

*Meadowbrook Hall*



## what is liberal studies?

A recent conversation with a potential applicant to the MALS program reminded me that not everyone knows exactly what graduate level “liberal studies” means. It was also a reminder that Oakland University’s MALS program is still new, having begun only in 2003. So, upon reflection, I decided that in this issue of the *Spectrum* I would provide a brief account of the Liberal Studies degree’s history and why it has been growing in popularity for adult students, both here and at the national level.

Although Oakland’s MALS program is new, liberal studies at the graduate level has been around for over four decades. Beginning in the 1970s, programs emerged at some of America’s leading research institutions as well as at smaller liberal arts colleges. Today, graduate Liberal Studies degrees are offered across the country from Wesleyan and Dartmouth to Stanford and San Diego State. Many of these programs experienced their greatest growth in the 1980s and some have

attracted very large numbers of eager students. One example of the latter is Georgetown University’s program which grew from a small number of students in the 1970s to over 450 in the fall of 2007.

A relatively new development is the establishment of doctoral programs in Liberal Studies. Among the first institutions to do so were Duke and Georgetown; the latter now has 36 doctoral candidates working toward their Ph.D. degrees. The evolution of the degree at Georgetown is firm evidence of the increasing value of the interdisciplinary approach and the appeal of a degree that allows both breadth and depth in an individualized learning experience.

From its inception, the Liberal Studies degree was designed to offer a unique graduate experience that holds

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what is liberal studies?

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interdisciplinary learning as its core. Although the exact requirements for the degree vary, most institutions require a core of courses that include an introductory course as well as core seminars in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. One aspect that has great appeal is the opportunity to choose electives that are of greatest personal interest. These allow students to shape their course of study in ways not possible in a single discipline. A fascination with art history, for example, can be explored one semester and a course in political theory or cross-cultural communication the next. For adults who have been away from a college campus for some years, the chance to explore new areas of learning, to update their research and writing skills, and to fire-up their intellects through challenging courses and lively, informed discussion is what leads them to the Liberal Studies program.

Each of the MALS core courses, including the introductory colloquium and the core seminars, is unique. They are designed specifically for the program and are taught by faculty who share their expertise and enthusiasm as well as an interdisciplinary approach to

education. The core courses are also kept small, with enrollment limited to ten, allowing for plenty of discussion and individual guidance in research. Each requires a substantial written paper as part of the requirements, and students are encouraged to hone their skills both in oral presentations and written projects.

Faculty from a wide variety of disciplines have taught for MALS, and, thus far, innovative courses have included an exploration of the nuclear age, an inquiry into America's class differences, and an examination of Russian film and culture, the latter combined with travel to Moscow and St. Petersburg. For 2008-2009, new courses on gender (LBS 500) and on aging (LBS 503) will be added to the array of topics explored only through the MALS program.

The last requirement for the MALS degree is called the final project (LBS 600). Working with a faculty mentor, the candidate for the degree defines a topic that combines the methods and theory of two disciplines. Proposals for the final project are submitted to the program's Executive Committee, and once that approval has been given, the student then works with his or her mentor and two other faculty members who, together, comprise a thesis committee. Further details on the final project are available on-line at the MALS website and

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Cheryl Cole Pope

**Cheryl Cole Pope scholarship**

*Applications are due the first Monday in April Annually*

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 2, 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.

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. Her life and death were the inspiration for the first MALS core course on Death and Dying in Literature, Art and Film in Winter 2004, and for the elective Medical Fictions course in Fall, 2005. ■

Read more about application guidelines and requirements at [www2.oakland.edu/mals/scholarships.cfm](http://www2.oakland.edu/mals/scholarships.cfm)

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also in the MALS Handbook.

Liberal Studies programs attract a broad spectrum of students whose education, life experiences, and personal goals vary enormously. Uniting these adult students is a common desire to acquire new areas of knowledge and at the same time transcend traditional disciplines. By crossing boundaries within academe, Liberal Studies students combine the methods and theories of different disciplines as a means to examine the contemporary world and to expand their knowledge base as a means to greater personal growth.

Oakland's students share many similarities with other Liberal Studies graduate students. Most are employed full time. For that reason, the core seminars and many of the electives are available at night. A few are recent university graduates, but most graduated some years ago and currently hold positions in business, education, or government. Although they come from varied backgrounds, they all share the motivation to expand their intellectual horizons.

Some MALS graduates consider the degree as purely a personal endeavour, but many also receive recognition from their employers for completing their

M. A. A number continue on to Ph.D. programs. Among the latter is the first Graduate Assistant for MALS at Oakland, Dan Brown, who is currently pursuing his doctoral degree in English at the University of Florida. (Please see the interview with Dan Brown in the Winter 2007 of the *Spectrum*). Whatever an individual's goals, the program offers learning experiences and personal attention that can shape and transform intellectual life and individual goals - a challenging but exciting prospect!

Oakland's program currently has fifty students, making it one of the larger master's degree programs on campus in terms of numbers. Its rapid growth in such a short span of time suggests that its goals and courses are providing the kind of graduate education valued by adult students. Not only does the program provide a rigorous graduate-level educational experience; it also contributes to personal growth and, ultimately, to use a colleague's apt description, the cultivation of a lifelong "voracious curiosity". ■

Linda Benson  
Director, MALS

## **MALS** graduate assistantship

Applications are invited for the 2008 MALS Graduate Assistantship.

This award is open to students currently enrolled in the MALS program. Applicants must have maintained a consistently high GPA and also have the necessary writing and academic skills to assist the director and to support the overall goals of the MALS program.

The MALS graduate assistant receives both a stipend and remission of tuition for eight credits of coursework. In return, he or she works with the director for fifteen to twenty hours per week on assignments that range from editing the newsletter to assisting other students with writing and computer skills. Holders of the assistantship may not hold other employment and are required to take two courses during the semester in which they serve in this capacity.

If you would like more information, please contact the Program Director, Professor Linda Benson, Varner Hall 221, Oakland University. Professor Benson can also be reached via e-mail, at [benson@oakland.edu](mailto:benson@oakland.edu), or by phone at 248-370-2539.

**LBS 513**

**Politics Through Film**

Summer 2008  
May 5 - June 25, 2008  
Monday/Wednesday 6:30-9:50 pm

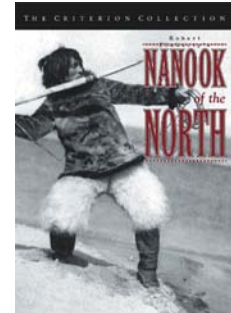
Professor  
Pat Piskulich  
Department of Political Science

**LBS 513**

**Culture and Society  
Through Film**

Summer 2008  
May 5 - June 25, 2008  
Monday/Wednesday 6:30-9:50 pm

Professor  
Peter Bertocci  
Department of Sociology/  
Anthropology



Art reflects and shapes reality. There are many films about politics with visions worth considering. This course uses film to address various concepts of society, polity, justice, and more!

Each session will include the following elements: a brief introduction, a film (or films), and group discussion. The main goal is to develop group dialogue and critical discourse about politics and film. ■

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Professor Piskulich is currently interim Master of Public Administration (MPA) Director. His “regular gig” is as Director of the Public Affairs Research Laboratory (PARL) in the College of Arts and Sciences. Recent work includes various opinion surveys for Rochester Hills, Oakland Township, and Auburn Hills.

This course introduces the anthropological documentary (or “ethnographic”) film with a survey of classic films, from the silent era to more recent outstanding examples of the genre. The field of cultural anthropology is explored by examining the complex ethical and political issues arising from anthropologists’ efforts to “represent” the people they study both in written text and on film. The film selection also documents the impact on indigenous peoples of European colonial expansion providing insight into an outcome of that history that is commonly neglected. Recent efforts of indigenous peoples to film their own stories will top off the course. ■

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Professor Peter Bertocci teaches anthropology and international studies and has been using documentary films to teach his classes since the late 60s. He received the Oakland University Teaching Excellence Award in 2007.



**newsletter  
contribution**

Please let us know if you may be interested in contributing to the newsletter. We welcome articles, interviews, and essays sharing your ideas and views on your MALS experience.

Please contact Professor Benson, at [benson@oakland.edu](mailto:benson@oakland.edu), or Graciela Osterberg at [osterber@oakland.edu](mailto:osterber@oakland.edu).

**L B S 500**

**Gender, Feminism and Knowledge**

Colloquium  
Fall 2008  
Tuesday 6:30 - 9:50 p.m.

Professor  
Phyllis Rooney  
Department of Philosophy

**L B S 503**

**Aging in Film, Fiction and Poetry  
Psychological Perspectives**

Seminar in  
Social Sciences  
Winter 2009  
Tuesday 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Professor  
Deb McGinnis  
Department of Psychology

In this new interdisciplinary course designed especially for MALS, students will explore issues related to women's role in the production and dissemination of knowledge. As the traditional male dominance of society and academe has given way, the greater female presence on university campuses and in the work place at every level has inspired new thinking about women, men and the role of gender assumptions in our society. It has also inspired new ideas about how knowledge is developed, defined and valued in philosophy. Feminist theory is now acknowledged within the study of theories of knowledge (epistemology), and women's impact on all areas of knowledge is, at last, being recognized.

This course is also an introduction to interdisciplinary methods and incorporates writing projects with class discussion. The course paper will reflect students' specific areas of interest and/or discipline (history, sociology, art, philosophy, chemistry, literature, medicine and others) and will provide skills that can be used in future courses taken as part of the MALS program. ■



In this innovative social sciences seminar, Professor Debra McGinnis will address issues of aging using a unique interdisciplinary approach. Students will examine portrayals of aging in literature, poetry, film, and commentaries which reflect wisdom, adaptation, bereavement, Alzheimer's disease, and more. The latter are topics psychologists examine empirically and theoretically, and in this new course the scientific approach will be combined with literary and artistic works as a means to understand the very human impact of the aging process. Among the course readings will be Amy Tan's The Bonesetter's Daughter which portrays an intergenerational relationship between a daughter and her elderly Chinese mother.

This rich exploration of aging and its role in contemporary American society offers you the opportunity for personal reflection on aging as well as a deeper understanding of how research seeks to better understand aging from a psychological perspective. ■



*University of Miami Memorial Building ca. 1950s*

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Dr. Debra McGinnis is a cognitive developmental psychologist. Her research includes studies of reading comprehension and critical thinking in adults of all ages.

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Dr. Phyllis Rooney's area of specialization is in theories of knowledge and feminist philosophy. Her current research focuses on feminist epistemology and the historical exclusion of women from various disciplines of knowledge within the academic community.

# China

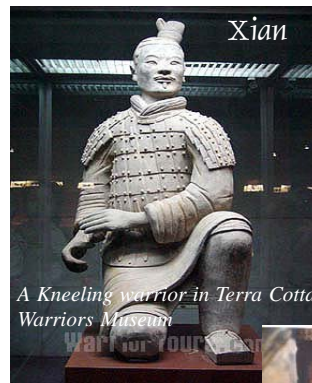
travel opportunity  
Spring Break 2009

Spring Break 2009 offers a unique opportunity for MALS students to travel to three major Chinese cities - Beijing, Xian, and Shanghai. The group will be led by Oakland University Professor Shuishan Yu, Art and Art History. Professor Yu has offered cross-listed MALS electives on Asian art for the past two years. Born in China and educated in Beijing, Dr. Yu is also involved in Oakland's undergraduate Chinese language program in Beijing. His background and expertise mean that this trip will provide an "insider's" view of the world's rising Asian giant.

Details on the trip will be available online at the MALS website and in the fall 2008 newsletter. Currently, the estimated cost, including all airfares and accommodation (double occupancy), is US\$2500 for the ten day trip. If you have always wanted to visit China, this is your chance!



*The Forbidden City - Beijing*



*A Kneeling warrior in Terra Cotta  
Warriors Museum*



*The Summer Palace*



*The Bund at night - Shanghai*

# Prenatal Genetic Testing

by Coleen Genette

*The following article is condensed from a paper written by Coleen Genette for LBS 504: Evil Genes (Fall 2007) taught by Professor Barbara Oakley. Notes and references have been removed in order to accommodate available space.*

Every expectant parent hopes for a healthy newborn, but in some instances the months spent waiting for the child to be born can be among the most stressful times in a parent's life. Fortunately, with the advances in prenatal testing, parents are getting a better glimpse into what their child's medical future will be. Unfortunately, while genetic testing may help discover disorders that will be present when the child is born, many disorders (such as autism) are only shown as a possible, not a definite, conclusion, leaving the parents as confused and unsure as they were before having the tests done. Therefore, parents need to research prenatal testing including the kinds of genetic tests available, the actual procedures used, and, finally, the implications of the results of prenatal tests in light of the controversy surrounding some testing procedures.

## Prenatal Testing

Prenatal tests can serve a useful function in terms of identifying and occasionally treating health problems that could endanger both the mother and unborn child. Some prenatal tests are screening tests and only reveal the possibility of a problem. Others are diagnostic, which means they can determine with good accuracy whether a fetus has a specific problem. When a more specific determination is needed, a screening test may be followed by a diagnostic test. Whichever tests are done on the mother and the fetus, a major problem is that while many birth defects can be diagnosed before birth, some cannot be treated or cured. So, it is important for a parent to be as educated as possible regarding basic genetics and how they could be the carriers for potential problems with their child.

Carrier testing of both parents will detect if either parent is a carrier of a certain genetic defect. Carrier testing can be done before, during, or after pregnancy. For a carrier test, a sample of blood or saliva is taken then studied in a lab to detect a defective gene for a certain inherited disorder. Parents may be informed and offered information

about carrier testing for cystic fibrosis, for example, which is one of the more common and easily detectable genetic disorders. If family history, ethnic origin, or some other factor raises the risk of being a carrier for other genetic disorders, other testing can be done to see if there are dominant gene disorders, recessive gene disorders, x-linked gene disorders, chromosomal disorders, or multifactorial disorders. (A check list of questions used in establishing the risk factors for genetic disorders is available from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists at: [www.acog.org/publications](http://www.acog.org/publications)).

## Dominant Gene Disorders

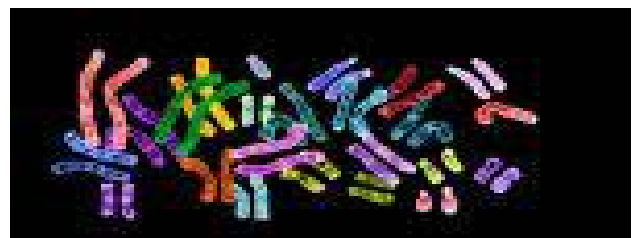
When a parent has a dominant gene disorder, there's a 50-50 chance a child will inherit the gene from the affected parent and have the disorder even if the gene from the other parent is normal. Dominant gene disorders include: achondroplasia which is a rare abnormality of the skeleton that causes a form of dwarfism, or Huntington disease which is a disease of the nervous system that causes a combination of mental deterioration and a movement disorder affecting people in their 30s and 40s.

## Recessive Gene Disorder

In the case of a recessive gene disorder, both parent have to be carriers in order for it to affect the fetus. Almost everyone carries some abnormal genes, but most people don't have a defect because the normal dominant gene overrules the abnormal recessive one. Unfortunately, if a fetus has a pair of abnormal recessive genes from each parent, the child will have the disorder. In certain ethnic groups, recessive gene disorders are more common. Among these are cystic fibrosis, which is a disease most common among people of northern European descent, and sickle cell disease, which is a disease most common among people of African heritage.

## Chromosomal Disorders

Some chromosomal disorders are inherited from the parents, but most are caused by a random error in the



Human chromosomes. [www.genome.gov/13514624](http://www.genome.gov/13514624)

genetics of the egg or sperm. The chance of a child having these disorders increases with the age of the mother. According to American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 1 out of 1,667 live babies born to 20-year-olds have

**Prenatal Genetic Testing**

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Down syndrome; the numbers change to a risk of 1 in 378 at age 35 and 1 in 106 at age 40. Women who are younger than 35 also have an increasing risk every year that they will give birth to a child with a chromosome problem. However, most physicians use the age of 35 as a cutoff at which the risk of having a child with a chromosome problem is high enough to justify having invasive prenatal testing such as an amniocentesis.

**Multifactorial Disorders**

The final category of disorders includes multifactorial disorders which are caused by a mix of genetic and environmental factors. Some of the disorders can be detected during pregnancy, but others cannot. Multifactorial disorders include neural tube defects, which occur when the tube enclosing the spinal cord doesn't form properly. Neural tube defects include: Spina Bifida and Anencephaly.

**Limitations to Prenatal Genetic Testing**

As a parent decides whether or not they want prenatal genetic testing, it is important for them to consider the limitations to prenatal genetic testing which include the following:

- Many genetic tests fail to detect all of the mutations that can cause a disease.
- A positive result doesn't mean the disease will develop.
- A negative result doesn't mean the disease will not develop.
- A positive test doesn't predict severity of the disease. Individual genes are only part of the puzzle.

**Prenatal Testing Timeline**

A major source of stress for a mother facing prenatal testing is the risk she must accept in order to discover the overall health of her child. While some of the diagnostic tests are simple and painless, others can be very invasive and potentially dangerous to the fetus. The most common types of prenatal tests include ultrasound, maternal blood testing, amniocentesis, and chorionic villus sampling (CVS).

**Ultrasound**

The textbook definition of ultrasound is energy generated by sound waves of 20,000 or more vibrations per second. An ultrasound is also called a sonogram, sonograph, echogram, or ultrasonogram. It is used in a large array of imaging tools, but is most often used for medical purposes. A transducer gives off the sound waves which are reflected back from organs and tissues, providing

a picture of what is inside the body. In this test, sound waves are bounced off the baby's bones and tissues to construct an image showing the baby's shape and position in the uterus.

Approximately 60% of women choose to have an ultrasound during their pregnancy. This is one of the most non-invasive tests available and can be done from the very beginning of a pregnancy until the very end. New developments in ultrasound technology have given expectant parents the ability to not only see the basic structure of their child, but also the details of the child's face, hands and other extremities.

The ultrasound can be a vital tool to look for tumors, analyze bone structure, or look for other indicators that show normal or abnormal development. Ultrasounds also are used to detect structural defects such as spina bifida, anencephaly, congenital heart defects, gastro intestinal and kidney malformations, and a cleft lip or palate.

**Amniocentesis**

After age 35, when the chance for a child to be born with a disorder increases, both an amniocentesis and CVS are offered, although not by all doctors. The test is primarily used to help diagnose chromosome problems but it can also help diagnose other fetal defects. It is performed on amniotic fluid (the fluid that surrounds the fetus), usually between 16 and 18 weeks of pregnancy (second trimester). As the fetus grows and sheds cells, those cells may be found floating in the amniotic fluid and used to study the chromosomes. Also, a protein made by the fetus, called alpha-fetoprotein (AFP), is released into the amniotic fluid.

While amniocentesis seems to be a wonderful advance in medical technology, it carries a certain amount of risk. This can be a reason not to recommend it as the benefits could outweigh the risk. The major risk comes from the actual procedure which requires piercing of the uterus which can cause cramping, bleeding, infection, leaking of amniotic fluid after the procedure, and even miscarriage. There is also the possibility that the needle can injure the baby if he/she is accidentally touched by the needle.

**Cost and Controversy**

In most cases, an individual will have to contact his or her insurance provider to see if genetic tests are covered. Usually insurance companies do not cover genetic tests outside of those discussed above. Companies that do will have access to the results. This means that anyone contemplating these tests needs to decide whether they would want their insurance company to have this information because it can lead to genetic discrimination. Genetic discrimination occurs when people are treated differently by their employer or insurance company because they have a gene mutation

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that causes or increases the risk of an inherited disorder. Also, when a person applies for life, disability, or health insurance, the insurance company may ask to look at all medical records before making a decision about coverage. An employer may also have the right to look at an employee's medical records. As a result, genetic test results could affect a person's insurance coverage or employment. Although laws at the federal and state levels help protect people against genetic discrimination, genetic testing is a fast-growing field and these laws don't cover every situation.

**Conclusion**

As prenatal genetic testing is becoming more widespread and more easily available, it is raising more questions for parents-to-be and for society as a whole. Do we want to have more prenatal testing in order to have the "perfect" child? Do we want personal information on our genetic heritage available to potential employers or insurers? Addressing these issues will become a more pressing matter as the advances in genetic engineering continue. But even before that point arrives, parents today need to become more educated on the tests that are available, what the procedures involve, and what the possible outcomes could be in order to have the healthiest child possible.■



*This paper was written for LBS 502: Evil (Fall 2007) taught by Professor Elysa Koppelman-White of the Department of Philosophy.*

In recent years, the subject of forgiveness has emerged as a popular topic in various academic disciplines including philosophy and psychology as well as in contemporary culture. The dictates traditionally concerning forgiveness were set firmly in a religious context. However, when forgiveness became the subject of academic study there was a major shift in perception of forgiveness from a sacred or religious perspective to a secular view. Discourse on forgiveness then became a popular theme for academics in what became known as "forgiveness theory". While forgiveness continued to be a spiritual matter in religion, it also became a part of philosophical and psychological moral issues in academic studies in the social sciences.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, forgiveness emerged as an antidote to the evils experienced by people around the globe. The application of forgiveness as demonstrated by the theorists promised to bring relief from the grief that always follows evil. Their premise was that forgiveness could be a panacea for the impact of "bad things" in the world. Theorists seemed to find endless ways to apply this "new" idea of forgiveness. They also found myriad ways to remove the spiritual motivations for forgiveness and, instead, employ the secular movement of Forgiveness Theory in the social sciences. However, the faith-based and psychologically-based doctrines and theories on forgiveness often overlapped.

This paper examines some of the current ideas on forgiveness and seeks to answer the question of whether or not the claims made for Forgiveness Theory are really effective or not.

The first wave of interest in forgiveness occurred between 1932 and 1980. This consisted of "theoretical papers and modest empirical work" (Enright 1992). In the last two decades of the 20th century there was a tremendous upsurge in forgiveness as a topic of social science research. Until then, "Researchers did not begin to devote serious, sustained energy to the concept of forgiveness..." (Enright 1992). The three areas of study included, "forgive-

**the MALS  
executive committee**

**2007 - 2008**

**Linda Benson**  
Professor, History  
Director, MALS

**Phyllis Rooney**  
Assistant Professor  
Philosophy

**George Gamboa**  
Professor  
Biological Sciences

**Debra McGinnis**  
Assistant Professor  
Psychology

**Aldona Pobutsky**  
Assistant Professor, Spanish  
Modern Languages & Literature

**“Forgiveness”**  
(continued from page 9)

ness and moral development,” forgiveness in counseling and clinical psychology,” and “forgiveness in personality and social psychology.” (Enright 1992). One problem encountered was the lack of a single definition for forgiveness. Most authors define their idea of forgiveness in relation to their discourse. The definition will often vary according to discipline (philosophy, psychology) and the focus of the paper or book.

The religious traditions involving forgiveness are frequently mentioned since forgiveness has such a short history in the social sciences and academia. In the Western world, many practice a faith stemming from the Judeo-Christian traditions in which forgiveness is a faith-based tenet. In his book *Getting Even*, Jeffrey Murphy states that, “The Christian tradition tends to emphasize purity of heart as the core of the virtue of forgiveness, whereas the Jewish tradition gives primary place to the social dimension of reintegration into the covenanted community” (Murphy, 2003).

Some say that the current focus on forgiveness can have a detrimental impact on victims. For instance, victims may feel a pressure to forgive for the “good of the community” and feel guilty about not wanting to forgive. Many forgiveness therapies claim that a victim cannot go on to lead a happy life without forgiving the transgressor (Cose, 2004). The burden of “doing all the psychological work” is on the victim. The victims must get over their own hurt; they have to look at the perpetrator as a valuable human and they have to forgive that person, whether or not that person shows remorse for what they have done.

Religious doctrines direct people to forgive others who have transgressed against them. However, in the normal course of events, it is most likely the transgressor who must ask for that forgiveness before it is conferred. In secular forgiveness, pressuring victims into forgiving when they are not ready to do so seems like additional victimization. One expert on trauma writes that “sometimes it is *virtuous* not to forgive” (Quinn, 2004).

Jeffrey Murphy writes, “We are often torn, when considering revenge versus forgiveness, by a deep tension between competing values - for example, the expected satisfaction of getting even versus the belief that the virtuous person should be loving and forgiving, not vindictive” (Murphy, 2003). His book *Getting Even* examines the needs of the victim in responding to evil. An interesting observation he makes concerns the idea that if we do not feel some resentment when wronged we probably do not have self respect for ourselves or our own rights. After all,

a caring person would feel indignant when another is wronged, so why not feel the same for oneself? He also writes that perpetrators would rather victimize someone who is willing to confer forgiveness rather than someone who will seek revenge. To illustrate the point he quotes Kant, “One who makes himself into a worm cannot complain if people step on him” (Murphy, 2003).

Author Ellis Cose reminds us that, “Society often tells us that revenge is unhealthy and that our only way for peace is through forgiveness...victims feel this is another of society’s guilt trips...Forgive if you must, but do not allow these insensitive people to shame it from you” (Cose, 2004). Like Murphy, Cose acknowledges feelings of resentment and vengefulness in victims of trauma. While he is also open to forgiveness and reconciliation he aptly quotes a victim, “There must be easier ways to release oneself from emotional turmoil than to embrace the one who harmed you” (Cose, 2004). In his book, Cose presents the narratives of everyday people, and his “real life” stories create empathy with the victims who may be unable to forgive or forget. For example, he tells Solomon Schimmel’s story about his childhood fantasy of revenge that was triggered when talk of revenge circulated freely after the 9/11 attacks. Schimmel shares the following view:

*I have not forgotten nor have I forgiven...what the Nazis and their collaborators did during their years in power. And whenever I read accounts of Nazi crimes, my blood boils and the childhood rage and desire for vengeance and retribution against Germans is triggered. I know, however, that the feelings, directed against an entire nation... are irrational and immoral (Cose, 2005, p.66)*

As a writer and journalist, Cose questions whether vengeance is the right way to deal with wrongs of the past and present. However, it is interesting to be reminded how deeply embedded the concept of vengeance is in our culture. Many of Shakespeare’s plays would be dull without this motivation, and many movies would have no plot (Cose, 2004).

Examples of dehumanizing evil frequently emerge following the horrors of inhumane genocides and wars as well as from victims following a traumatic evil. A hopeful narrative often emerges in these circumstances. That narrative tells of individuals and groups who risk everything to assist the victims. Unfortunately, these groups are usually a very small percentage of the greater population - but it does allow hope that there is some good in this world. Certainly the idea that there can be good in the face of such monumental evil is difficult for victims to envision while in such a darkened state.

Simon Wiesenthal’s book, *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*, relates his experiences as an imprisoned Jew in Nazi Germany. In this memoir he

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tells of an incident in which he was asked to confer forgiveness on a Nazi, a member of the SS, who committed atrocities against a group of Jews. The Nazi is dying and has had a change of heart about the horrible crimes he committed during war. He is a Christian and has sought out a Jew as a representative of the people he has killed. Wiesenthal does not believe that it is in his power to forgive for others and does not give forgiveness the SS Nazi seeks. Discussions and debates ensue on whether Wiesenthal should or should not have forgiven the dying man.

Wiesenthal's book and the discussions resulting from the story related above have continued to engage people on the topic of forgiveness ever since the book was published in the United States in 1976. Anyone who is interested in forgiveness in the aftermath of genocide can still read Wiesenthal's first person account - an account that remains vivid and fresh after so many years.

Whether it is an aspect of traditional religious belief or part of forgiveness theory, forgiveness is an act that a victim chooses to perform in order to restore relationships that have been broken. Traditional forgiveness continues to flourish in the various religious doctrines today but is now joined by the secular views of forgiveness theorists who offer new insights into why we transgress and why and how we are able to forgive.

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## farewell!

David Maines, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, is retiring in 2008, but his past contributions to the MALS program will be well remembered. He served on the original MALS Executive Committee when the program was first established in 2003, representing the area of social sciences. He also taught several core seminars for the program, including "Inequality in America" and "Rich and Poor" (both as offerings under the LBS 503 rubric). Most recently he served on the thesis committee of Angela Kayi who will receive her MALS degree in May 2008.

Over the course of his career, Dr. Maines taught at a number of distinguished institutions, including the University of Iowa, Northwestern University, and Pennsylvania State University prior to coming to Oakland. His research resulted in some 100 journal articles and nine books, the most recent of which appeared in 2007.

MALS wishes him well in his future pursuits (including a newly discovered interest in golf!)

Thank you, Dr. Maines!

## MALS final project alert!

Do you have 20 credits or more completed in the MALS program? Then it's time to start thinking seriously about your Final Project, the last step in completing your MALS degree. As explained in the MALS Student Handbook, pages 12-13, you need to start planning your project well in advance. Remember that you need to have your proposal completed and approved by the MALS Executive Committee before you can register for LBS 600 (Final Project). Please contact the director, Professor Linda Benson (248-370-2539, or by email at [benson@oakland.edu](mailto:benson@oakland.edu)), and arrange to come in for a consultation. Early evening hours will be available throughout spring and summer.

**MALS**  
 Master of Arts  
 in Liberal Studies

**save the date**

**Fall Open House**  
 Please check the MALS website: <http://www2.oakland.edu/mals/> for further information.

Please contact Professor Linda Benson, the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program Director at (248) 370-2539 or (248) 370-2154 for an application or other program information.

**2008**

- April 19 Winter 2008 classes end
- May 3 Commencement
- May 5 Summer classes begin
- May 26 Memorial Day Holiday
- June 1 MALS application deadline for fall 2008
- June 12 Graduate Admissions Open House 5:30-7:30
- July 4 Independence Day
- August 1 Recommended deadline, Final Project proposals for fall 2008
- August 18 Summer classes end
- September 2 Fall 2008 classes begin at 5 p.m
- September 26 Deadline to apply for Fall 2008 graduation.
- October 1 MALS application deadline for winter 2009