The Fellowships Program is proud and excited to be sending eleven of its graduates to top doctoral programs with the support of generous graduate fellowships. In September, our 2011 graduates will enter doctoral programs at Yale (History, American Studies, and Pharmacology), Princeton (History), University of Michigan (History), SUNY Stony Brook (Physics), University of Kansas (History), and a university in Israel (Neuroscience). Three Fellows who completed their undergraduate degrees in previous years will also begin doctoral studies at Johns Hopkins (Neuroscience), Case Western Reserve (Music), and Fordham (Psychology). For details, please read about the achievements of our graduates listed below. Congratulations and best wishes to you all!

These achievements are the fruits of much hard work on the part of the individual students; but they also reflect the excellent education Fellows have received at CCNY, and in particular generous mentoring provided by the college’s faculty. The Fellowships Program can only succeed thanks to the dedication shown by so many faculty members who are contributing to form a talented new generation of scholars who will pioneer new areas of research while diversifying our universities.

Highlights of the spring semester include Prof. Emily Greble’s presentation at our “Forum: On Research.” In addition to providing keen insights on the methodological complexities of constructing historical narratives from archival sources, she offered much funny and useful advice on strategies for coping with the challenges of field research. I also want to thank other colleagues who led workshops during the spring, including: Renee Philippi and Carlo Adinolfi (public speaking); Adrienne Petty and Adib Birklund (balancing life and career); Barbara Brooks and Gerardo Renique (the mentoring relationship). These events provide Fellows with tools that foster success along with perspectives on the pleasures and challenges of pursuing a career in academia.

I am excited to welcome strong new cohorts of City College Fellows and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows. They promise to enrich our community with their creative energy and diverse perspectives from across the disciplines. I owe a great debt to the Fellows for all they have taught me during the twelve years I have directed the program. Thank you!

Have a fruitful and fun summer!

Susan Besse
ing the US occupation of Haiti (1915-1934). His mentor is Prof. Clifford Rosenberg.
Kesi Foster (English) will examine how 19th century bi-racial author and activist Charles W. Chesnutt used fiction to expose and critique the negative psychological effects of socially constructed racial identities on both African Americans and white Americans. His mentor is Prof. Gordon Thompson.
Ms. Jessica Mendez (History) will participate in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.
Rashun Miles (Psychology) will extend his counseling experience as an intern at the Harlem Hospital Community Support Systems Program. He will also collaborate with Dr. Claude Mellins, co-founder of Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital’s Special Needs Clinic, on her research on HIV-infected youth.
Ms. Christen Pruitt (English) will participate in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.
Erin Warren (Psychology), under the direction of her mentor Prof. Jon Horvitz, will conduct research on the neurobiology of habit formation and inhibitory control, with a focus on the role of the pre-frontal cortex.
Elva Yang (Biology) will travel to the Philippines to participate in fieldwork designed to uncover the evolutionary history of the butterfly genus Euploea. Following fieldwork with her mentor Prof. David Lohman and researchers from the National Museum of the Philippines, she will travel to Taiwan to meet with Prof. Lohman’s collaborator on this project, Prof. Shen-Horn Yen and his student Chia-Shuan Wei.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fellows' Activities and Awards
2010 - 2011

Graduating Seniors
Shana Adise (Psychology) graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa with Psychology Honors. She plans to enter medical school in fall 2013 to pursue either a MD or MD/PhD.
Deborah Ayeni (Biology) graduated Summa Cum Laude. She will enter the Pharmacology PhD program at Yale University in September 2011. She was awarded the Chemistry Department's Merck Index Scholarship, the Ward Medal, and the J. Birnbaum Scholarship. From the College, she was awarded Student Support Services Program Science Award. Outside the College, she was awarded the Salk Award and the 2010 University of Pennsylvania’s SUIP Award for Best Summer Intern. She is Treasurer for the Baskerville Chemical Society and is interning at the Bristol Meyers Squibb Pharmaceutical Company during summer 2011.
Fejzije Bala (Biology) graduated Cum Laude.
Charlene Blades (Psychology) graduated Summa Cum Laude.
Ashley Canino (English/Philosophy) graduated Summa Cum Laude.
Amanda Davis (Psychology) graduated Summa Cum Laude and was awarded the Psychology Department’s Ward Medal.
Rafael De Jesús (Psychology, 2006 BA) has been accepted to Fordham University’s School Psychology PhD program for fall 2011.
Simon Divilov (Physics) graduated Summa Cum Laude. He will enter the Physics PhD program at SUNY Stony Brook in September 2011. He was awarded the Physics Department’s Ward Medal.
Reut Gelblum (Psychology) graduated Magna Cum Laude. She plans to begin a Psychology PhD program in Israel fall 2011. She was awarded the Psychology Department’s Bernard R. Ackerman Foundation Award.
Adela Gonzalez (Spanish/History) was awarded the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department’s Certificate of Academic Achievement in Portuguese.
Fadila Habchi (English) graduated Summa Cum Laude with English Honors. She will enter Yale University’s American Studies and African American Studies PhD program in September 2011. She was awarded the English Department’s Sidney Jacoff Graduate Fellowship, and was also a recipient of the College’s Weston Scholarship for Public and Community Service.
William Hickox (History) graduated Magna Cum Laude. He will enter the History PhD program at University of Kansas in September 2011. He was awarded the History Department’s Sydney Jacoff Graduate Fellowship.
Rodion Kosovsky (History) graduated Magna Cum Laude. He will enter the History of Medicine PhD program at Yale University in September 2011. He was awarded the History Department’s Bronson Award for Outstanding Work in the Field of History.
Priya Puliyampet (Psychology) will spend the coming year completing her MA thesis to earn a BA/MA in June 2012. During spring 2011, she presented the findings of her BA Honors Thesis at the Eastern Psychological Association Conference and the Association for Psychological Science Convention.
Robert Ramos (English) graduated Magna Cum Laude. He will enter CCNY’s MA program in English Language and Literacy in September 2011 and plans eventually to earn his PhD. He was awarded the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department’s Downer Academic Award in Italian.
John Romey (Music, 2008 BFA) and has been accepted to Case Western Reserve to pursue a DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) in historical performance practice, beginning fall 2011.
Winston Scarlett (Black Studies) will complete his BA in January 2012.
Diana Sierra (History) graduated Summa Cum Laude. She will enter the PhD program in History and Women’s Studies at the University of Michigan in September 2011. She was awarded the History Department’s Bronson Prize for Outstanding Work in the Field of History.
Fidel Tavarez (History) will enter the History PhD program at Princeton University in September 2011. He was awarded the History Department’s Oscar Lloyd Meyerson Medal/Aron Award for the best undergraduate research paper. His of...
paper, “The Contested State: Political Discourse During the Dominican Republic’s Independence from Haiti, 1844,” has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming academic anthology.

Zhe (Kitty) Xu (Biology, 2009 BS) and was accepted to Johns Hopkins University’s Psychological and Brain Sciences PhD program, beginning in September 2011.

CONTINUING

Miguel Briones (Psychology) was awarded the City Seeds’ Honors Fellowship.

Joshua Clough (History) was awarded the History Department’s Leslie Steigman Bayor Award for Outstanding Work in American History.

Chathuranga DeSilva (Chemical Engineering) was accepted into the CUNY-SURP Summer Research Program, under the mentorship of Prof. Ilona Kretzschonar.

Hyeondo (Luke) Hwayng (Biochemistry) was awarded the Dr. Bernard B. Levine Scholarship from the Division of Science, and the Math Department’s Award for Highest Final Examination in Math 39100, Differential Equations. He was also awarded the Chemistry Department’s Frank and Rosie Brescia II Award.

Alix Faas (Psychology) was accepted into the City College’s BA/MA program in Psychology.

Ala Fink (English) was awarded the Philosophy Department’s Ketchum Prize in History of Philosophy.

Eduardo Lerro (English) has been studying abroad in Germany during the 2010/2011 academic year. He holds a Kaye Scholarship.

Zach Mazur (History) has been conducting research in Poland during the spring 2011 semester. He was awarded the History Department’s Sidney Pomerantz Award for the best paper in urban history.

Cheryl Mazzeo (Biology) was awarded the Division of paper, “The Contested State: Political Discourse During the Dominican Republic’s Independence from Haiti, 1844,” has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming academic anthology.

Th., November 17
Workshop: Advanced Learning Techniques

Th., November 22
(Note: Tuesday, Nov 22nd is a Thursday schedule.)
Workshop: Mental Health

Th., December 1
DUE: Applications for City College Fellowships

GRE PREP COURSE

Just a reminder that the City College Fellowships Program will pay the tuition for a GRE Prep course for all Fellows, be the course a Prime Prep course, offered by Prof. Pilette, or a Kaplan course. For Prime Prep information and schedules, please contact Prof. Pilette at: prep@primeprep.com. If you would like to take the Kaplan course, you MUST apply for the CCNY discount. For information regarding Kaplan and for approval of your registration for either course, contact Renee, (renee_philippi@verizon.net). You must obtain approval before registering for either course.

CHECK PROCEDURE

Remember: all checks (stipends, reimbursement for travel, summer monies, etc.) are picked up in the Bursar’s office, A103. It takes approximately three weeks to receive a check once a disbursement form has been submitted. Stipend checks are not processed until the journal has been received with the Mentor’s signature. If you have any question about the procedure, please ask Renee Philippi.
Science's Gloria and Myer Fishman Scholarship and was chosen to participate in the Albert Einstein College of Medicine Summer 2011 Undergraduate Research Program. James McGowan (English) is the recipient of a Kaye Scholarship from the College. Rashun Miles (Psychology) was awarded the Psychology Department's Kenneth B. Clarke Award in recognition of his pursuit of social justice. He is also a recipient of the College's Weston Scholarship for Public and Community Service. Rashun was chosen to participate in the summer 2011 Pipeline Program at the CUNY Graduate Center. Eliezer Posner (Mathematics) was chosen to participate in the 2011 summer REU in mathematics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Roy Song (Biology) was awarded the Biology Department's Professor Jess Hanks Award. He was chosen by Mt. Sinai School of Medicine to receive their Summer 2011 Fellowship in Systems Biology. Agata Tumilowicz (English) has been studying in Paris for the spring 2011 semester and is the recipient of a Kaye Scholarship. Elva J.H. Yang (Psychology) presented posters in the CCAPP Annual Students Poster Presentation and in “Einsteins in the City 2011” International Research Conference.

EXCERPTS FROM FELLOWS’ JOURNALS

SPRING 2011:

Among our spring workshops, the one on public speaking led by our own Renee Philippi and Carlo Adinolfi [Co-Directors of Concrete Temple Theatre] was a huge hit. Many of the Fellows raved:

Robert Ramos (English): Renee and Carlo’s public speaking workshop was the most interesting of the semester! It complemented last year’s workshop by focusing on mental, respiratory, and vocal preparation. We practiced breathing, posture, and eye contact. Some of the exercises were a bit embarrassing, but they helped us shed inhibitions.

Roy Song (Biology): This workshop in particular was extremely useful and the most fun. Renee and Carlo taught us how to approach a microphone, how to address an audience, and some physical and mental preparations we can do to relax beforehand. I will always remember to over articulate!

Miguel Briones (Psychology): Renee and Carlo’s workshop showed me how to loosen up and have confidence in my voice. At the beginning, it was nerve-wracking for me just to make eye contact with everyone in the room and introduce myself. Afterwards, however, I felt like a boulder was lifted from my shoulders. The techniques I learned proved very useful when I presented my research at Princeton University.

The guest speaker at the spring semester’s “Forum: On Research” was Professor Emily Greble (History). Fellows majoring in all different disciplines drew useful lessons from her discussion of methodology, her infectious enthusiasm, her wide-ranging advice, and her example of tenacity and flexibility.

Fadila Habchi (English): A highlight of the semester was Professor Greble’s presentation. I appreciated her insights concerning complex methodological issues involved in archival research. She also spoke honestly about the anxiety and excitement she experienced while conducting research in small archives in Bosnia. Her candid remarks on the impact of field research on family life—time spent away from loved ones and social support networks—hit home for me. And it was especially sobering to hear about the efforts she had to make as a young female professional to adapt to and function within a male-dominated environment where women were not expected to be historians.

Roy Song (Biology): I took home four messages. (1) Always bring some American treats, such as Twinkies or Hostess cupcakes, when you go abroad to do research. They can be more useful than money and can make a difference on the quality/quantity of research materials you are allowed to access. (2) Be aware and respectful of cultural differences. Learn the language. (3) Be prepared for less than optimal working conditions. Improvise. (4) Collect and store everything. It might turn out to be useful in the future.

Ideally, when students become Fellows, they start to take “ownership” of their education. As they take the first steps toward defining what kind of scholars they want to be and what kind of scholarship they want to produce, they shift toward becoming not just consumers but also producers of knowledge. Carlos Santacruz (History) describes this transition during his first semester as a Fellow. Reut Gelblum (Psychology) looks back on the experience as she graduates.

Carlos Santacruz (History): In my time at City College, no semester proved to be more challenging or rewarding. I began to see the semester as not simply a collection of weeks full of academic work, but as a stepping stone to a greater goal: to obtain a PhD. My goal in classes was no longer simply to get good grades, but to push myself a little harder, which at times took me out of my comfort zone. As the semester progressed, school became a completely different experience. Beyond doing what was expected to complete class assignments, I undertook research projects that tested my perseverance and challenged me intellectually. My daily routine now incorporated countless visits to other campuses and libraries to obtain material not readily available within the CUNY system. Meetings with professors dramatically shifted from brief discussions about class material to long conversations about my research projects and academic goals. In this process, my relationships with faculty members turned into partnerships based on mutual respect. This dramatic shift would not have been possible without the support of like-minded Fellows. I felt like I was moving forward not as an
individual but as part of a flock of birds flying together toward a common destination. I must admit that at times being surrounded by such outstanding students was a bit intimidating; indeed, it drew out some insecurities about my own potential. However, as my relationship with other Fellows grew and our conversations touched on personal matters, I realized that the insecurities I felt were very much shared by my peers. Finally, I stopped doubting my potential, dug deeper, and pushed harder. When I felt I couldn’t push any harder, my peers became a source of inspiration.

Reut Gelblum (Psychology): I remember feeling very timid in the company of the accomplished Fellows during my first semester as a City College Fellow. I thought it admirable that here were students just like me, but they were already so focused; they were well versed in their field’s jargon and trends, and they had found their own unique professional voice. They talked about papers they had written and presentations they had given at conferences. They created an almost visible aura of excellence around them in the fellowship meetings. Looking back as I graduate, the fellowship has helped me to get there as well.

Conducting research builds undergraduates’ academic skills and helps them to develop a research agenda to pursue in graduate school. Many Fellows take advantage of support from the Fellowships Program to pursue independent projects. Zachary Masur (History) describes his experiences using archives in Poland. Priya Pulyampet (Psychology) recounts her experiences presenting her research findings at academic conferences.

Zachary Masur (History): I spent spring semester in Poland conducting research in archives. Nothing is better for foreign language acquisition than spending hours every day reading and speaking languages that are not your own. But this was
a difficult process at first. My first day in the archives was nerve-wracking. I felt enormous pressure to make a good impression on the archivists, so I carefully prepared a speech explaining myself and my research. It is difficult to be so young, to look so young, and enter a community full of (mostly) old people. Also, as I am a foreigner in a sometimes xenophobic country, the utmost respect must be paid to everyone I speak to. Imitation is a powerful tool. I observed how other people spoke to archivists, figured out where the lines are drawn in terms of formality and informality, and simply recycled phrases I had heard.

I spent the majority of my time in one branch of the State Archive in Krakow that holds most of the court, police and prison records for the past 900 years. For weeks upon weeks I showed up right when they opened at nine in the morning and did not leave until they closed six hours later. I wore button down shirts and nice pants every day, and I read as much as I could. Pretty soon everyone in the archive knew my name and happily said hello to me every morning. It was as if I had become a fixture in the archive. This meant that rules no longer applied to me. Most people have to wait several hours to receive documents, but when I request them they arrive immediately. When I asked to take pictures of the documents, something the regulations expressly forbid, I was granted permission. Having earned the archivists’ respect I can reap the benefits, possibly for a long time to come.

My focus has been on the police records in Krakow from approximately 1904-1914. This collection is so enormous that I still have dozens more files to read. But having learned to decipher their awful handwriting and having pieced together a good number of records, I now know exactly how the police functioned, who they answered to, how court procedures worked, and on and on. This knowledge has affected how I look at each piece of paper, and it has vastly increased the speed at which I can go through these documents. I can evaluate each police report quickly, identifying who wrote it, when, why, what other reports it refers to, and where I can find those.

Despite my successes, I find the process of research trying. Far too often I have felt that I have no idea what my research amounts to. It has also been difficult to stay so focused throughout all these weeks and months. Archival research is tiring; six hours or more reading documents leaves me exhausted every day. And it takes discipline to get up and start working each morning when no one is keeping track.

It has been an enormous help to write journals for my mentor, Professor Greble. These gave me focus and made me consider my notes closely in the attempt to explain what I was reading. I had to try to rise above the million minute details I was dealing with every day, pick out the most important things I had learned, and form some preliminary impressions. Professor Greble’s encouragement and positive responses gave me strength and confidence that I am on the right track.

Priya Puliyampet (Psychology): For the past two years I have been a part of Prof. Engle-Friedman’s lab at Baruch College. During fall 2010 semester, we worked on my honors thesis (an examination of the effect of mood states and clinical depression on objective and subjective effort). We submitted proposals for posters based on this analysis to the Eastern Psychological Association (EPA) and the Association for Psychological Science (APS). These proposals were accepted and we presented the research findings at the EPA conference in March and the APS convention in May.

At both conferences, I was pleasantly surprised by how un-intimidating the poster sessions were. I met many wonderful people who worked on interesting projects; and I was amazed by the amount of information exchanged. Whenever criticism was offered, it was delivered in a constructive manner. I was delighted to find myself speaking with authority and confidence I did not know I had! Nevertheless, it bothers me that I lack the skills to scrutinize the various experimental designs and statistical approaches used. This has motivated me to strengthen my statistical and experimental skills so that I will be able to evaluate the results of papers for myself. I do not want to rely on researchers to tell me what they believe their findings signify.

We are currently in the process of preparing a poster to present at this year’s annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS). When I attended the meeting last year, I saw that the field of sleep research is huge and very interdisciplinary. Yet the community of sleep psychologists is small. It seemed as if everyone at the conference had worked with everyone else in some way during the course of his/her training. Even if I were not as interested in sleep as I am, I would still want to work with such a group because of the culture of warmth and mutual support I saw. Professor Engle-Friedman has invited me to a lab dinner hosted by her mentor Richard Bootzin, who every year brings together his current students, former students, and their students to meet and discuss current research. I am excited by this opportunity to become a member of the “sleep family.”

City College Fellowships Program is an umbrella program that administers the City College Fellowship and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. See our website for information:
www.ccny.cuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram
The City College Fellowships Office is located in NAC 6/316, 212/650-8388.