up the Western products that had previously been forbidden, yet these things did not have a lasting appeal.

Once the physical and political barriers were removed what may have been the toughest obstacle to unification remained: East and West Germans finding a way to understand one another. The *Ossis* and *Wessies* came from radically different backgrounds and each group had preconceived notions about the other. A blending of the two would take years, especially since those from the East felt as if they had been treated unfairly by those from the West.

In the early days of unified Germany the task of bringing East and West together appeared almost impossible. Easterners had been conditioned to think of Westerners as the enemy, while Westerners had ingrained notions about the GDR. "Casting East German culture as fundamentally pre- or anti-modern became a favorite West German parlor game after 1989." The West viewed East Germany, and its citizens, through the framework of Cold War rhetoric – as a backward society with rundown buildings, old technology and inferior goods. When the societies merged East Germans encountered these stereotypes and had to come to terms with the misperceptions. Easterners, however, had some knowledge of what the West was like from relatives or from television shows. This basic familiarity meant that East Germans did not see Westerners as the enemy despite what their government wanted them to believe.

Since the unification of East and West Germany happened so rapidly it is easy to understand why the East German people felt somewhat bulldozed through the process. The West German government seized upon the opportunity to bring the German people together once again and left most of what had been the GDR behind. Citizens of the suddenly non-existent country had no choice but to turn to their memories in order to remember who they were as a people. The nostalgia they felt during this period was their way of dealing with the situation. They were faced with an uncertain future and it was comforting to look to the past to find what they then believed had been better times.

Most of the ex-GDR citizens had difficulties dealing with their new situation. It was a transition they were not prepared for. East German women, in particular, found themselves facing unique circumstances as they navigated the unfamiliar territory of life after unification. Women had a dual role in socialist society. They were expected to work and contribute to the common good, but they were also the mothers of future socialists. The government took action to make sure that there were no barriers for women in regard to both working and motherhood. "A 1950 'Law for the Protection of Mothers and Children and the Rights of Women' established the mother as the center of the family, giving legal and financial assistance to single mothers, guaranteeing women job protection during pregnancy and offering incentives for large families.

After the *Wende* all of this disappeared. West Germany did not offer those types of guarantees, to women or anyone else. Western women could choose to work but were not required to. Many were content to be stay-at-home mothers, something it was originally thought East German women would also be happy to do. In fact, years of working had created a sense of independence and pride in GDR women. When they lost their jobs and were unable to find new ones, they expressed a feeling of loss of dignity at not being able to earn their own income. All of these issues contributed to the overall feeling of nostalgia experienced by the East Germans.

East and West German women had different experiences before and after unification but there were a few things they did have in common as women such as work issues. Though, as Eva Kunz, a commissioner for equal opportunity, describes it, the discussions did not always go smoothly. “Contact between East and West women was established very quickly after the *Wende* and in many cases went well. However, there were disagreements, and sometimes the West women dominated the meetings and didn’t give the East women an opportunity to talk.” Her example is symptomatic of the trials faced by East Germans.

All of these issues contributed to the overall feeling of nostalgia experienced by the East Germans. While things were not perfect in the GDR, many women felt they had better lives and opportunities. Eva Kunz summed up the changes experienced by East German women in the unified Germany.

Before, they had a tremendous degree of security through their own income which affected, for example, a decision to divorce or a decision to have children without being married, which many women did. And now women find themselves suddenly in a system of dependencies – dependency on a partner or dependency on social welfare – and that is of course an entirely new way of living.”

After the *Wende* a new type of literary genre began to emerge as more people from both East and West put pen to paper in order to share their experiences with one another. “Literary writers became presenters of life stories. One such writer who had an extensive impact on society was Jana Hensel. In her work, *After the Wall*, she not only educated West Germans about East Germany, but also helped legitimize the nostalgic feelings of many former GDR citizens.” Hensel’s work was the culmination of GDR nostalgia. She casts the socialist society in a rosy light and lovingly remembers the days before November 1989 as simpler times when people were content despite not having much

The fact that East German nostalgia made it into books and films shows how prevalent it was in the society. Professional writers to private citizens were writing about their experiences in the former GDR and the new struggles they faced in the united Germany. In many ways it was a cathartic process for East Germans, and educational for those not from the East, to document what their country had been like and show a more positive side that had not often been discussed. Works like *After the Wall* and *Good Bye, Lenin!* function as eulogies for both the loss of East Germany and the promise of better times that many thought the *Wende* symbolized.

East German nostalgia in some ways could fall into the category of the old saying the grass is always greener on the other side. For years, East Germans fought and risked their lives to escape the oppression of their government. They cherished the few forbidden items from the West that they were able to sneak in. They protested their government and demanded the Berlin Wall be brought down and they be allowed more freedom. Once those things actually happened, though, there was almost instant regret on the part of the East Germans. Their country disappeared, everything that had been familiar to them was taken away and they were left living in a country that was not theirs. The rise of the nostalgia for the GDR was a way of mourning what they had not intended to lose. If some semblance of their country had remained after unification there would not have been such a desire to remember the good times. If the unification had been more gradual perhaps the East German citizens would have developed a better appreciation for and understanding of their situation. Instead, they escaped into their memories and tried to find what had been good in their lives and use it to brighten difficult days.



Foto: Heiko Burkhardt

Berlin Wall Today. Marked by a double row of bricks on many streets where it once stood.

Textiles of The Silk Road

By Brenda Bujold

This paper was written for LBS 500: The Silk Road: Trade and Cultural Exchange over Two Millennia (Fall 2007) taught by Professor Linda Benson, Director MALIS and Professor of Chinese History.



A Silk Worm Cocoon

The history of silk along the Silk Road actually begins more than five thousand years ago. The impact of this fabric would be felt throughout the known world.

Sericulture

The raising of silkworms for the production of silk is a process referred to as sericulture. The fabric silk begins with the small *Bombyx mori* silk moth. A female moth sac carries between 300 and 500 eggs. The ancient Chinese believed there were a number of requirements for egg survival. Prior to hatching the eggs must be kept cool and after hatching the caterpillars must be kept warm. While molting, the worm must be kept hungry. Following molting a steady supply of food must be provided between intervals of sleep. The silkworms mustn't be kept too close or too far apart. While sleeping their environment must be dark. However, after molting the silkworms must be kept cool and given plenty of light, fed sparsely but when full grown should not be without food. The food necessary for silkworms were leaves of the mulberry tree. It was the white mulberry that was the unique diet requirement for the success of the Chinese silkworm.

Silk from wild silkworms was recorded in history in a number of different sources. Today, it is almost impossible to determine the first use of silk. Early records show the silk production centered in the region between the Huangho Valley and the middle of the Yangtze Valley. Gradually, over a two thousand year period, silk production migrated south paralleling the movement of Chinese civilization. Once sericulture reached the Yangtze Valley region this industry grew rapidly.

The creation of this beautiful fabric is surrounded by legends and myths. The most famous of these legends concerns the origin of silk itself. The person singled out as starting silk production was the Empress Hsi-Ling-She (also known as Te-ling-she) in 2640 B.C. While drinking a cup of hot tea, a cocoon fell into her tea cup. When she retrieved the cocoon it came out as a long delicate thread. Her enthusiasm for the silk thread spread and soon the Emperor was said to have ordered silk robes made. Hsi-Ling-She is also credited with the invention of the loom.

The introduction of the silkworm into Tibet is recorded in the *Annals of the Tang Dynasty* (618-907). The Chieftain of Khoten (440 A.D.) had repeatedly failed to obtain the silkworm. He asked the emperor for one of his daughters to marry. The request was granted and the princess prepared for her trip to Tibet. Knowing there were no silkworms (thus no silk) in Tibet she smuggled silkworms in her elaborate hairstyle. The chieftain got a new bride and the people of Tibet got a much desired insect.

The Tibetans were able to keep the silkworm a secret for another one hundred years or so. Eventually, around 550 A.D. two Nestorian monks, smuggled silkworms out of China in their hollowed out bamboo canes and presented them to the Roman Emperor, Justinian. The monks carefully supervised the eggs as they hatched into worms and then into cocoons. The Byzantine Empire was now a part of the silkworm business.

The Silk Road

(cont.)



China continued to be the major source of raw silk to Europe throughout the middle ages. By the first half of the 10th century Northern Italy began producing domestic silk while continuing to import it. Merchants living in Genoa, Italy purchased large amounts of Chinese silks planning to sell the fabric at fairs in Champagne. Proceeds from the sale at the fair would then be used to pay off the original debt. The production of and the desire for silk in Italy continued to grow. The Duke of Milan (1451-1501) chose the mulberry as his symbol of prudence. The duchess of Milan, Beatrice d'Este Sforza, had dresses embroidered in silk designed by Leonardo daVinci.

Although England was known to have mulberry trees as early as the 11th or 11th century, it wasn't until James I in 1603 that sericulture was attempted domestically in England. A recent influx of protestant immigrants needing employment, as well as his wife's love of silk were foremost influences on what would become James' obsession for developing a silk industry. Unfortunately for England, his majestic plan failed. England was never to become a world power in silk production.

Technology

China's mastery of the art of silk production led to important advancements in the development of looms and in mechanical engineering. The draw loom is thought to have been invented by the Chinese in the 2nd century. It is used for creating fabrics such as brocade that have a raised pattern. Prior to the draw loom, free-figured or all-over pattern weaving was difficult, time-consuming and done on a hand loom. The weaver needed to be able to lift the individual warp threads as necessary. With the [invention of the] draw loom the assistant

would sit on top of the harness or cords. The weaver would shoot the (horizontal) weft thread through the (vertical) warps. As this was occurring the draw boy would pull on predetermined cords forming raised patterns on the silk. This process allowed the Chinese to produce elaborate designs much more quickly.

A predecessor of the steam-engine was the Chinese silk-winding or reeling apparatus. The silk-worm cocoons were placed in a pan of hot water under a chimney where they unroll. The fibers are wound off the cocoons over a set of rollers and on to a large reel. In order for the fibers to lie properly on the reel they are moved back and forth laterally by a ramping-arm. The reel is rotated by a pedal and crank system. The reel's axis is connected to a driving belt with a small pulley, which swings back and forth the ramping arm.

The significance of cloth, especially silk, was fundamental to ancient Chinese life. Cloth held a deep philosophical meaning for the Chinese. It separated humans from beasts and it separated the rulers from the ruled. The Chinese didn't consider the naked human body beautiful or erotic. Clothing provided dignity and was a point of civilization. In the treatise *Tiangong kaiwu* written by Song Ying Xing, he states, "The noble wear sweeping robes, resplendent as mountain dragons they rule the empire; the humble wear coarse wool or hemp garments, in winter to protect them from the cold, in summer to shield their bodies." Discussing the merits of the silkworm, the early Confucian Philosopher *Xunzi* commented, "Its merit is to clothe and ornament everything under Heaven, to the ten thousandth generation. Thus rites and music are completed, noble and base are distinguished, the aged are nourished and the young reared."

In addition to the role textiles played in social status of ancient China, it was considered, after food grains, the most important commodity produced. Tax dues for each household included grain (produced by men) and cloth (produced by women). From approximately 700 B.C. to A.D. 1580, every household was taxed in grain and textiles. The government required enormous amounts of silk to clothe the imperial court, to pay bureaucrats and soldiers,

The Silk Road

(cont.)

as rewards, to buy horses, and as bribes or gifts to impress tributary monarchs. These gifts were at times a costly drain on the national economy. In 25 B.C., twenty thousand rolls of silk and twenty thousand pounds of silk floss were sent to the Xiongnu from the Chinese as tribute. This amounted to almost 10 percent of the state revenues.

Silk Road Expeditions and Excavations

Silks and other fabrics found at excavation sites along the Silk Road are vital for the information they provide regarding early Chinese weaving and interrelations with Central Asia.

During the years 1900-1915, three important expeditions were led by Sir Mark Aurel Stein. These expeditions resulted in the excavation of a number of sites. From these sites, Stein collected several examples of Central Asian textiles. During his third trip to Chinese Turkestan, Stein explored the burial grounds of Loulan and Astana. At these sites some of the oldest products of the Chinese silk industry were discovered. Astana fabrics (550-860A.D.) show Western and Chinese influence. A piece of yellow silk dated from about the end of the first or the beginning of the second century A.D. was significant for a couple of reasons. First, it was inscribed in Chinese giving its origin, dimensions, weight and price. A second reason was that the find gave evidence as to the standard loom width of silk fabrics. Although few pieces of completely intact articles of clothing were found, a number of well preserved fragments used to wrap the dead remained. Some of the silks were of a fine texture, indicating that persons of importance visited the area. The fragments found in Astana showed great skill in construction. Some of the garments were padded with silk wool and lined. One piece even had pinked seams.



Much of the Stein collection consists of fabrics for votive purposes. Miniature banners were found at Astana, Endere, Khara-khoto and the Limes. The Ch'ien-fo-tung site held the greatest number of votive banner and accessories. These banners provide pictorial representations of the Buddhist divinities and mythological scenes. The banners also provide information on the construction process and decorative methods used. Stein divided the banners into three groups. The first group consisted of large banners intended as wall hangings. They were made of plain fine silk, one measuring 7 feet 2.5 inches by 3 feet 7 inches. A second group was designed to hang free. These banners were transparent, made of fine gauze as not to obstruct the dim light of the caves. The third group of banners was made of paper and hung from the first two types.

The origin of silk is shrouded in myth and legend. What is known is that silk has a five thousand year history in China. Although there is evidence that other cultures had silk, it was from China via the Silk Road that silk spread throughout the known world. China's mulberry trees were the unique ingredient that fed the Bombyx mori silk moth. From this tiny creature came the magic thread that would be woven into incredibly beautiful fabric. Technology inspired by the motivation to create such beauty became the impetus for the draw loom and silk reeling machines. This same technology was the precursor of the steam engine. Through the findings of excavation sites, anthropologists gain insight to social power, status and values of those who lived along the Silk Road.

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Cheryl Cole Pope

Scholarship

Deadline April 6, 2009

The Cole Pope Scholarship was established in memory of Cheryl Cole Pope, R.N.,M.S. (1953-2002) by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James F. Cole of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, her brother, John Cole M.D. of New Orleans, Louisiana, and her sister, Natalie Bell Cole, of Royal Oak, Michigan.

The minimum requirements for applicants and the application process are both described on the MALS website. All materials must be submitted to Professor Linda Benson, Director, MALS Office, by April 6, 2009, for applicants to be considered. The Director and Executive Committee will make the award announcement at the end of the semester. The Cheryl Cole Pope Scholarship will be awarded in the amount of \$1500.00.

Read more about application guidelines and requirements at
www4.oakland.edu/mals/scholarships.cfm

academic calendar 2009

April 20	Winter semester classes end
April 24	MALS Spring Open House, 5-7 p.m.
May 2	Spring Commencement
May 4	Summer semester classes begin
May 25	Memorial Day Holiday
June 1	MALS application deadline for fall 2009
June 11	Graduate Admissions Open House
June 26	Deadline for August 2009 graduation application
July 3-4	Independence Day
August 1	Deadline, final project proposals for fall 2009
August 15	Summer semester classes end
September 3	Fall semester classes begin, 7:30 a.m.
September 7	Labor Day Holiday
September 25	Deadline to apply for December 2009 graduation
October 1	Deadline, MALS applications for winter 2010

MALS
**Master of Arts in Liberal
Studies**

Need Help with computer or writing, brainstorming for a project?

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