HUMANITIES at BYU
After five centuries of political, cultural, and intellectual ascendance, in the mid-thirteenth century, the Islamic kingdoms of what is now Spain collapsed under the pressure of the steady advance of Christian armies from the north. The Muslim city-state Granada, rooted on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada, allied itself with the Christian kingdom of Castille, and, under the command of the Christian king who would be known to history as “San Fernando,” helped overthrow Seville, the last fully independent Islamic state in the peninsula. Granada’s populace welcomed home her ruler, Ibn al-Ahmar, with the chant, “conqueror, conqueror.” Ibn al-Ahmar, perhaps mindful of his own political vulnerability, is said to have responded, “Allah alone is conqueror.” Then he commanded his artisans to carve the phrase hundreds of times into the ornate plaster walls of his palace, the Alhambra.

A century and a half later, Peter I hired Muslim artists to add on to the palace formerly occupied by Seville’s conquered Muslim rulers. Above the main entrance they inscribed in clear Gothic letters, “The all-highest, most powerful, mighty conqueror Don Pedro.” But below, in stylized Arabic script—inlegible to the majority Christian population—they wrote, “Allah alone is conqueror.” The crosses on many of the vertical strokes were added, according to tradition, to appease Catholic King Peter.

This story illustrates the contradictions in the long conversation between Islam and the West, one informed by conquest and cooperation, aggression and adaptation. In the featured article in this issue, Professor Jim Toronto describes the tradition of “independent inquiry and original analysis” that fired Islam’s golden age; it also gave form and substance to the Western Renaissance. But the “hermeneutical methods and spiritual energy” of the past, Toronto explains, have yet to show modern Muslims the way out of their “tormenting predicament.”

BYU is doing its part to ensure that the future will include more cooperation and less conquest, more creative adaptation and less aggression. On our faculty, Dan Peterson is at the head of an international translation project that makes available in English, often for the first time, classic works of medieval Islamic philosophy and literature. Dil Parkinson is advancing the understanding of Arabic linguistics while immersing students in exemplary study abroad programs in Egypt and Jordan. Kirk Belnap, head of BYU’s federally-funded National Middle East Resource Center, has become one of the best-known figures in the United States in the rapidly growing field of teaching Arabic as a second language. And Jim Toronto publishes and teaches in the rich field of Islamic humanities.

Through September 2012, the BYU Museum of Art is hosting a major show that attempts to answer the question of what makes Islamic art Islamic. By challenging commonly held assumptions, the exhibit aspires to build bridges between two cultural traditions that might yet learn from each other today as they did hundreds of years ago.

The humanities reveal and create: reveal what is of value from the past; create new understanding for the future. In that sense, we have a special understanding of what once was said of that moment of Islamic history that touched and changed the West:

It embodied what came before, and illuminated what came after.

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Dean John R. Rosenberg

Dean John R. Rosenberg
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Front cover: students at Petra.
Back cover: red rocks in southern Utah.
The Herculaneum Papyri Project and other multispectral imaging projects of the Ancient Textual Imaging Group (ATIG) are featured in a display in the Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center. The interactive display allows visitors to select short film segments that explain and illustrate the work of the ATIG in reading otherwise unreadable ancient papyri. Thousands of such papyri, including those carbonized when Herculaneum was destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, have been “read” in the past few years by the ATIG. Stop by the Hinckley Building and spend a few minutes accessing the video kiosk that explains this fascinating project.

EMERITI DEATHS

Max Rogers, professor emeritus of German, died on December 19, 2011. He was on the BYU faculty from 1945 to 1983. He served as chair of the Languages Department and, for thirteen years, as associate dean. He created and directed the first BYU study tour of Europe, traveling between Sweden and Italy with thirty-six students for over three months in the summer of 1952. During their tour, Max and his students enjoyed an audience with Pope Pius XII, in which His Holiness was presented with a set of LDS scriptures. Max directed five more such tours, then went on to develop the now-terminated Travel Studies program, out of which the Study Abroad program developed. He directed four semesters abroad.

Jean Anne Waterstradt, professor emeritus of English, died on December 10, 2011. She graduated with a BA in 1945 and had the distinction of being immediately hired as a faculty member by English Chair P. A. Christensen. It was ten years before she could manage a leave to obtain her master’s degree from USC. In 2008, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by Weber State University in Ogden. Miss Waterstradt (as she always expected to be called by students and most colleagues) taught at BYU until 1989.
The word a’goon is a phonetic transliteration of thank you in the Khmer language. The customary way of saying it includes bringing your hands up in prayer position while simultaneously bowing your head. Considering that a’goon is one of the easiest to pronounce and most important words in Khmer—and one of the few that I know so far—I use it frequently here in Cambodia. For several days, it’s been my only way of communicating: Suppose that I’m fed dinner by the family I live with: A’goon. What if I bump into someone on the street? A’goon. And if I refuse a ride from a tuk-tuk driver? A’goon.

It’s an appropriate label for this time of my life because I’m so thankful to actually be here. I live with a wonderful family; the younger girls take me shopping and teach me Khmer, and Loke-yay (Grandma) sets a place for me at the table and holds my hand from time to time. I feel at home here. The family thanks me for volunteering to teach English in their country because they think it’s a great service, but I think it’s the least I can do.

The children at Cambodian Children’s Fund (CCF) have also already thanked and hugged me for coming to their school, and I haven’t even started teaching yet! I went to a school end-of-the-year function and saw how they interacted with their teachers; they hug them, fetch them bottles of water, volunteer to clean up, and take leadership. They are so young, but so respectful because they know their teachers have changed their lives. Each child has a similar story of being rescued by CCF from a life of illiteracy, poverty, frequent neglect, and, in some cases, abuse. And they do not hide their gratitude for one moment. I’ve only known them for a day, but their actions and sincere smiles have already impressed me.

I thought I came here to do some good and to enrich my life. But I think this place and these kids might change my life. A’goon, Cambodia.

Excerpted from an initial blog entry of Jessica Myers, a June 2011 linguistics graduate who recorded these thoughts upon arriving as a volunteer English teacher at Cambodian Children’s Fund in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
What does it mean to “Do Deutsch”? Students across campus were invited to consider that question as Do Deutsch became the theme of the first German Week at BYU, October 4–14, 2011. Thanks to the generous support provided by the German Embassy and the German Information Center in Washington, DC, the BYU Germanic and Slavic Department was able to hold several events designed to engage the campus community with the meaning of German and Germany in their lives.

German students, led by Alicia Cutler and Tyler Williams, worked closely with Randall Lund and other faculty members to plan and carry out the ambitious agenda. Student leaders began planning social events such as World Cup Soccer and Oktoberfest months beforehand. Dozens of students volunteered to promote and help run events.

The program began at the college’s International Cinema with three German films and a lecture by Professor Rob McFarland exploring German culture and history from the post–World War II period to the present. Further interdisciplinary cooperation, a main goal of the program, was achieved through a colloquium by Professor Michelle James that was co-sponsored by the BYU Women’s Studies Center. She spoke on the early German writer Elisa von der Recke and the problems women experience finding their own voices.

One of the major successes of the week was the creative arts contest. Over forty students entered various categories, responding to the prompt, “German(y) in My Life.” Winners of the one-hundred-dollar prizes were Michelle Schwoebel (essay), Romy Franks (film), Joshua Malyon (poetry/song), and Chad Lindsay (visual arts). Faculty members were impressed with the students and their creations. Professor Lund remarked, “Even after years of working with students, I was touched by...

Attracting support and participants for the week’s festivities.
the depth of feeling students expressed for the language and culture and the diverse ways that they found to express that."

German students also hosted local high school students on Senior Day. The visitors sat in on German classes and met with students and faculty. They joined a diverse audience to watch an original play, Die Wende (The Turning), written and directed by BYU student David Tertipes. The play explores a young man’s journey to enlightenment as he learns how the Berlin Wall affected family relationships on both sides of the border. Following the play, David explained his perspectives on both the play and the wall and took questions from the audience.

A highlight of the week was the visit of German native Elder Erich W. Kopischke, of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and his wife. The audience was treated to very personal and inspirational reflections, in German, on questions of special interest to the students, such as finding a spouse and finding a career. Even beginning German students who could not follow much of the discussion felt the spirit of the occasion.

Another popular event was the German movie night featuring Schindler’s List (edited). The crowd was so large for the usual venue that an English language copy was quickly located and shown in an adjacent room.

Oktoberfest, the culminating social, was held in Brigham Square and drew nearly two hundred students to an evening of games, music, dancing, and food.

Based on the interest awakened across campus (“Where can I get one of those cool shirts?” was a question often asked), the interdisciplinary connections, and the large number of students involved in both planning and participating in events, German Week was a clear success. Participants have a more personal understanding of what it means to “Do Deutsch.” Students and faculty are already looking forward to next year’s week under the slogan, “Think Transatlantic.” ✦
More and more students are starting their Arabic language studies earlier. For example, Isaac Earl, a high school student from Orem, Utah, enrolled in Brigham Young University's 2007 STARTALK intensive summer Arabic camp and continued his studies during the 2007–2008 academic year with Arabic Without Walls (a distance-learning program developed by BYU and UC Berkeley). During the summer of 2008, he studied in Cairo on a National Security Language Initiative for Youth scholarship. As a result of a lot of hard work and favorable learning conditions, Earl made impressive gains and was funded to study in Jordan during the summer of 2009 (the first high school student ever admitted to BYU’s intensive Arabic program abroad). In the summer between high school and college, he certified as an advanced-level speaker, correctly answering every advanced-level item on the National Middle East Language Resource Center Reading Proficiency Test. Only three of the forty-one BYU students with whom he studied did this well in reading.

It was not long after that he began BYU’s Middle East Studies/Arabic major at a level of proficiency that many such majors aspire to reach by the time they graduate.

Isaac is no longer an anomaly; forty-three high school students enrolled in BYU’s 2011 summer residential camps. Among them are thirteen returning from the previous year who hope to press on in their study of Arabic. All forty-three took the standard BYU Arabic 101 or 102 final examination, a fact that allows for comparison between their progress and that of regular BYU students who complete these courses on campus in both intensive and non-intensive formats. We have never seen a more successful year, with many program participants scoring as well as our better BYU students. Many are now continuing their study with Arabic Without Walls (BYU Independent Study currently has seventy-seven students across twenty-eight states in the program), and most would welcome the opportunity to study abroad with NSLI-Youth, although limited funding is available.

In January of 2012, a select group of BYU students entered the College of Humanities’ newest major, Arabic language. This new course of study is available as a second major only to those who have achieved advanced-level proficiency in Arabic and who already have another major. It stresses facility in both speaking a dialect of Arabic and fluency in reading the press, with the goal of pushing students’ reading and speaking abilities toward professional level proficiency. Dr. Khaled Abuamsha, academic director of the Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan, where fifty-two BYU Arabic students studied during the fall semester of 2011, joined the College as a visiting professor for most of the year to help kick off the new major. The only one of its kind in the country, it is designed to help students develop language skills in professional settings. Students gain proficiency in reading, conversing, and giving formal presentations on particular areas of expertise chosen by each student.
The College’s Arabic Program is considered among the best in the country. After four semesters of rigorous preparation, students head abroad for an intensive semester led by members of the BYU faculty. During Fall semester 2011, Dr. Dilworth Parkinson and Dr. Kirk Belnap accompanied fifty-two students to Amman, Jordan. Dr. Parkinson oversaw the most successful implementation to date of a highly effective method he has developed to help students efficiently acquire both accuracy and fluency in reading the Arab press. An unprecedented proportion of the students achieved advanced-level proficiency, as measured by a nationally-recognized test, with the best students at or near the “superior” level.

Dr. Belnap, who directs the National Middle East Language Resource Center, accompanied the group as part of Project Perseverance, a pioneering research effort funded by the US Department of Education and BYU, to help students overcome the stresses and anxiety typical of immersion study and become effective self-regulating language learners. Other research team members include the College’s own Dr. Dan Dewey (Linguistics) and Dr. Jennifer Bown (Germanic and Slavic) and Dr. Patrick Steffen of BYU’s Behavioral Medicine Research Center, as well as Dr. Madeline Ehrman, former director of research at the Foreign Service Institute, and Dr. Andrew Cohen of the University of Minnesota, an authority on language learning strategies.

Content-based learning is a cornerstone of the BYU study abroad program, an approach recently found to contribute to significantly higher language proficiency gains during study abroad (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige, 2009). Students met daily with professors from the Qasid Institute to discuss current issues in Arab society, many of them connected with the unfolding events. These teachers devised surveys that helped the students simultaneously improve their Arabic and engage in discussions that gave them a much more
nuanced understanding of Arab culture, including complex topics such as attitudes about women wearing the veil.

For the first time since the program began in 1989, some of the students attended a regular class for Arab students at the University of Jordan, a Political Science class taught by Dr. Faisal Al-Rfouh. One day, the professor commented at length about the Palestinians’ U.N. gambit, about which he had just published an editorial in a major newspaper—which students then read and came back and discussed with him in the next class. As they listened day after day to his commentary on developments, they found themselves with a front-row seat to history in the making. This opportunity stretched high aptitude students much more than ever before.


Selected Publications from BYU Arabic Faculty


Beauty and Belief
Crossing Bridges with the Arts of Islamic Culture

 Runs Feb. 24 through Sep. 29, 2012, in the BYU Museum of Art. Assembled in collaboration with Islamic art scholar Dr. Sabina Al Khemir, the exhibition features over 250 objects from several collections, allowing visitors to experience the stunning beauty and powerful messages of the art of the Islamic world.
At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the intense debate within the worldwide Muslim community (umma) over how to reconcile the traditional religious values and norms of Islam with the requirements of an international socioeconomic order based on concepts of secularism, rationalism, democracy, and human rights continues unabated. And questions surrounding Islamic law (shari'a) lie at the center of this debate. In order to understand more fully this ongoing dialectic among Muslims, it will be helpful to outline some key points regarding the nature and role of Islamic law in the umma.

It is crucial to remember that Islam is a mosaic, not a monolith. As one of the world's largest and fastest-growing religions, with about 1.3 billion adherents (almost one-fifth of the world's population), Islam, according to some demographers, could surpass Christianity in the first half of the twenty-first century as the most populous religion in the world. The geographic expanse of the Islamic world, those areas in which Muslims are the majority population, is vast. Over the centuries what has become known as the Islamic world has accommodated a wide variety of languages, ethnic and racial groups, political systems, legal schools, and richly diverse cultures. Although Westerners often speak of the Islamic world in monolithic terms, there are very few generalizations that would accurately include a ninth-century Sufi mystic in Damascus, a fourteenth-century court musician in Granada, and a twentieth-century working mother in Jakarta. Nor is there much in common among the political ideologies of contemporary Islamic nations where we find theocracy in Iran, monarchy in Jordan, autocracy in Syria, and secular democracy in Turkey. In fact, there are nearly as many religious denominations and political points of view in Islam as there are in Christianity, and Islamic history is equally variegated. Keeping this polychromatic diversity in mind when talking about Islam will help avoid overgeneralizing and thus misrepresenting a complex, nuanced, and multifaceted reality.

The roots of this complexity and diversity, and the origins of Islamic law, spring from the early period of Islamic history. In the centuries following Muhammad's death, Islam spread into an immense empire with laws and techniques of governing which were far more complex than those required when Muhammad was leading the community. Where was guidance to be found? The Qur'an, of course, was the most prestigious and authoritative source, but it mostly provided general principles of legal and moral guidance and was limited in terms of the range of issues that it actually covered. In the early phase of expansion, Muslim leaders simply followed the laws and practices of the conquered areas and left much of the day-to-day government in the hands of the local leaders.

population. But this was not a satisfactory solution for the long term. As problems arose, many Muslims began to wonder what Muhammad, the Prophet, would do in like situations. They began to gather information about what, in fact, he had done and said on almost any question that could be imagined. This information took the form of reports called *hadith* that, over a period of about two centuries after the Prophet’s death, were collected and codified in volumes that represent the second principal source of law, the Sunna. It is largely on the basis of the Qur’an and Sunna that the all-inclusive legal code of Islam, shari’a, was constructed. Muslim legal scholars frequently take pains to note a crucial distinction between “sacred law, or ‘the law of God’ (shari’a), and jurisprudence, or the process of human comprehension, interpretation, and codification of this law. In Islam, God is the ultimate law-giver. Thus the shari’a, properly speaking, consists of the maxims, admonitions, and legal sanctions and prohibitions enshrined in the Qur’an, and explained, elaborated, and realized in the Prophetic tradition. The process of codification of the shari’a is called *fiqh*, or jurisprudence."

With these two sacred sources as the foundation, Islamic law began to develop to meet the myriad demands of governing a vibrant, diverse community of Muslims and non-Muslims. The evolving system of law fostered a cadre of specialists—including ‘alim (scholar), mufti (writer of legal opinions), faqih (jurisprudent), and qadi (judge)—who applied hermeneutical principles such as *ijtihad* (independent reasoning and analysis), *qiyas* (analogy), and *ijma’* (consensus) to establish a legal framework for regulating temporal and spiritual affairs in the empire and for finding creative solutions to local problems. Several major schools of legal thought were eventually established in Sunni and Shi’ite Islam, all of which differ to some degree in their methodology and interpretation of shari’a but are viewed as equally authoritative and legitimate by Muslims, thus contributing even more variety and flexibility to Islamic jurisprudence. However, with the passage of time and increasing emphasis on consensus and blind acceptance (*taqlid*) of legal precedent, the doors of *ijtihad* began to swing shut and the dynamism and creative energy of the Islamic legal system dissipated. Many scholars trace the decline of the Islamic empire to this ossification of legal thinking that culminated in about the tenth century CE, though there is debate about the historical timing and subsequent impact of this development. After this time, no new legal systems or schools of thought were acceptable in the Islamic world.

With the advent of the modern era in the Middle East (often identified in Western scholarship with the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798), a majority of the Islamic countries on the Mediterranean littoral were subject to the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire. As European colonial powers began to encroach on the Ottoman domain, the traditional system of shari’a gradually experienced a series of changes that eroded its role in Islamic governance and society. First, the reputation and influence of the legal scholars significantly diminished as Muslim rulers co-opted the religious establishment into the state bureaucracy, making them essentially government employees whose livelihoods depended on pleasing and supporting political potentates rather than engaging in independent legal scholarship. Consequently, the authority of religious elites gradually deteriorated, becoming viewed by many Muslims as puppets “in the pocket” of the regime; scholars of Islamic law have consequently experienced a weakened capacity to promote positive change in society. Second, increasing colonial intervention, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Ataturk’s abolition of the caliphate in the 1920s laid the groundwork for the establishment in most Middle Eastern and North African countries of “hybrid” legal systems. These
typically incorporate European constitutional principles and legal codes to address the demands of modern governance, national security, and a globalized economy while taking a selective approach to Islamic law, implementing only those portions deemed useful. Ironically, especially in view of the current alarmist rhetoric about the dangers of “creeping shari’a” in Western countries, the reality in most Muslim countries is that shari’a law has been relegated to a secondary status, limited generally to the realm of personal status and family law (marriage, divorce, fertility, sexuality, death/burial, and inheritance) and to issues related to religious freedom and rights of non-Muslim minorities.

As a result of these developments, the Islamic countries in the Mediterranean basin today represent a spectrum of legal systems, constitutional frameworks, and approaches to applying shari’a. Some countries have espoused a more secular legal orientation, while others emphasize the centrality of religion in the national polity. Some constitutions state that the country is an Islamic state; some prefer not to declare an official Islamic political identity but mention Islam as “a source” or “the main source” of legislation. All of these countries apply Islamic law in a “patchwork” fashion: mostly in regards to personal and family law, and cobbled together with law codes of European origin governing civil, economic, and criminal issues. Most of the national constitutions include liberal language acknowledging human rights and religious freedom and granting some degree of autonomy and equality to religious minorities. But these high-minded principles guaranteeing rights of worship and conscience are normally couched in terminology and contain conditions that allow for enormous latitude of interpretation in regulating the exercise of those freedoms. Typically included is a caveat that freedom of religion will be honored so long as religious practices do not contravene the laws of Islam or disturb the public order.

Two major obstacles hinder the umma’s efforts to deal with the “tormenting predicament” of how to implement reforms that can bring greater security, prosperity, and freedom to the Islamic world without sacrificing Islamic values and identity. First, with a wide variety of legal codes, schools of Islamic law, sects, ideologies, and politico-economic systems across the Islamic world, and with no universally accepted authority to define issues, render binding interpretations, and rally support, the Islamic world faces a grave crisis in its divinely mandated duty to establish “the Islamic alternative” (al-badil al-islami) in both spiritual and temporal affairs throughout the world. The reality is—and it is a reality that causes as much distress to thoughtful Muslims as it does confusion to non-Muslims—that the various Islamist reformers and movements have been unable to define just what the acceptable, distinctive, and viable “Islamic solution” is to intractable problems such as poverty, disease, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, and national governance.

The second obstacle is closely related to the first and concerns the role of Islamic law in governing a modern nation-state. It is axiomatic for most contemporary Muslims that shari’a must form the foundation of any truly Islamic polity because “God’s law” provides the only lasting remedies to the social, political, and economic ills that beset humanity; that these remedies are as relevant and effective today as they were during Islam’s golden era centuries ago; and that therefore Muslims must avoid a piecemeal approach and adopt the corpus of shari’a law in its entirety. The logic is that what was good for Muslims then will be good for Muslims now; what made Islam preeminent once will make Islam preeminent again today. Islam, as fleshed out in meticulous detail in Islamic jurisprudence, is valid “in every time and in every place,” as Muslims are fond of saying. Implementation of shari’a, then, is the sine qua non of any Islamist reform effort, the

![Detailed mosaics adorn the interiors of Islamic mosques.](image)
key ingredient that will ensure successful realization of an Islamic sociopolitical order in the world: that is, modernization without Westernization. “There is no cure for the widespread disease of poverty, ignorance, sickness, and moral and national corruption except a return to the laws of Islam.” Conservative Muslims reject the argument that shari’a is incompatible with prevailing international norms, while others defiantly welcome the prospect of international opprobrium and isolation that might result from the full application of shari’a. However, in cases where those espousing this fundamentalist philosophy have managed to gain political power and implement an Islamic state with the full weight of Islamic shari’a law, either through democratic means (in the case of Algeria) or through military force (in the case of the Taliban in Afghanistan), we see that the Islamist solution to complex socioeconomic problems typically consisted of simplistic measures like compelling women to veil and to give up their jobs outside the home; closing down cinemas, bars, and casinos; segregating schools so that boys and girls cannot mingle; forcing people to observe prayer times; and imposing the harsh punishments, hudoud, prescribed in shari’a for certain crimes such as theft and adultery. And there is little evidence to suggest that either Iran or Saudi Arabia, who compete with each other for the self-ascribed title of the world’s only true Islamic government, represents a model of enlightened modern Muslim governance that can provide viable leadership, vision, and solutions to unite a fractured umma.

Careful observation of contemporary Islamic experience reveals the following paradox: while many Muslim reformers extol the virtues of shari’a and regard it as the sure means of their salvation, other Muslim voices raise important questions about the role of shari’a in a modern setting and hold that Muslims’ confusion about shari’a lies at the heart of their “tormenting predicament.” This latter position asserts that changing times require adapting religious traditions and principles to fit new realities and advocates a return to the classical premise of shari’a: that it is a broad set of divine, timeless principles that allow for flexibility in formulating viable, enlightened solutions to the infinitely varied problems of modern life. Moderate reformers point out that legal solutions worked out in response to specific historical situations from the seventh to the ninth centuries cannot be transplanted effectively to meet the needs of a modern, pluralistic, technologically based society. The way out of the contemporary Muslim predicament, they feel, is not to adopt the solutions worked out and codified as law by earlier Muslims in Medina or Damascus or Baghdad; rather, it is to emulate the hermeneutical methods and spiritual energy of the earlier generations who developed creative solutions to the problems of their time based on ijtihad—indeed inquiry and original analysis of the Qur’an and Sunna. Moderate reformers believe that, freed from stultifying overdependence on historical and legal precedents, contemporary Muslims can formulate their own dynamic legal responses to the ever-changing realities of modern life by consistently adhering to, interpreting, and applying core values of true shari’a law—for example, free will, justice, equality, freedom, common interest, consultation—that reflect God’s will.

Obviously, the notion of discounting the corpus of traditional Islamic law in favor of fresh, original interpretation is anathema to fundamentalist Muslims, who regard the proposals of moderate Muslim reformers as apostate blasphemies.

The literature on contemporary Islam treats myriad examples that illustrate the difficulty of harmonizing shari’a law with modern standards and practices and the challenge of carrying out shari’a-based sociopolitical development, educational reform, and economic integration in the global community. One such example relates to the growing issue of women’s rights. Another deals with the rights of religious minorities living in Muslim communities. Basic human rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press, constitute another area where interpretations are often varied or incomplete.

Is the shari’a an engine or a brake in national development? Does it promote or hinder the Islamic world’s progress? These questions lie at the heart of Muslim efforts to define their direction as a community and regain their preeminent position on the world stage. The debate is intensely emotional and divisive because shari’a has traditionally formed the heart of Muslim identity and the bedrock of Islamic orthodoxy. The dilemma of whether to accept a new approach and perhaps altered status for shari’a in society or to face the prospect of continued underdevelopment and alienation in the international arena is a difficult one for Muslims. The ability or inability of Muslims to deal effectively with these two issues—defining a more unified

“ WHICH WAY WILL ISLAM GO?”
voice and vision, and achieving some form of consensus on sharia’s role—will profoundly shape their spiritual course and vibrancy in the twenty-first century and beyond. But the present rivalries and deep-rooted fragmentation within the contemporary Muslim community on political, social, and economic issues do not bode well for a successful resolution of these tensions in the short term.

However, there are signs that moderate Muslims represent a majority voice who support political and social reforms within an Islamic context and who can counteract the powerful minority of “puritan” Muslims who have succeeded, in recent times, in shaping the image of Islam, dominating the discourse, and winning the “war” for the hearts and minds of Muslims today. Several worldwide surveys of attitudes and opinions in the Islamic world have revealed that the radical, violent image of Muslims that is so often portrayed in Western media is unjustified. Two key survey findings include:

✦ Muslims, while overwhelmingly in favor of a role for sharia in their lives, have widely divergent views of what that role should be. The majority believe that sharia law, properly interpreted and applied within some form of democratic government, can be a powerful tool in the effort to constrain the abuse of political authority and promote greater freedom, equality, and self-determination.

✦ Most Muslims have aspirations and values that are strikingly similar to those of Westerners, not radicalized views and attitudes. Rather than hating the West and supporting violent jihad to bring about its destruction, the predominant view is one of admiration for Western democracy, technology, and human rights. Yes, there are lingering feelings of anger and hostility, but these stem from the historical legacy of colonialism, the perceived disrespect for Islamic religion and culture, and the foreign policy of Western powers who profess to support the spread of democracy and human rights while invading Muslim lands, favoring Israel’s occupation of Palestine, and turning a blind eye to oppressive Muslim dictators.

Which way will Islam go? It is impossible to know with certainty. But this much is clear: these problems in the Islamic world will be most effectively addressed and answered by the Muslims themselves. In the interest of promoting peace, religious freedom, and other human rights in the Mediterranean basin, it behooves Westerners to be more informed about the dialectic of jihad and counter jihad within the Muslim community. It is essential to confront Western voices who disseminate misinformation and portray Muslims in bigoted, stereotypical, derogatory terms. And it is imperative to support institutions and individuals in the Muslim world who, in the face of threats from religious extremists (whether Muslim, Christian, or Jewish), are courageously calling for peaceful dialogue, legal and political reforms, implementation of human rights, and a return to the progressive, enlightened values that gave rise to one of the world’s greatest civilizations and produced a religion that continues to provide spiritual fulfillment and moral guidance to millions of Muslims worldwide.

Notes
1. The term “legal code” can be somewhat misleading since, in Islam, it regulates things that are far removed from anything that would be recognized as “law” in the Christian West. Not only does it deal with social interactions (mu'amalat) such as crimes, economic transactions, personal etiquette, inheritance, marriage, and divorce, but it lays down rules about worship (‘ibadat) on prayer, fasting, caring for the poor, and virtually every other aspect of human existence.
3. See Ayoub, Islam, 126.
7. Statement by the founding committee of the Muslim Brethren, quoted in their official newspaper, al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (May 7, 1946).
8. The findings are reported in two volumes: John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think (New York: Gallup Press, 2007); and James Zogby, Arab Voices: What They Are Saying to Us, and Why It Matters (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
Stowaway magazine, a student-produced travel publication at BYU, garnered two national awards for publishing excellence last year. The grassroots periodical received the Bronze Award for “Best Editorial/New Publication” in the Print/Magazine category of the 2011 ContentWise Magnum Opus Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Custom Media, presented in conjunction with the Missouri School of Journalism at the University of Missouri–Columbia. Stowaway also won the Award of Excellence for “Custom-Published Magazines and Journals,” presented by the 2011 APEX Awards for Publication Excellence.

“These awards speak to the caliber of the editing students at BYU,” said Carrie Van Dusen Akinaka, student managing editor for the Winter 2011 issue, which received both awards. Published since 2010, Stowaway is a quarterly travel magazine created and published as a project in English Language 430R, the capstone class of the editing minor. Each semester, all class members contribute to planning, writing, editing, designing, creating web content, and selling ads. The niche magazine aims to inspire the imagination of college-aged readers and encourage them to explore the world, immerse themselves in different cultures, and create their own adventures through exciting and meaningful travel that includes service, education, and leisure.

Publishing Stowaway “helps students gain highly marketable skills in editing, writing, designing, and web publishing,” said editor-in-chief Marvin K. Gardner, professor of English language in the Department of Linguistics and English Language. The magazine is unique in that every issue is created by an entirely different group of undergraduates. Gardner, who came to BYU after a twenty-eight-year career as an editor and managing editor of the Liahona and Ensign magazines published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, enjoys the challenge. “At the end of each semester, after the issue has been printed and published online, the students graduate, and I start on a new issue with a new group. The awards are tributes to their skills, talents, and creativity.”
Chelsee Ostler, teaching assistant to the class when the awards were won, said that the students put in ten to twenty hours a week on the magazine staff. "When we first saw the awards, it was exciting to realize that we are part of something reaching people across the world," she said. Stowaway currently has online readers in 112 nations.

Complete copies of current and past issues of Stowaway can be read online at www.stowaway-mag.com. Free digital versions of the magazine are also available at www.magcloud.com/browse/magazine/45637. MagCloud also offers a free iPad app that includes access to all issues. ✦

> Chelsea Fitch, a student art director, leads a staff planning meeting.

 Parts of four recent issues of Stowaway magazine.
On September 9, 2011, students in the creative writing MFA program and several creative writing professors traveled by van to September Cottage, Dr. Susan Howe’s family cabin in southern Utah, near Capitol Reef National Park, to participate in a two-day writing retreat. Set in the midst of red rock, piñon, and juniper, September Cottage and its environs were the perfect place for students and professors alike to think about and experiment with place-based writing, the focus of the event.

On the first day, we hiked to Hickman Bridge, where Dr. Patrick Madden taught us about the French Oulipo group’s work in “potential literature” and asked us to experiment by writing with constraints. Later that evening, we scrabbled on some rocky slopes where Dr. Susan Howe asked us to sit quietly and closely observe some particular tree, rock, plant, or segment of the landscape, and then record what we might learn from it, its relevance to our human experience. The second day began with an exercise by Dr. Stephen Tuttle, who had us draw three related items—three rocks, three bones, three trees—in our notebooks, using our own visual representations as a way of forcing attention and capturing details. Then, we hiked into Spring Canyon, where Dr. Lance Larsen had us write a letter to someone who was not present, using the physical details we observed to express a difficult concept such as love or pain.

When we stopped in Spring Canyon to write, we sat on rocks and fallen trees and sought inspiration in the landscape to see beyond our own lives. But the landscape was not the only thing that made the exercise worthwhile. “As we walked through Spring Canyon,”
While we went to the cabin to hone our skills and practice writing, another much needed benefit was the friendships and trust we built while we hiked, wrote, ate, and played together. Sharing our work was a highlight, especially when a late-night session turned into a sing-along with guitars, confessions of famous or important books we had never read, and a game of movie title mash-ups that produced such clever combinations as *The Lion King’s Speech*, *A Time to Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Cowboys vs. Aliens vs. Predator*. At 2 a.m., Dr. Tuttle came up with *Hunt for Red October Sky High School Musical 3 Amigos*.

Amber Watson, a second year MFA student, wrote this prose poem in response to Dr. Lance Larsen’s prompt, “Here Are the Things I Recognize”:

Conversation always turns to you. You’re in the rocks, the cracks, the dark places always. Here in the aspens—especially those—here in all things that move without a body: seeds, branches, wind, water. And, though I don’t see it now, snow. You are everywhere. Take here, for example. Take now. I’m writing you because the assignment was to write a letter; write a place. And since you are everywhere, I’ll write you. I’ll write sand and earth so fine it’s left a red powder on my soles. Picture the sand so fine that when the wind moves, I can taste it as a film on my lips. The wind comes softly, but steady. For the canyon walls are tall, the creek bed dry, and the passage narrow. You can probably picture that. The small aspens with shimmering green leaves, tiny purple flowers and shoots of slender green. White clouds from last night’s rain and rocks cool to the touch. You know what I mean. And they told us to write it. But how can I write this place without writing you?

said Laura Dutson, a first-year MFA student, “I found myself grateful not only for the beauty of the cliffs, but also for the laughter that echoed off the canyon walls.” Our camaraderie made both laughing and writing easier. The hike was “edifying, encouraging, and just a whole lot of fun,” Laura went on, thanks to “people who shared the same itch to write.” We were so enthusiastic about Spring Canyon that instead of turning around and walking out the way we came in, we continued the entire nine miles to the end, wading the Fremont River to get back to the highway at the other end, emerging with a shared sense of accomplishment.
We stayed up late because we couldn’t stop the discussions, the laughter, the companionship, the vibes that, it turns out, lasted through the rest of the semester as we returned to classes, ready to discuss our work with greater understanding of each others’ strengths and values. Crystal Radley, a first-year MFA student, said, “We got to see each other’s little nuances and idiosyncrasies; we got to have fun and laugh and get to know each other. And I think that’s valuable. We’re going to be in each other’s hair for the next two years, reading each other’s work and critiquing pieces, and having that sense of camaraderie already built in to our dynamic will really help us help each other in productive and valuable ways.”

We are delighted to report that we reached our 2011 fund raising goal (see “A Math Assignment” in previous issues) of $100,000 to provide internship opportunities for students in the College of Humanities. Thank you so much! However, even though we met the goal, the percentage of alumni who participated was below our goal. We received gifts from as far away as Canada, Mexico, Japan, and South Korea, but we’re still waiting to hear from alumni in Louisiana, Nebraska, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Vermont.

This was a relatively new fund raising priority for us, so it was kind of a “chicken and egg” situation—many students were unable to participate in internship opportunities because they were limited by finances, and many donors were reluctant to give because we didn’t have many students participating in the program. Thankfully, you—our alumni and friends—started the ball rolling and we are pleased to tell you that many more students, in turn, have responded by signing up for internship opportunities.

The program has been so successful, in fact, that the dean has increased the fund raising goal for 2012 to $500,000. We invite you to consider giving to this important program even more generously this year so we can reach our goal again. Anyone wishing to make a gift should make the check out to BYU and write “Humanities Internships” in the memo line. Checks should be sent to

Matthew Christensen
4019 JFSB
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah 84602-6704

If you would prefer to give by credit card or to inquire about other methods, please send an email to mbchristensen@byu.edu.
Books that made
a difference

I'll Watch the Moon ✦
by Ann Tatlock

Karen Bergeson Schmidt
Meridian, Idaho
Spanish 1970

I have, throughout my life, struggled to understand why God lets bad things happen to good people. Recently, I read this novel and was touched by its great lessons on forgiveness and free agency. Set in the post-World War II era, it tells the story of a Polish man living in Minnesota after enduring Auschwitz and Dachau. He boards with a woman named Catherine, her two children (one of whom contracts polio), and their aunt. Having been abused as a child, and later betrayed by her husband, Catherine has turned her face away from God. But the Polish immigrant, Josef, still believes, still prays, and still turns his face toward God.

One night, Catherine and Josef, both unable to sleep because of their nightmares, talk in the kitchen. She asks him how, after all the sorrow he has seen, he can still have faith and still believe in a kind and benevolent Supreme Being. He asks, “If I turned my face away from God, who would I turn it to?” But he, too, struggles to understand. He tells her an old story:

Centuries ago, the Baal Shem Tov was standing high on a hill with a couple of his students, looking down at the town where his school was. Suddenly a group of Cossacks on horseback attacked the town. As he saw many of his students, along with the men, women, and children of the town, being slaughtered, the rabbi looked up to heaven and said, “Oh, if only I were God.” One of his students said with astonishment, “But, Master, if you were God, what would you do differently?” To which he replied, “If I were God I would do nothing differently. But if I were God, I would understand.”

It’s a hopeful, encouraging, and satisfying story.

Zenzele: A Letter for My Daughter ✦
by J. Nozipo Maraire

Kiri Price-Reeves
Sandy, Utah
English 1999

In a BYU course on ethnic writers, I became fascinated with books that present different worldviews. I stumbled upon this novel of a Zimbabwean mother who sends her daughter Zenzele to school in the United States but fears the girl will lose touch with her heritage. So she writes a series of letters about what it means to be a mother and an African woman. When I first discovered it, I was adjusting to staying home with my children and struggling to find fulfillment in that role. This book inspired me, and it has become my dog-eared companion on those days when I need an infusion of parenting perspective. It tells the story of one life in a way that speaks of all lives.

Let us hear from you! Tell us about a book, or several, that made a difference for you, at some point in your life. Include your name, major, year of graduation, and current place of residence, with a description about the book’s influence on you. Email ron_woods@byu.edu

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Recent Faculty Books

**Reading the Gospel of St. Mark in Greek: A Beginning**
by Norbert Duckwitz

In this volume by Professor Norbert Duckwitz of the Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature Department, the combination of text, vocabulary, and grammatical notes all on one page enhances the study of the Gospel of Mark for both practiced and beginning readers of Greek. Published by Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers.

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**A Collection of Critical Biographies of Chinese Thinkers**
by David Honey

Mozi was a Chinese philosopher who lived from about 470–391 BC. He founded the school of Mohism. Mozi is also the name of the text compiled from his thought. Professor David Honey of the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages is the author of this bilingual biography, one of a series in the Collection of Critical Biographies of Chinese Thinkers from the Nanjing University Press.

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**The Biblical Dante**
by Stanley Benfell

Dante’s extensive use of Biblical citations in his poetry is the pursuit of this volume by Professor Stanley Benfell of the Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature Department. A key concept is Dante’s vision of an encounter between readers and the Biblical text through which truth and transformation occur. Published by the University of Toronto Press.
Carol Kounanis, LDS Philanthropies donor liaison for the college for the past several years, is being transferred to another unit on campus. We wish her the best and are pleased to introduce our new donor liaison, Matthew Christensen, who comes to us from a liaison position with the Museum of Art.
We’d like to hear your views, your memories of campus experiences, or an update on your life since leaving BYU. Please email ron_woods@byu.edu.

*Humanities at BYU* is the alumni magazine of the College of Humanities.