SPRING 2026

BYU College of Humanities

HUMANITIES





What Makes You Human?

by Christopher Oscarson, Dean

No consensus has yet emerged about what the age of artificial intelligence (AI) might mean for us individually or collectively; the only certainty seems to be that we face epochal change. AI's disruptive impact is already felt in the changing texture of everyday life, and for our students, AI impacts everything from homework and classroom pedagogy to post-graduation employment. Every department and discipline at the university must rapidly assess the implications AI has for both what and how we teach. Certain programs may disappear altogether. When AI can almost instantaneously summarize thousands of texts, identify images, and generate essays in a matter of seconds, will the humanities survive the age of AI?

Without question. The humanities are needed now more than ever.

There are at least two broad reasons why the humanities will continue to be core to who we are and what we do as humans. The first is practical. The skills developed by engaging with literature, philosophy, languages, and art uniquely qualify individuals for a job market marked by disruption and change. A recent Oxford University study documented how the resiliency, intellectual flexibility, and proficiencies learned while studying the humanities make students particularly adroit at adapting to disruptions caused by unsettled financial markets, global pandemics, and the rise of automation and AI technologies.[1]

Similarly, journalist and educator Nils Gilman predicted that those who have cultivated skills uniquely taught by the humanities will become important players in their fields. "The most prized future workers will be those who can decode a sea of outputs, spot the meaningful signal, and translate it into action that others understand and trust. . . . They will be capable of designing decision processes rather than merely executing them."[2] The skills fostered by a deep exposure to the humanities enable students to navigate complexity, inhabit different cultural or social vantage points, communicate clearly, and make discerning judgements.

The second reason why the humanities will be relevant long into the future goes beyond these transferable skills and gets at the heart of what it means to be human. While the various applications of AI will change how we research, write, and interact with the world—much as the invention of writing, the printing press, the computer, and the internet did in previous generations—AI will never be able to replicate the engagement of literature, art, or performance nor the experience that comes with the inspiration and insight of entering into a meaningful relationship with beauty and truth. AI can circumscribe the experience through summary, cataloging, and description, but it cannot replicate the experience for us.

The fear that AI will ultimately displace learning languages, reading novels, or studying art fundamentally misunderstands what is core to the human experience. For example, the point of reading is not simply to consume content. It is rather to enter into an active relationship with the language, ideas, characters, setting, rhetoric, and narrative of the text. Similarly, a student who uses AI to write an essay has misunderstood that the point of writing is not to have a finished paper. The point is the experience and process of writing that demands agency, stretches understanding, and requires a focused engagement to make connections and think through an argument. These experiences and the work they require have an emergent quality, producing a perspective and experience that did not exist before in the text, the reader, or the writer. The process in which the reader or writer engages, interacts, and ultimately changes is exactly the point. The labor of learning is not just getting to the last page or word; it is all about the growth that comes in the process of making connections and receiving inspiration. This is what AI can describe but not replicate.

Elder David A. Bednar has warned us that while the benefits of AI are real, the ease of the technology as a replacement for our own investment of thought and effort is a threat to our moral agency. According to Lehi, the expulsion from the Garden of Eden—characterized by St. Ambrose of Milan (AD 337–97) as *felix culpa* (the fortunate fall)[3]—made possible the *experience* of opposition and growth fundamental to our mortal and eternal development. The work of experience and the exercise of agency was the point of creation, not an unlucky byproduct. AI can facilitate how we learn and what we do, but it should not replace the transformational labor of learning itself. The real danger that AI presents us and our students is that it substitutes data and information for wisdom and understanding. If we don't learn to think on our own, develop discernment, foster good judgement, and cultivate wisdom by understanding the uses and limits of technology like AI, we risk being "transformed from agents who can act into objects that are only acted upon."[4]

The humanities steep us in the deep experience and ideas of culture that, when taught in the light of the gospel, will develop the wisdom, perspective, and skills to take charge of our moral agency. Walking together with the great artists and thinkers of history enables us to navigate ambiguity and change to exercise judgement, discern truth, and receive inspiration.

In the age of AI, the question of what it means to be human—the central question of the humanities—will not diminish or dwindle. It only promises to become more obvious. H

1. James Robson et al., "The Value of the Humanities: Understanding the Career Destinations of Oxford Humanities Graduates" (Oxford University, 2023).
2. Nils Gilman, "How to Future-Proof Your Career in the Age of AI," *Noēma*, April 9, 2026.
3. "O felix culpa!" is a phrase in the *Exsultet* (Easter Proclamation) that makes up the Easter celebration of many Christian traditions.
4. David A. Bednar, "Things as They Really Are 2.0," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, November 3, 2024.

Photo by BYU Photo

In This Issue

Articles with this icon feature College Beacons of Light videos.







Illustration by Elizabeth Walker (Editing and Publishing '26) (LEFT)
Photo by Adobe Stock (RIGHT)
Photo by Jaren Wilkey / BYU Photo (BOTTOM)
Front and Back Cover: Photos by Jaren Wilkey / BYU Photo

5 **When Research Comes to Life**
by Briana Wright

6 **Our Covenant of Belonging**
by Bruce Haraguchi

8 **Shining the Light of Film**
by Kira Christensen

10 **The Lives Behind Language**
by Emma Mafi

12 **The British Isles: A Linguist's Playground**
by Emma Mafi

16 **Where Art & Fashion Intersect**
by Emma Lindorf

20 **Teaching Language, Transforming Lives**
by Emma Mafi

22 **A Tale of Two Journals**
by Kira Christensen

24 **The Universal Language of Music**
by Briana Wright

2 PERSPECTIVE
4 LEXICON
27 COLLEGE LECTURES
28 RECOMMENDATIONS
30 COLLEGE UPDATES
32 CAREERA INCOGNITA
33 CROSSWORD

To donate to the College, visit bit.ly/donatetohumanities
To access this magazine digitally and learn more about the College, visit hum.byu.edu

Scan the QR code to connect with us on LinkedIn!

Publisher Christopher Oscarson
Editor Joshua J. Perkey
Editorial/Design Team CC Brown, Kira Christensen, Bruce Cui, Shayne Eliason, Emma Lindorf, Emma Mafi, Faith Riddoch, Briana Wright
Design Advisor Michelle Miller
Editorial Advisor Sarah Griffin

HUMANITIES magazine is published twice per year for alumni and friends of the BYU College of Humanities.
© 2026 Brigham Young University. All rights reserved.

Feedback? We would like to hear your views, your memories of campus, or an update on your life since leaving BYU. Please email humanitiespr@byu.edu.

For information about giving to students in the College, contact Christopher Oscarson at 801-422-2779 or christopher_oscarson@byu.edu.
BYU College of Humanities
4002 JFSB
Provo, UT 84602
801-422-2775
hum.byu.edu

Illuminating Gifts of Wisdom

by Elliott D. Wise (Eucharistic and Liturgical Imagery)

"Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness."[1]

The relationship between wisdom and light is enshrined in the academic mission of BYU, where we profess that "the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth."[2] In Christian iconography, some of the most striking representations of luminous knowledge appear in illuminated manuscripts, such as a circa 1530 book of hours conserved in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections. The book depicts a sequence of supplications organized around a devotional theme, including the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (shown left), when the "spirit of wisdom" like a "rushing mighty wind . . . filled all the house" and "cloven tongues . . . of fire . . . sat upon each of [Jesus's disciples]."[3]

The images and text in this particular book of hours were printed with movable type and metal-cut plates and then *illuminated* with colored washes and gold. *Illuminate* means to enliven an image with color, flooding its lines and shapes with multi-hued light, in a manner not dissimilar to the outpouring of knowledge at the Pentecost. The effect is particularly dramatic in BYU's book because many of the metal-cut lines from the print are visible through the illuminating color. A ghostly halo shows through the yellow wash surrounding the dove of the Holy Spirit, and, through its gold overlay, a printed inscription in the oval frame is discernible: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus, reple tuorum corda fidelium, et tui amoris in eis ignem accende* ("Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of thy love"). The semitransparent colors that overshadow these lines and text trope the action of the Holy Spirit, which hovers over the Virgin Mary and distills fiery, Pentecostal wisdom from within the "shadow of [its] wings."[4]

A BYU education seeks the overshadowing of the Spirit, whose diverse gifts of wisdom are similar to the spectrum of colored glazes that gives form, depth, and differentiation to the printed matrix. The outpouring of languages, light, and elocution at the Pentecost resonates in a special way with the work of the College of Humanities, where we layer our study of words, images, and tongues with illumination from the spirit of Christ. H

Photo by Faith Riddoch (Photography and Lens-Based Design '27)

1. Ecclesiastes 2:13
2. Doctrine and Covenants 93:36
3. Isaiah 11:2; Acts 2:2–3
4. Psalm 63:7

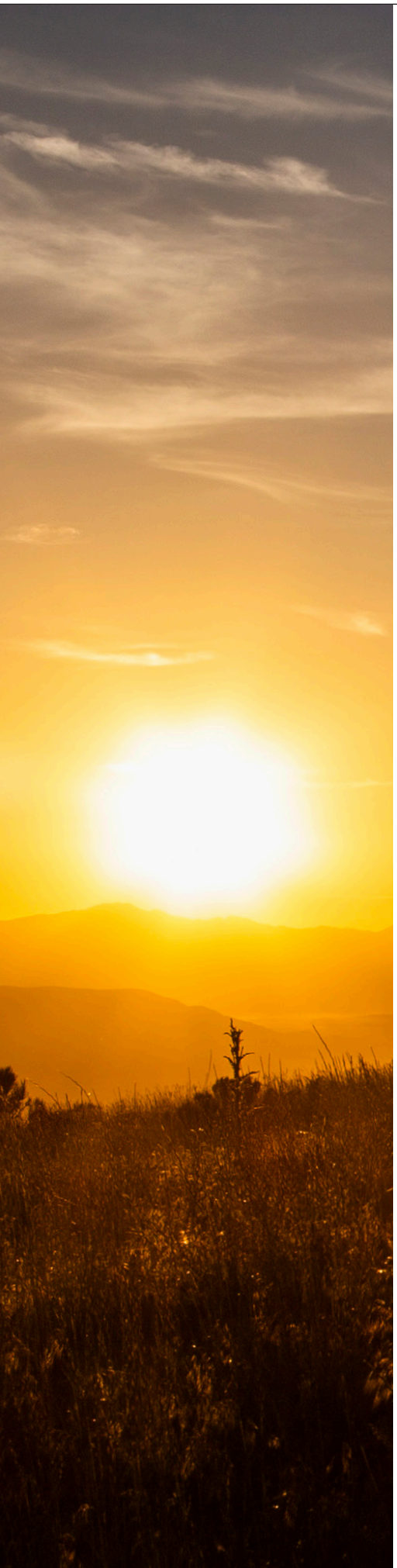


Photo by Mark A. Philbrick / BYU Photo

Enlighten

[in-ˈlī-tᵊn]

Verb. **To provide with information and understanding, to clarify. To illuminate, to instruct, to cheer, or to supply with light.**

by Matthew Wickman (Christian Spirituality and Literary Theory)

In our information-saturated world, it can be difficult to conceive of the BCG era: before ChatGPT. Where might one learn—quickly—about commerce, weather patterns, the solar system, the virtues and shortcomings of the latest geometrical theories, and virtually anything else? Well, during the 18th century in Britain and France, figures like Ephraim Chambers and Denis Diderot served as human (sometimes one-person) search engines, compiling entire encyclopedias. Their aim, Diderot professed, was "to assemble the knowledge scattered over the face of the earth . . . so that our descendants, by becoming better informed, may in consequence be happier and more virtuous."[1] This 18th-century era of knowledge gathering and dissemination became known as the Age of Enlightenment.

Samuel Johnson, one Enlightenment-era human search engine who compiled the first English dictionary, defined *enlighten* in both literal and figurative senses. To enlighten is "to illuminate," "to instruct," "to cheer," and "to supply with light."[2] These vibrant and hopeful associations attached themselves to science in both the traditional and emergent senses—that is, to knowledge generally considered and to a special kind of knowing consistent with empirical methods of inquiry. The philosopher Thomas Hobbes equated all knowledge with light-bestowing vision, including what he called "an audible being seen" (or knowing granted through hearing), "an intelligible being seen" (or knowing gained through thinking), and so on.[3] Isaac Newton, in his pioneering study *Opticks*, explored the nature of light and then concluded that light's marvelous properties lead us to discern "that there is a Being" who is "living" and "intelligent" and who "sees [all] things themselves intimately . . . and comprehends them wholly."[4] For Newton and his contemporaries, knowledge about the earth and the cosmos was tantamount to a deeper understanding of God. Light, instructive and cheerful per Johnson's definition, symbolized that belief.

The history of knowledge in the West, particularly in the centuries following the Enlightenment, has not always born a similar witness. From its inception, some proponents of the Enlightenment harnessed modern knowledge to bleak conclusions that we dwell alone in a godless universe. Others, however, concluded that an ever-more-capacious understanding enabled us to expand our vision of God and His creation. This was Joseph Smith's conviction; his vision, evocative of Newton's, is enlightening in all the senses Johnson lists. It's no coincidence that Doctrine and Covenants 88, the great Latter-day Saint manifesto on education, begins with an elaborate statement on the Light of Christ, a light that infuses the earth as well as the heavens and gives "life to all things" (verse 13). To "seek . . . out of the best books words of wisdom" and to "establish a house . . . even a house of God" (verses 118–19)—to circumscribe secular and sacred knowledge into one great whole—is to welcome and live into that light. And a humanities education exemplifies, perhaps better than any other, what it means to seek "words of wisdom" from these "best books."

1. Frank T. Brechka, "Catherine the Great: The Books She Read," *The Journal of Library History* 4, no. 1 (January 1969): 42.
2. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed. (London, 1766).
3. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Hackett, 1994), 7.
4. Isaac Newton, *Opticks*, or, *A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections, and Colours of Light* (Dover, 1952), 370.

When Research Comes to LIFE

by Briana Wright (English Teaching '26)

Merrie Kay Ames did not just research the best methods of language acquisition—she experienced them firsthand in Panama.

Not all lessons can be taught in the classroom. For graduate student Merrie Kay Ames (TESOL MA '25), that truth became clear through her experiences in Panama presenting research, visiting a small Indigenous Emberá village, and attending a Sunday afternoon church gathering. The trip gave Ames the chance to not only share her findings from her master's thesis but also experience firsthand the very principle her research explored—that meaningful learning grows out of authentic relationships with others.

The Spark of Growth

In June 2025, Ames and BYU faculty traveled to Panama to present at the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese Conference. Her research examined the effects that nonlinguistic factors like age, age of acquisition, the months of learning a foreign mission language, and informal language learning have on college students' Spanish proficiency.

Many Emberá villages sit along the Chagres River.



Photo by EWY Media / Adobe Stock

To study this question, she compared results from BYU's Language Ability Self-Evaluation Resource (LASER), which surveys students' background with a second language and evaluates their self-assessment proficiency, with Oral Proficiency Interview-Computer (OPIc) scores. She found that relationships were key: "Sustained, authentic communication—especially through missionary or immersive contexts—is the most powerful driver of language growth."

Living Like Others

Ames's own language learning was enriched during her visit to an Emberá village. Soon after arriving, she attended a presentation on the Emberá way of life and learned a few words in the people's native tongue, Emberá. Most importantly, she learned what these people hold most dear—their connection with the earth. "They're living right in this beautiful nature and make beautiful handiwork just with the leaves, flowers, and the plant materials there," she says.

> "It's a small world, and people are really loving and giving."
>
> – Merrie Kay Ames

Ames realized that understanding a culture requires more than observation, though: It requires participation. As she and her colleagues ate Emberá cuisine, danced with locals, and received henna tattoos, she formed relationships with the people and felt immersed in their way of life, which is something she loves about traveling: "I try to stay with people in their homes because that's how you really get to know them and really connect with and understand them."

Passing On the Spirit of Learning

This experience also deepened Ames's appreciation for genuine human connection, something she continued to find throughout her trip in Panama. One Sunday, she was invited to a bilingual ward luncheon after church services. While there, she started talking with a young woman who suddenly began telling Ames about her educational plans: She wanted to go to BYU and study TESOL. Coincidentally, that was the exact same path that Ames herself had taken.

Ames could not help but wonder if she had been placed at that Sunday dinner to help this aspiring BYU student achieve her educational dreams. "It's a small world, and people are really loving and giving," Ames says, feeling deeply grateful for the chance to give back by encouraging this young woman and connecting with her through WhatsApp.

Ames's experiences in Panama—from an academic conference to a tourist destination to a dining table—demonstrate the type of meaningful interpersonal connection that fulfills her and keeps her pursuing education: "I believe that every endeavor must be meaningful. If it is not, we should either cast it aside or infuse it with significance—and connection to others should be the underlying motivator."

Our Covenant of BELONGING

Covenant belonging in the BYU College of Humanities refers to our shared purpose as we seek daily to be more Christlike, both individually and as a community.

by Bruce Haraguchi (Humanities Advisement)

My wife teaches Italian language and culture at BYU, and every couple of years we have the privilege of accompanying BYU students to Italy. Last year in Rome, I noticed a word that locals were using everywhere—in the streets, on the trains, in gelato shops. It could mean just about anything: amazing or awful, delicious or disgusting, wow or whatever.

I admired this word's versatility and loved how it sounded. Back home in the apartment, I tried it out a few times quietly to myself. I wasn't confident enough to use it in the wild, but I hoped to get there someday.

One night we went to dinner at a nice restaurant with a very polite, well-mannered Italian friend. Between courses I asked him, "So what's up with this word I keep hearing?"

He gently but emphatically informed me it was a vulgar term, not appropriate for polite, well-mannered company. He provided a succinct English translation so there would be no mistaking its meaning. My dream of enriching my vocabulary to sound more like a local went up in smoke.

But instead of humiliation, I was grateful to be educated and guided by a trusted friend. I was relieved not to be judged for my ignorance. I felt encouraged to stay observant, curious, ready to ask questions, and willing to learn. That outcome is what I hoped for our study abroad students as they encountered the unfamiliar. It's also what I hope for anyone at BYU who dips a toe into the work of belonging and inclusion.

At times we may misspeak or misconstrue or mishandle. We may need to seek forgiveness. But we take that risk because our shared purpose is to be better than we are today, individually and as a community. At BYU, our intent is to practice repentance.

Our Spiritual Imperative to Create Belonging

To explain belonging in the College of Humanities, I'll share three inspired statements that both reflect the nature of and influence our work: a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants, a verse from the Quran, and an excerpt from our College of Humanities values statement.

The foundation is a scriptural mandate to "become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people" (Doctrine and Covenants 90:15). Human variety creates potential for division and animosity—but also compassion and connection. This paradox is captured by a verse in the Quran that Muslim BYU students shared at a college event: "O, people! We created you from a male and a female, and We made you races and tribes, so that you may come to know one another" (49:13). Those verses of scripture illuminate a core value in the College of Humanities: "We believe that studying others—especially those different from us—leads us to feel empathy, develop charity, understand ourselves, and become better disciples, citizens, and lifelong learners" (College of Humanities Values Statement).

This is a tall task, and we need the influence and example of Jesus Christ, who saw divine potential in "the beggar, the sinner, and the infirm . . . the fisherman, the tax collector, and even the zealot."[1]

In ways that matter most, all are alike unto our Savior.

Personal Reflections on Belonging

I'll share an instance when I feel God blessed our efforts to engage with difficult, painful realities to arrive at a place of hope and connection.

Two years ago, a group of 15 students gathered to discuss Paul Reeve's book *Let's Talk about Race and Priesthood* followed by a field trip to the Pioneers of 1847 Monument to visit statues of Black pioneers who had crossed the plains. Mauli Bonner, who helped spearhead the creation of that memorial, met us there to share his awakening to that complex period in the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

That weekend we reviewed the life of an early convert, Elijah Able, who was ordained an elder in 1836 and later ordained to the Third Quorum of the Seventy. He held a ministerial certificate signed by Joseph Smith and served three missions for the Church. But due to changes in Church practice during his lifetime, he was denied full temple ordinances and his wish to be sealed to his deceased wife went unfulfilled.

We studied Jane Manning James, who arrived in Nauvoo on foot with other family members and was welcomed in by Emma and Joseph Smith. Jane's sister Sarah was known to declare, "You can just as easily make me believe that the sun never shone as that Joseph was not a prophet of God."[2] Jane held an esteemed place in the Church community, but she too was denied the full temple blessings she desired most.

We learned that an enslaved convert named Green Flake drove the lead wagon into Emigration Canyon two days before Brigham Young's arrival. Green had been separated from his mother at age 10 and given to another family. At age 16, he was impressed by a missionary's testimony that families would be reunited for eternity, and he was baptized—together with his owners. He arrived in Utah as the property of other Church converts.

As our group marveled at these pioneers' enduring discipleship, their stories were heavy for us to process. Mauli shared with us, "I learned history that made me proud and that broke my heart."

That October morning there was a solar eclipse, and we were ready with our funny cardboard glasses. At one point, Mauli paused and observed that the most dramatic part of the eclipse was starting, so we put on our glasses and gazed into the heavens.

As we watched the moon slide in front of the sun, we saw darkness gather and felt the temperature drop. Our crisp, sunny autumn day turned dull and cold. But slowly the sun reemerged on the other side, engulfing us in its warmth and restoring a day of promise. The obstacle that separated us from God's light was removed, allowing His illumination to flow unimpeded.

Standing among those statues of our pioneer forebears as beneficiaries of their legacy, we sensed their exuberant faith, their heartbreaking loss, their grief, and their hope. We felt their kinship.

We felt belonging.

Adapted from a talk given at BYU's 2025 Belonging Conference.

1. Elder Clark G. Gilbert, "Becoming More in Christ: The Parable of the Slope," *Liahona*, October 2021.
2. "Died," *Saints' Herald* (Plano, Illinois), January 4, 1890.



SHINING THE LIGHT OF FILM

by Kira Christensen (Editing and Publishing '25)

BYU's International Cinema helps students and the community see the world in a different light, one film at a time.

On a cold December day in 1895, shortly after Christmas, a crowd of about 40 people gathered in the basement of the Grand Café in Paris for what would later be known as the world's first commercial public film screening. The event, put on by brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière to showcase their *cinèmatographe* film camera, screened 10 short films that were each between 35 and 50 seconds in length. None of these "moving pictures" had any kind of narrative attached—they simply showed short clips from French life.

In the 130 years since, cinema has become a mainstream storytelling medium used by filmmakers the world over to tell compelling, expansive stories that capture the depth and breadth of the human experience. From the UK to Nepal, from Japan to Central America, film reaches every corner of the world, connecting people and teaching them about each other. And if anyone is looking for that life-changing, intellectually expanding experience in Provo, Utah, they have a unique resource right here on BYU campus: the International Cinema (IC) program.

The History of International Cinema

BYU's history of screening foreign films began back in the 1950s, when the French, German, and Spanish programs would take turns showing films in each of their languages. Finally, in 1968, German professor Joseph Baker decided to institute a weekly international film screening. Thanks to both his foundational efforts and humanities professor Don Marshall's transformative leadership, the foundation for the IC program was laid.

Fast-forward to today, and IC fills a critical niche in the community both on and off campus. The program shows three films each week during fall and winter semester—about 80 films per school year—and hosts weekly lectures by professors and experts to give audiences a deeper look into one of that week's films. In addition, the College of Humanities offers an international cinema studies minor for students interested in studying international film as part of their degree.

"As far as we know, IC is the biggest and oldest program of its kind in the United States," says former IC codirector and Professor Marc Olivier (Film and Media, 18th-Century Literature). "Every week, we have a selection of new films—documentaries, dramas, anything—not just in the usual languages but also in languages that you've maybe never heard of."



International Cinema class (ICS 290), 2018

Photos by David Eliason (ABOVE), Chip Oscarson (RIGHT)

World Cinema Is Our Campus

Over the course of the program's history, IC has impacted thousands of students in a variety of ways. Olivier has fond memories of attending film screenings when he was a student; he says that the program "opened my mind. It helped me understand other cultures, other ways of seeing things. It helped me develop compassion and empathy in ways that I never would have if I hadn't been exposed to those experiences through film."

Former IC codirector and current Teaching Professor Brad Barber (Department of Theater and Media Arts) says that IC also allows students to get to know remote places that they would likely never otherwise encounter. "It shares, I think, a light of curiosity for our students," he says. "They might not have a chance to travel to Brazil or Turkey or Tunisia, but we're screening films from there that show these intimate, real stories from people's lives and imaginations."

The best part is that IC can fit with any student's experience, whether they're well-versed in a second language or not. Olivier gives an example of a student who learned Spanish on their mission: "Let's say you've been to Mexico and you have come to love Spanish. Maybe you want to see a film from Spain, a film from Colombia, a film from Venezuela. We can offer an expansion of what you already know. It doesn't matter what you're studying; International Cinema will add a new dimension to your education."

A (Literal) Beacon of Light

This new dimension of education isn't limited to only students, either—IC stretches its reach across campus to the local Provo community and beyond. Screenings are free and funded by the university, so while the program does not market its films outside of campus, anyone can attend and have an international experience.

Current IC codirector Carl Sederholm (Horror, Popular Culture, Literature and Film) says that the openness of the program helps build community. "We have several people from the community attend our weekly lectures and screenings. For them, IC serves as a valuable means of staying close to BYU and encouraging lifelong learning. One elderly couple celebrated their 45th anniversary by attending a screening."

Olivier shares how IC contributes to lifelong learning by quoting his favorite line dictated by Joseph Smith, who said that if we would bring souls to salvation, our minds need to stretch as high as the heavens and



LEFT (from top): *Perfect Days* (Japan), *Polina* (France), *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (France), *A Separation* (Iran); RIGHT (from top): *The Young Girls of Rochefort* (France), *Letters to Father Jacob* (Finland), *The Quiet Girl* (Ireland), *Scrapper* (The United Kingdom)

contemplate the darkest abyss.[1] "I think that a well-curated film at International Cinema helps you do both of those things in a safe environment," Olivier says. "You can discuss what you're learning with friends and truly grow intellectually and spiritually."

As for Barber, his favorite part of IC is that it provides an opportunity to share an experience with a room full of strangers. "There's something that happens when you watch a film with other people," he says. "You have this communal experience. You experience something together. You feel things together. And it's really special."

1. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Deseret Book Company, 1972) p. 137.

Watch this Beacons of Light video to see the personal impact of the IC program.

(bit.ly/BYUICBeacons)

THE LIVES BEHIND LANGUAGE

by Emma Mafi (Microbiology '25)

BYU has been praised for its diversity of language courses; and for the language instructors, sharing their culture and language with students is more than impressive—it is meaningful.



MANY UNIVERSITIES TEACH FOREIGN LANGUAGES, though few offer quite as many as BYU. The College of Humanities teaches 84 languages regularly, making the university a cornucopia of language knowledge, and critical to this effort are the adjunct faculty who help make it possible. Two adjunct faculty—Alina Hovsoyan, who teaches Armenian, and Rena Dunn, who teaches Navajo—explain that being part of a BYU language program means more than simply teaching a language: It means sharing their identity.

FINDING STRENGTH IN CULTURE

Dunn grew up on a Navajo (or Diné) reservation in Arizona and now teaches her native language at BYU, a position she considers to be an important calling in her life. "I love teaching my language and culture to others so they can be proud of who they are," she says, explaining that learning about other traditions can help develop one's sense of self. For Native students, she says that "knowing your tribe's traditions and culture helps you become a stronger person." Because the Navajo language is in danger of extinction, teaching has manifested as both a blessing and a responsibility to help preserve her culture for posterity. By teaching Navajo to both Native and non-Native students at BYU, she helps maintain Diné customs for generations to come.

Many of Dunn's students have used their understanding of Navajo in various professional settings; some of her students go on to work on reservations, employing their language skills daily to communicate and connect with tribal members and customs.

Dunn believes that learning a tribe's customs and traditions can give any student an extra measure of personal strength. These topics can especially bolster Native students by connecting them with their relatives in ways that can only be done with the help of language. Learning Navajo, Dunn says, "makes you know the power you have because of what your ancestors went through. It helps you know that you can do anything you want and can overcome any challenge before you."

Photos by Adobe Stock; courtesy of Rena Dunn (LEFT) and Alina Hovsoyan (RIGHT)



MAKING CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE GLOBE

Similarly, Hovsoyan grew up in Yerevan, Armenia, but moved shortly after war broke out in 1993. Since then, her language has become more than just a tool for communicating—it has become a symbol of her heritage. Hovsoyan finds the chance to teach the Armenian language and customs "deeply personal and sacred." Sharing her culture with students in this capacity, she continues, allows her "to honor where I come from and to inspire others to find meaning and belonging through language and human connection."

This connection became prominent in 2020 when war again broke out in Armenia. Hovsoyan's students responded with prayers and fundraisers for those affected, using their background with Armenia to better understand the conflict. She has also introduced students to her country's strength and resilience through art at BYU's Museum of Art, cultural activities, and current events, helping her classes connect with the country despite the distance.

"In each class, it feels like I'm planting seeds of connection, and I feel grateful to witness them grow."

Hovsoyan says that sharing personal experiences with her Armenian roots "allows students to experience a culture rooted in spirituality, creativity, and community—a culture that teaches not just words but ways of seeing the world." In teaching her language, Hovsoyan has seen students take part in rich and meaningful interactions with the world around them by virtue of their ability to understand and respect different cultures.

Dunn and Hovsoyan agree that their work goes beyond grammar patterns and vocabulary quizzes; it invites students to develop empathy for another culture and to dare to see the world differently. Hovsoyan says, "In each class, it feels like I'm planting seeds of connection, and I feel grateful to witness them grow." H

THE BRITISH ISLES:

A Linguist's Playground



BY EMMA MAFI (MICROBIOLOGY '25)
PAINTINGS BY ELIZABETH WALKER (EDITING AND PUBLISHING '26)

Six weeks in the British Isles—diving into history, language, and culture—transforms students' understanding of language, identity, and connection.

When Americans feign a British accent, they often drop the *r* sound that follows a vowel—in words such as *better* or *Potter*—and might even end their sentences with a triumphant *cheers*. To many Americans, this depiction of British English is all-encompassing; however, the British Isles house numerous varieties of English, with accents differing between neighborhoods and, in some areas, as short a distance as between stores.



Students hear this linguistic variety firsthand on the English Language in British Isles Study Abroad hosted by the Linguistics Department every year. In summer 2024, Associate Professor Jacob Rawlins (Editing and Publishing) codirected the six-week program alongside Associate Professor Chris Rogers (Language Documentation, Linguistic Field Work); Rawlins explains that the program helped undergrads see "how language is preserved as we write it down and as we print it."

For the duration of the program, the group witnessed language preservation and usage in real time, a process Rawlins believes helped "increase students' love of language through their study of publishing." As a result, this program teaches students to value variety in language and editing better than any other study abroad. Most importantly, he says that the program teaches students to prioritize connecting with others and sharing spiritual light.

Photos by Malena Wood (Editing and Publishing '26), Joshua J. Perkey. Map by Adobe Stock

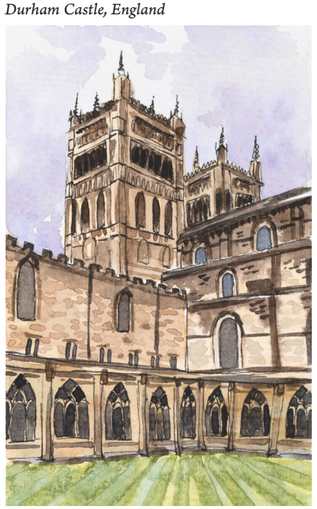
One of a Kind Program, One of a Kind Experience

The courses taught, places visited, and student experiences in each city set this particular study abroad apart from other programs. Unlike most programs based in the United Kingdom, this one takes students to all four nations in the British Isles—England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland—and also includes a trip to Ireland. "It's important to go to all five locations, especially when you're looking at the history of English or the varieties of English," Rawlins notes. "Each of those nations represents a different kind of English spoken."

Over the course of the six-week program, students visit a smattering of cities within those nations, such as Belfast, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, York, and London. Each location provides students unique opportunities to engage with the culture, history, and dialect of the area. For example, they tour Robert Smail's Printing Works in Innerleithen, Scotland, a preserved and operational 19th-century printshop; peruse grand libraries such as the Library of Trinity College Dublin in Ireland; roam Cardiff Castle in Wales; and explore centuries-old walls and architecture throughout York, England.

Experiencing different traditions in the British Isles often taught the students more about language than they could have learned in a textbook. "Language and culture are inextricably linked. You can't study one without the other," Rogers explains. "Instead of learning about language varieties, the students were *immersed* in them."

Durham Castle, England



The tour guide demonstrates vintage printing equipment at Robert Smail's Printing Works in Innerleithen, Scotland.





Battle Abbey, England



Stonehenge, England

Students also study language variations in classes focused on English dialects and the evolution of printing, starting with parchment scrolls and ending with modern-day books. These niche courses make the study abroad optimal for students studying either linguistics or editing and publishing. Rogers notes that the program's biggest benefit for these students lies in its ability to help them "contextualize their 'book learning' with cultural observation and immersion."

As students explore language both inside and outside the classroom, they can hear dialectical differences in real time and develop a more well-rounded understanding of the English language.

Language's Role in Identity

For many of the students in the program, visiting each location highlights more than just language variations between cities and locals. Olivia Kitterman (Editing and Publishing '26), who participated in the summer 2024 program, explains that one experience in particular taught her how language and identity intertwine.

Browsing a cathedral exhibit in Salisbury led Kitterman to meet a woman who spoke with a Geordie accent typical of Northeast England. During their conversation, Kitterman recalls the woman explaining "that she didn't identify with that dialect," despite being born and raised in the area. "That really opened my eyes to the difference between identity and language," Kitterman continues. "It's so much more than just where you're born or what you speak. It's something greater that shows who you are."

This one interaction taught Kitterman that dialect does not equate to identity; each person's story cannot be condensed down to the way they talk—or even the way they write. This realization proved to be a turning point in her studies, helping her develop a deeper compassion for the words or pronunciations speakers use as well as the experiences that make their dialect unique.

Her conversation with the woman in Salisbury also prompted Kitterman to continually consider the many assumptions she makes

regarding language. With her future career in mind, Kitterman can use this newfound understanding of language and identity to improve her work as an editor: "This study abroad means, for me, the difference between studying editing in my own dialect and being an editor for every variety out there."

Connecting with Cultures and History

For Sydney Simpson (Editing and Publishing '25), the study abroad experience prompted her to reflect on the power of connection. From planned meetings to serendipitous run-ins, Simpson believes that recognizing the individuality of accents facilitates the creation of strong and meaningful relationships. "If you can pick up on someone's dialect," she explains, "you instantly form a connection with them because they want to talk about who they are, and they want to talk about where they're from, and they want to share that with you. We all need to connect with people, no matter what we do for our work."

Students learned the importance of building relationships by connecting with the nations and peoples they visited. Undergrads conducted interviews with locals to hear and study different dialects, and in each nation, they dove into the history. These activities provided undergraduates with a more complete view of regional language through the study of English dialects and accents as they exist today and as they existed over the centuries.

Old-town York, with many of its buildings erected hundreds of years ago—some even a thousand years ago—offered the group unique insights on language development. "You can see this history that's just surrounding you in the woodwork, in the walls, in the stones," Rawlins shares. "As far as the language, you see it in the names of the streets and in the slang and the words that people use." For example, street names such as *The Shambles* and *Nedellergate* pay homage to the city's Anglo-Saxon roots and describe the businesses that were once housed there.

Though only in York for a couple of days, the students had time to roam the city's walls, admire street signs, and tour many historic buildings in the area. These interactive learning opportunities taught students in ways traditional classroom study never could: "It's something that we can't bring into the classroom in Provo, not with the same weight as when you go and stand where the Roman emperor walked," Rawlins says, "or go to the cathedral that was built a thousand years ago and is still under construction in some places."



Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Ireland







(TOP LEFT) High tea, York, England

(TOP RIGHT) Students interview locals to learn more about their native dialects in York, England.

(LEFT) Salisbury Cathedral, England

Spiritually Enriched in All Things Temporal

The places and people visited on the trip took up a sizable portion of the program's itinerary; however, it only represents a fraction of the learning and light students acquired. The study abroad taught students to have greater compassion and understanding for those who sound different than they do. For many who attended, these growing experiences also came much more personally.

Rawlins witnessed how deep students' personal experiences were during a testimony meeting held on the group's final night abroad. There, students and faculty shared the most impactful moments of the trip. "This was a powerful spiritual experience at the end of six weeks together, where we shared how we'd grown in light together as a group," he says.

Testimony-building experiences from the 2024 trip came in the form of spiritual support and guidance for Natalie Davis (Linguistics '25)—not just as she traveled from city to city but also as she made plans for the future. "I had numerous experiences where God answered my questions and validated my fears and told me that I was doing the right thing and that I was on the right path."



"As we travel together, we go through hardships together; we give blessings; we pray together; we eat together—all these things that a family does, we do on a study abroad."

—JACOB RAWLINS

Rogers believes that this type of enlightenment comes in large part because of students' willingness to learn and care about new people, cultures, and experiences. "Seeing the world is a spiritually strengthening experience," he says, explaining that his testimony of the Savior's love has grown by traveling and experiencing a new way of living.

One Unit, Countless Memories

Traveling in a group—especially one made up of students and professors—proves to be another source of light. Rawlins explains, "One of my favorite things about a study abroad experience is the community it creates between the students and the faculty. Students and professors become as close as family. As we travel together, we go through hardships together; we give blessings; we pray together; we eat together—all these things that a family does, we do on a study abroad."

The English Language in British Isles program is one of many study abroad opportunities the College of Humanities offers to students; the program's unique ability to intertwine culture, language, and identity while providing undergraduates with valuable skills and experience qualified it to be one of the College's Beacons of Light. "Through this program, you can see how the different people who are there relate to each other, what their history is, and why they use language in the way that they do," Rawlins continues. The program creates opportunities for students to share "not just educational experiences but also important spiritual experiences that can help students *and* professors grow in light and knowledge together."

Watch this Beacons of Light video to see how a student's life was changed by this study abroad experience.

(bit.ly/BYULinguistics)

The Irish countryside



WHERE ART & FASHION INTERSECT

In November 2025, student fashion designers and makeup artists had the unique opportunity to bring art to life on the runway at the Museum of Art's fashion show.

by Emma Lindorf (Editing and Publishing '27). Photo illustration by Jaren Wilkey / BYU Photo

BYU's well-beloved Museum of Art (MOA) was transformed into a venue more likely to be found at Paris Fashion Week than on a college campus. Under the soft glow of string lights against the November sky, patrons enjoyed refreshments and the quiet strumming of Spanish guitar while waiting for the start of an exclusive event: the MOA's first-ever fashion show.

To a casual observer, the main lobby of the museum was unrecognizable, the space filled with rows of chairs, all positioned to face a catwalk illuminated by spotlights. Guests milled about *The Sense of Beauty* exhibition, on loan from the Museo de Arte de Ponce in Puerto Rico, taking in the art that inspired the fashion show's student-created designs.

The lights dimmed and attendees found their seats, the chatter dying down as Professor Heather Belnap (19th-Century French Art and Culture) took to the podium near the runway. Her remarks set the stage for the show: a living demonstration of the intersection between art and fashion.



Frederic Edwin Church (TOP RIGHT) Morning in the Tropics, *1872, oil on canvas.*

Raimundo de Madrazo y Garreta (BELOW) Woman in a Garden, *ca. 1880, oil on panel.*





Artworks courtesy of the Museo de Arte de Ponce. The Luis A. Ferré Foundation, Inc.

Fashion Found in Art

Paintings such as those found in *The Sense of Beauty* collection provide glimpses into a different era, their colors and composition standing the test of time. But just as relevant, if less noticeable, is the clothing that the subjects wear. Belnap emphasized the importance of clothing as an artistic choice, explaining how the fashion displayed in artwork can demonstrate elements of humanity.

"Costume and accessories," Belnap said, "perform symbolic functions, conveying a sense of individual identities as well as collective cultural developments." She cited several examples from *The Sense of Beauty* that demonstrate this intersection: A *fichu*, the dainty neck scarf found in Thomas Gainsborough's *Portrait of a Young Lady*, demonstrates the lady's wealth and her modest disposition; a colorful dress, seen in Raimundo de Madrazo y Garreta's *Woman in a Garden*, shows the woman's patriotism. Belnap continued, "The styles, cuts, and fabrics of costumes and accompanying accessories included in a painting can be a means of expressing national pride and suggest the commingling of cultures during a particular age."

These paintings, along with the rest of *The Sense of Beauty* collection, were brought to life on the catwalk. BYU students designed and created the looks, effectively translating the works of art into a new medium.

Bringing Art to Life

The practice of taking a historical art piece and creating a contemporary interpretation in a new medium has been happening for years. For example, Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film reimagined *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare. Andy Warhol's 1962 *Marilyn Diptych* reworked an old publicity photo of Marilyn Monroe into a format typical of historical Christian art. For the December 2013 issue of *Vogue,* Annie Leibovitz photographed Jessica Chastain, imitating the clothing and the composition of well-known historical paintings. The spread was, according to Belnap, "a stunning intersection between art and fashion"—an intersection also demonstrated by the MOA's event.

The fashion show featured the collection and the original designs of intermediate sewing students taught by Amber Williams, a faculty in the School of Family Life. Williams wanted her students to "see beauty in different lenses," so she challenged each one to come up with a fashion look inspired by one of the works in the MOA's visiting collection.

Students worked on their pieces for a full semester. They began by sketching designs based on three different paintings and pitching their ideas to the fashion show organizers, who selected the final designs. The students then gathered materials and started sewing, altering, and adjusting their original ideas as they went. Williams paired each designer with a model, who would wear the design on the runway, and a theatre and media arts student, who created a makeup look to complete the piece.

Photos by Joren Wilkey / BYU Photo

The MOA fashion show marked the culmination of their work. As each model paraded down the catwalk, the painting that inspired the design was projected on the wall. The emcee animatedly described the materials in each look and how the design related to the piece of art. Senior Emmie Hall (Cybersecurity '26) modeled her own work, drawing inspiration from Miguel Trelles's *The Philanthropist*. The painting depicts a suit-clad man sitting on his couch, cast in cool tones. Above him hangs a warm-hued portrait of an unknown man wearing loose-fitting, colorful clothes. Hall interprets the warm-hued portrait as "a picture of the cool-toned, harsh man's beautiful, vivid imagination." She wanted her piece to create "the harmony of those two, where you get the true representation of who the philanthropist really is."

Hall's design had three pieces, including a pleated pencil skirt made with shiny red satin and embellished with four gold buttons on the front. The garment's crisp lines and defined shape imitate the philanthropist's suit. She also created a white short-sleeved button-down shirt, which she trimmed with orange and blue, pulled from the philanthropist's tie. "In a suit, the only place where you can really express individuality is in your tie," Hall says, so she believes the colorful tie provides a "glimpse of who the philanthropist is inside." Hall finished the look with a long red scarf hung over her shoulders. It functioned as a kind of cape to capture the colorful spirit of the brightly colored portrait, which Hall describes as the cool-toned man's "adventurer."





Emmie Hall (MIDDLE) drew inspiration from The Philanthropist *by Miguel Trelles, 2000, oil on canvas.*

Amber Williams (BOTTOM) guided students through the construction process.







Creating Perspective

One of the main reasons Hall enjoyed participating in this unique experience was because it allowed her to not only develop her creativity but also learn from her peers to see art and the world in a different way. Hall says that learning about different perspectives is important because "if you want to make the world a better place . . . you need to know about the world you're trying to change." For Hall, that aspect of seeing things from multiple perspectives is "how fashion is connected to the humanities."

Hall feels grateful for the platform the show provided, allowing students to create their own contemporary interpretations of art from *The Sense of Beauty* collection. The event, as described by Belnap, put "art into conversation with fashion," engaging people across campus and the community in a new, innovative way. Hall believes that expressing creativity in contexts such as the fashion show is important because creativity provides "a unique way to express your own personal opinions," she says. "Everyone has the ability to be creative. People resonate with others' creativity because it's part of everyone's divine nature to try to be creative." H

Teaching Language, Transforming Lives



by Emma Mafi (Microbiology '25)

BYU's English Language Center has helped thousands of students learn English, setting the stage for a myriad of careers worldwide.

For those who study at BYU's English Language Center (ELC), learning English opens doors for the future—and in many ways, it changes lives. Ben McMurry, the ELC's director, explains that the ELC provides students with enhanced language skills and ample opportunities for professional development: "We are helping them learn English, and we're very successful with that; but, we're also helping nourish the entire individual so that they can benefit the world."

The Inner Workings of the ELC

Since its establishment in 1980, the ELC has offered an intensive English program for international students who aspire to attend college in the US but lack the language proficiency to do so. ELC curriculum is designed to offer support at every English level, strengthening students' language skills regardless of their initial English proficiency. Enrolled full- or part-time ELC students are placed in one of seven proficiency levels, four of which focus on foundational English (foundations prep, foundations A, foundations B, and foundations C) and three others centered on academic language (academic A, academic B, and university prep).

Once placed, students spend 18 hours each week developing their language abilities in four main areas: listening and speaking, grammar, reading, and writing. Computerized Language Acquisition Tests (LATs) evaluate students' progress in these categories, and, if sufficient progress is detected, students can move up to a higher proficiency level the next semester.

BYU students studying TESOL play a large role in this process as ELC teachers. Thus, the ELC supports both international and BYU students simultaneously: "We're trying to be a positive institution," McMurry says, "where all students feel like they can learn and grow."

One Institution, Thousands of Stories

"The things that ELC students learn," McMurry says, "and the experiences they get, they take back to their country or use while staying here." Many ELC students go on to attend college, including Ensign College or BYU, settle down in the US, or return home with a marketable skill. By interacting with students who study at the ELC, McMurry has come to believe that no matter where they go after, "they share the light that they felt" with the communities they join. This is true for all students, many of whom are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

For Mahonry Soto (Global Supply Chain Management '27), a former ELC student from Chihuahua, Mexico, the center was an influential source of light. "Growing up," he says, "I tried to prioritize having God with me in my studies, but where I'm from, it's not common to talk about religion in education. When I came to the ELC, I experienced a completely different and better way to learn. The ELC gave me the tools I needed to open myself to a new world—new cultures, ideas, perspectives, and knowledge."

Soto's time at the ELC taught him the importance of including Christ in his studies, and as he invited the Spirit into the classroom through intentional prayer and Christ-centered study, he saw a palpable change in his own abilities: "The ELC helped me become more confident and competitive in my education and future career. It gave me the ability to handle complex conversations and express my skills in a new language and environment."

> "The ELC gave me the tools I needed to open myself to a new world—new cultures, ideas, perspectives, and knowledge." —MAHONRY SOTO

Beatriz Santelo (Pre-Business '29), who finished at the ELC in August 2025, also found studying English to be an integral part of her education for a similar reason. She first felt prompted to learn English while serving a mission and enrolled at the ELC shortly after receiving an associate degree in financial management. "I started with just the basics of English," she recalls. "Even though my English still isn't perfect, the ELC helped me grow until I was truly ready to move on to the next level: academics."



Photos by Faith Riddoch (Photography and Lens-Based Design '27)

Santelo's time at the ELC opened countless doors for her and helped her accomplish her lifelong dream of attending BYU. "Studying English allowed me to study abroad at my dream university," she says. "Because of it, I can now pursue a degree in one of the best accounting programs in the country."

Like Santelo, Daniela Ortega (Linguistics MA '24) was accepted into BYU shortly after completing her studies at the ELC. Making it into BYU was a big accomplishment for Ortega, but she recalls that the community and the experiences she had while learning English were instrumental to her success as a master's student. "Thinking about all the memories I made at the ELC helped me get through the difficult times." Ortega explains that the ELC influences students' lives even after they move on; in fact, in many ways leaving the ELC is just the beginning.



46 Years of the ELC

For 46 years, the ELC has helped students like Soto, Santelo, and Ortega learn English and integrate into American culture. So far, the center has offered 10 thousand hours of experiential learning to BYU undergrads each year and has welcomed international students from a total of 90 different countries.

Though learning English may feel daunting at times, it never seems impossible to the students who join the ELC and its supportive community: "There are no words to express my gratitude for this program and those who make it possible," Soto says. "It's more than just a training place—it transforms lives when there is a willingness to learn and grow."

Watch this Beacons of Light video to see how Daniela Ortega's life was changed by the ELC.

(bit.ly/BYUELC)

A TALE OF TWO

JOURNALS

by Kira Christensen (Editing and Publishing '25)

What does it take to create not just one but two international fiction publications? Over the course of the last few decades, dozens of BYU students with a love of story and a shared vision have established a rich literary tradition, rooted in two premiere publications: *Leading Edge Magazine* and *Inscape*. For the students working on these magazines, fiction is becoming more than just a genre—it is a meaningful part of their real-life educational experience.

Leading Edge: The Many Worlds of Science Fiction and Fantasy

From Typewriters to Computers

If you want to find science fiction and fantasy published at BYU, *Leading Edge Magazine* is the place to go. Established in 1981, the magazine was created by a group of students who met in BYU's very first science fiction and fantasy writing class. "The students in that class were very enthusiastic," says Adjunct Faculty Liz Busby (English), the faculty advisor for *Leading Edge*. "They banded together and called it 'the class that wouldn't die.' . . . The magazine has been running since then."

When *Leading Edge* launched, the staff did not even have a word processor to use; students typed the first issues by hand and stapled them individually. Thanks to the tenacity of those students and those who followed, the magazine has published high-quality sci-fi and fantasy from creatives across the globe for decades, including a number of works from well-recognized authors and illustrators like Orson Scott Card and James C. Christensen.

Student Writers, Student Editors

Busby says one of the driving forces behind *Leading Edge*'s legacy has been the sheer number of students at BYU who are interested in science fiction and fantasy. "When I teach my regular Writing 150 classes, there's always somebody in there who says, 'I'm majoring in computer science, but I also want to write a science fiction and fantasy novel,'" she says. "Everybody's doing it."

For both the student writers who submit their work and the student editors who run the publication, the magazine is a great training ground. This is in large part thanks to *Leading Edge*'s commitment to giving authors specific, constructive feedback on the works they submit—a rarity in a world where most submissions only ever get a simple form rejection letter. "It's such a cool opportunity for students to have a chance to work on both sides of this, writing their stories and getting critiques but also practicing on the editing side," Busby says. "Behind every good author is a good editor."

Recent graduate Lenicka Lee (Editing and Publishing '25) agrees, saying she gained a lot of valuable experience from her work as a managing editor on the magazine. "I started as a deer-in-the-headlights editor who didn't really know what I was doing," she says. "It's helped me have really good relationships with other editors in the major and gain confidence in editing, which is what I ultimately hope to be doing."



Former editor in chief Phoebe English Carroll (Editing and Publishing '25) shares that she hopes the magazine will continue to grow, bringing quality fiction to a wider audience. "I think we have a lot to give to the genre," she says. "And I hope more BYU students join us so they can gain experience in the genre in a fun and welcoming setting. It's a good place to get your foot in the door and get industry experience."



Inscape: The Beautiful and Peculiar World

Driven by a Vision

If you want to hone your abilities to see the world around you in all its beautiful strangeness, *Inscape* is the place to go. Like *Leading Edge*, the journal began in the 1980s, and its growth has exploded in the last five to ten years, starting with previous faculty advisor John Bennion's decision to involve BYU's MFA students in the journal's editorial leadership. Adjunct Faculty Cheri Earl (English), the current *Inscape* advisor, explains, "He (Bennion) decided to give the MFA students experience on a journal because most MFA programs have journals that students work on. It's been an evolution."

That evolution has been driven in large part by the innovation of the journal's MFA and undergraduate students. The journal has expanded from a publication seeking only student submissions to one aiming to become an internationally renowned publication. Staff have tightened *Inscape*'s branding, refined its mission statement, and begun hosting a yearly gala to recognize their published authors—all under the direction of its editors in chief. "Every editor who comes brings a new innovation," Earl says. "And it's not an overhaul—it's an expansion of what we've already done."

Professional Quality Learning

All this growth means that *Inscape* consistently adds new opportunities for students on its staff. The journal offers internships to students from any college on campus—not just the College of Humanities—to learn web design, marketing, podcasting, social media management, and more. This results in exceptional experiential learning opportunities, even if magazine publishing is not the career students ultimately choose to pursue.

Senior Assistant Editor in Chief Avery Dall-Hilton (Theater Arts Studies '23, Creative Writing MFA '26) says that although she does not foresee a long-term career in magazine publishing, working on *Inscape* has offered her critical career experience. "I want to get published," she says. "Having the perspective of being on the other side of the submission email has been really good for me."

Creating a Place to Share

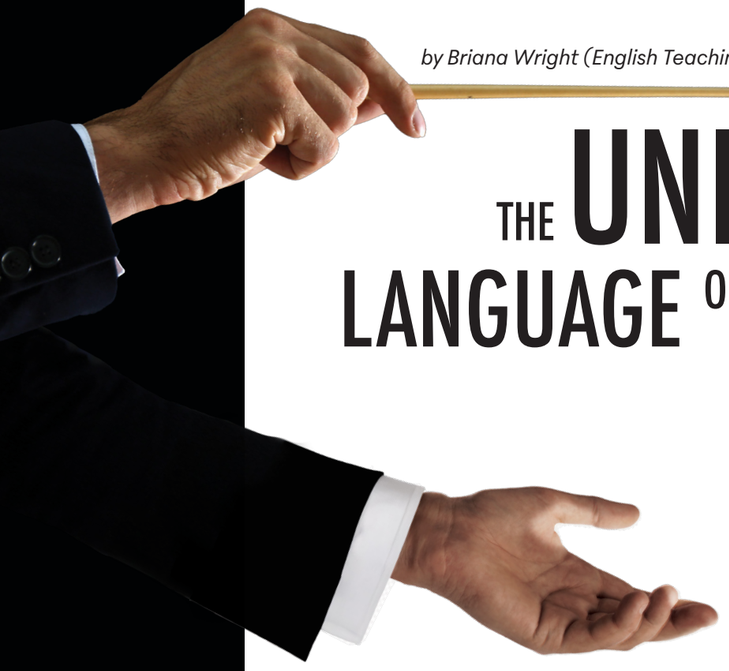
The driving force behind *Inscape*'s growth lies in the poignancy of its mission: publishing peculiar, gorgeous pieces that do not compromise on quality or craftsmanship. The journal accepts pieces from people of all experiences and walks of life, seeking to celebrate and create a home for the bizarre, the believing, and the beautiful.

For Dall-Hilton, another great value-add of *Inscape* is its positive environment for the student staff. "I feel really passionate that the act of creation and creativity needs to be focused on, especially now," she says. "We sometimes forget that the end product is not to *have* a thing but to *create* the thing. I think *Inscape* is such a good example of that."

And for Earl's part, she has seen the impact *Inscape* has had on the lives of its staff and those who submit, having personally had many meaningful interactions with people outside of the Latter-day Saint tradition. "In our reaching beyond our own faith community, or even university community, I see an opportunity to collaborate in a believing way with other authors and artists. *Inscape* has provided and continues to provide an opportunity to have those incredible conversations."

For submissions to *Leading Edge Magazine*, find their guidelines and links at ling.byu.edu/leading-edge.
For submissions to *Inscape*, find their guidelines and links at inscape.byu.edu.

Photos by Adobe Stock



by Briana Wright (English Teaching '26)

THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF MUSIC

BYU language choirs are not just about learning a language—they are about forming a community and expanding personal perspectives.

Many students might remember language classes that focused almost exclusively on grammar drills and rewriting sentence structures in hopes of mastering each rule. Moving away from this tedious and unengaging process, the College has made a concerted effort to redesign instruction to be more interactive, meaningful, and culturally rich.

Students can participate in these experiences through BYU's many language choirs—including French, German, Italian, Scandinavian, Slavic, Welsh—and a mariachi band. Each group performs in a combined end-of-semester language choir concert as well as other recitals.

German Choir Director Curtis Isaak (Alumni Relations) explains these students "connect with other cultures—not just through study but through the universal language of music." Directors and students echo the same sentiment.

FOSTERING HARMONY

Interestingly enough, some students who join the choirs have not studied its designated language; in fact, many join out of excitement to connect with friends and peers. In the



German choir, Isaak focuses on facilitating language learning and a cultural educational experience, but ultimately, he says, "It's equally important to me that everyone involved has fun and builds lasting friendships." That was certainly the case for Isaak. He reflects that he made some of his closest friends in German choir when he was a student.

Other students join just because the language intrigues them. Trevor Smith (Music Education '26), an undergrad who directed the French choir, says he is especially inspired by his students who do not speak French but still seek to deepen their appreciation for the language: "They recognize that there's beauty in it, and they want to participate in that creative process—which is something that I think we can all do with things that we are not familiar with."

EXPLORING CULTURE

Students' initial motivations—whether social or linguistic—quickly intertwine with a broader cultural education that unfolds through the music itself. At each rehearsal, students learn about the piece of music they

Photos by Colby St. Gelbis (Communications '25), Joshua J. Perkey, designed by Freepik



sing, discussing the time period, composers, and content, which allows students to introduce the piece in concert. For Slavic Choir Director and Adjunct Professor Catherine Lindsay (Russian), this illustrates the impact of combining language learning with another discipline. She says, "It's not just the melodies and the composers but also the stories behind them—there's a lot of culture behind the words."

During the fall 2025 semester, the French choir learned "Noël," which Smith says "isn't your typical song" for a couple of reasons. This piece, originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is set apart by its unfamiliar rhythms and its language—Kituba, a French creole. Smith included this piece in the class repertoire so his students could explore another Francophone culture outside of France. He explains, "When we talk about and indulge in other cultures, we open our minds to how someone in that culture would appreciate or participate in this music."

PERFORMING WITH PURPOSE

These cultural experiences come to life in the performances that bring students and audiences together. One of the most notable is *Adventsingen*, a traditional German event that celebrates the music, literature, and culture from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, welcoming in the Christmas season.

In December 2025, people flocked from all over the country for BYU's 51st annual performance. The audience listened to traditional readings in German by Professor Hans-Wilhelm Kelling (German Cultural History and Literature); vocal and organ solos by staff, students, and members of the community; and musical selections by local musical groups like Musica Antiqua, Swiss Chorus Edelweiss, and a children's choir from a local charter school. Participants also dressed up in authentic attire and played traditional instruments like hammered dulcimers, harps, recorders, and alphorns.

GROWING IMPACT

When audiences gather for concerts like Adventsingen, they enjoy a multicultural production but may not fully appreciate the individual development—beyond just vocal ability—behind each performance.

Andrew Jones (Physics '26), a member of Mariachi Los Pumas, says the class allowed him to practice leadership skills as he helped with the logistics and organization of their performances throughout the semester, often scheduling with various venues outside of BYU and advertising those events. On a more personal level, he learned to love and embrace culture. Of these performances he says, "I connect with an entire demographic of people in a way I'd never be able to otherwise."

Smith says that directing the French choir has helped him develop habits he would like to incorporate into his future classroom. For example, as a teacher, he knows the difficulty of setting a goal with his class and not always reaching it. "If I pick a song that pushes the choir, it's going to be hard to learn, but it's a great chance to apply the principle of hard work while having compassion on yourself." Smith has gained a testimony of working through challenges with reflection, adding, "That's when the most improvement happens—when you are willing to make mistakes."

Like Smith, others have found that lessons learned in choir extend far beyond rehearsal. Isaak's perspective of the world shifted as an undergrad in the German choir, and his outlook continues to evolve to be more globally minded. He says, "The German choir opened my eyes to the responsibility we all share to make the world a better place."

As Smith says, what better way to build this global connection than through "divine creation"—music.







Watch this Beacons of Light video to learn more about the 50th anniversary of Adventsingen.

(bit.ly/byuchoir)

BYU Connect

Where Experience Meets Potential



Photo by Adobe Stock

Join BYU Connect to mentor students today!

BYU Connect is the university's official mentoring and networking platform that strives to connect alumni and students.

How does BYU Connect work?

As an alumnus, you have valuable lived experience in and out of the workforce. By participating in BYU Connect, you can support college students as they navigate life after graduation. Signing up is easy, and you decide how involved you'd like to be.

What does mentoring through BYU Connect look like?

Mentoring can be as simple as creating a profile and allowing students to ask you questions. But you can also give more, providing support on topics including:

- *Choosing a major*
- *Balancing work and family*
- *Building résumés*
- *Networking effectively*
- *Preparing for interviews*

What students are saying about BYU Connect:

"BYU Connect is helping me see all the options for future careers that I didn't know existed."
—Spencer Sorensen

"Having BYU Connect and continuing to form connections will allow me to succeed quickly when I graduate and go out into the professional world."
—Maddie Hintze

"BYU Connect makes me feel a lot more support than other networking platforms since we all already have something deeply in common."
—Landon Andrews

So far, thousands of alumni and students have already joined BYU Connect. Follow the QR code to get started today.



Fall 2025 Todd A. Britsch Lecture on Citizenship: Dennis Cutchins

by Emma Mafi (Microbiology '25)

We are living in a zombie apocalypse, and Professor Dennis Cutchins (American Literature, Adaptation Studies) believes our actions are the key to fixing it. Unlike the creatures depicted in media, the zombies of our current apocalypse do not feed on brains as much as they do isolation and mindlessness. At the Fall 2025 Todd A. Britsch Citizenship Lecture held November 6, 2025, Cutchins introduced the antidote to this zombie-like behavior: active and intentional citizenship.

Though hard to spot, apocalyptic themes are manifested everywhere today—sometimes even in plain sight. "Perhaps we're working mindlessly at dead-end jobs or scrolling endlessly through social media," Cutchins said. If mindless behavior fuels this apocalypse, then citizenship may be the remedy. Citizenship, Cutchins postulated, consists of building the invisible infrastructures that foster creativity, encourage genuine interactions, and discourage thoughtless or purposeless behaviors.

These practices, he believes, can transform BYU campus, making it a haven from the apocalyptic world. "From where we sit in late 2025, BYU seems inevitable," he said. But "nothing about it was inevitable or easy. [BYU] came about because of intentional, hard work—and that is citizenship."

The College awards this lecture to faculty who exemplify the legacy of service and citizenship that humanities professor Todd A. Britsch left. To watch this lecture, go to bit.ly/2025Britsch.



2025 James L. Barker Lecture: Troy Cox

by Briana Wright (English Teaching '26)

Associate Professor Troy Cox (Language Learning and Assessment) may love testing more than most people do; in his 2025 James L. Barker Lecture on October 2, 2025, he shared how personal experiences led him to make language testing more self-reflective to foster engaged lifelong learning in college students.

Using the LASER test he helped develop to evaluate language proficiency, Cox began to include more self-reflective questions in his assessment, asking about a student's willingness to communicate, their grit, and their perception of their own skills. From his experiences, Cox asserts that students who are willing to communicate—and make mistakes—will have greater growth opportunities. And those who persist will go further than those with "natural talent."

Cox has seen how self-appraisal plays an important role in lifelong learning and hopes that the LASER will help students learn that skill. He said, "If we can help students have better self-appraisal, then they can more accurately self-assess what class to go into and what they should do to be a lifelong learner."

Ultimately, Cox hopes that students will invest in language learning out of curiosity rather than just to check the boxes. If they do, he believes they will find personal fulfillment and the "joy of discovery."

The annual Barker lecture honors faculty who have shown research excellence in the field of linguistics, language studies, or translation. To watch the full lecture, go to bit.ly/2025Barker.

Photos by BYU Photo (TOP LEFT, TOP RIGHT), Colby St. Gelais (Communications '25) (BOTTOM LEFT)



2025 Honored Alumni Lecture: Chris Washburn

by Emma Mafi (Microbiology '25)

A Japanese parable describes a man trapped on a vine in the middle of a small canyon, with tigers on both sides and mice gnawing at the vine. He suddenly notices a strawberry and takes a bite, choosing to capture the beauty of the moment despite his perilous situation. On October 16, 2025, Honored Alumni lecturer Chris Washburn (Japanese '90, MBA and JD '95) shared this parable, explaining how its morals have proven instrumental to his success.

Washburn said that, in his life, this story has taught him to "be present where you are at and in what you are doing," a sentiment echoed in the Japanese expression 物の哀れ (*mono no aware*). He shared how he embraced this principle, including his story of leaving his stable, high-income job for a much more personal endeavor: starting his own bicycle company. He explained that being present in the beginning stages of the company has been key to its success long-term.

More recently, Washburn has found these moments of gratitude to be instrumental in his recovery following a mountain bike crash that left him temporarily paralyzed below the chin. Though turbulent, this experience has reaffirmed the importance of looking for strawberries and being grateful when we find them. "If you can walk your path with purpose," he concluded, "every path that you're on will become holy ground."

Each college at BYU selects an alum to honor for their life of service and accomplishment during the annual BYU Homecoming week. To watch this lecture, go to bit.ly/2025honoredalum.

Faculty Favorites



The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben

A novel that reveals forests as compassionate communities, quietly reshaping how we see nature and our role within it.

"*The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben deeply changed the way I see forests and nature as a whole. The book reveals forests as interconnected communities where trees communicate, share resources, and support one another through underground networks. Wohlleben shows that resilience in nature comes from cooperation, patience, and long-term relationships rather than competition. What struck me most was the idea that caring for weaker members strengthens the entire ecosystem. This perspective encourages a greater sense of respect for creation and reminds readers of our responsibility as stewards of the natural world and participants in a larger, interconnected system."

—Edita Bzik (Center for Language Studies, Croatian)

Zero at the Bone: 50 Essays Against Despair by Christian Wiman

A novel that, through intellectually rich and profoundly honest writing, explores spirituality in the midst of suffering.

"In *Zero at the Bone*, Christian Wiman applies his ample skill as a poet, storyteller, essayist, and scholar to the question of how to live a life of faith in a world of pain. His sentences are rich, his ideas complex, and his unvarnished discipleship exemplary."

—Joey Franklin (Creative Writing)

The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt

A best-selling book that tells us why we should stop checking our phones and get outside to play!

"Two facts lie at the center of this book: Young people are more anxious and depressed now than ever before, and our lives have become much more phone-based in the last 10–15 years. Correlation? You bet. Causation? A resounding yes. In this book, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt shares research on the damaging effects of social media and smartphone use. This book will help readers, whether young or old, to recognize the impact social media and smartphones are having on their lives and to tip the scales back toward a play-based life."

—Johnny Allred (English Education)

Beasts of a Little Land by Juhea Kim

A translated novel about how love, resilience, and the will to survive shape identity, even in the shadow of history.

"Set in colonial Korea, the story follows the intertwined lives of individuals caught between love, survival, and power. Beneath its sweeping historical backdrop, the novel reveals the quiet resilience of human connection and the deep social forces that shape identity and destiny. Even though the story takes place a century ago, it's really just about people. Main characters Han-su and Jung-shim take completely different paths, but both just keep fighting to stay alive, and that made the whole story feel vivid and alive to me."

—Juno Baik (Second Language Acquisition, Korean)

The Friction Project: How Smart Leaders Make the Right Things Easier and the Wrong Things Harder by Robert I. Sutton and Huggy Rao

A book that reframes leadership as stewardship and challenges readers to use their power to make doing the right thing easier for those they serve.

"While this book focuses on businesses and large organizations, the principles it presents are easily applied to any relationship, especially those inflected with the dynamics of power. It invited me to consider my role as a trustee of other people's time and how much power I have to make doing the right thing easy for my students, my staff, and my colleagues."

—Jeremy Browne (Digital Humanities)

Stone Tables by Orson Scott Card

A sacred story that brings Moses off the page and into the heart with renewed spiritual power.

"*Stone Tables* by Orson Scott Card is one of my favorite books because it brings the story of Moses to life with depth and imagination. I return to it often, and each time it inspires me to study the scriptures more earnestly and apply their teachings with greater intent."

—Teresa Bell (Second Language Acquisition and Language Teaching, German)

Gouverneurs de la Rosée by Jacques Roumain

A masterpiece of Haitian literature that shows how one self-forgetting soul can restore a community scarred by violence and division.

"Everyone should read *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* (*Governors of the Dew*, 1944). Though I am Haitian and confess my bias, the book is a masterpiece of literature not only because of its Haitian dimension but also because of its relevance to a society like ours—with bodies and souls cut open by all sorts of violence. Online summaries might give pause as readers learn that Manuel, the main character, is a Marxist. Those with the intellectual curiosity to read for themselves will love to see that instead of an anti-bourgeois crusader, he is truly an emmanuel who, forgetting himself, brings healing water, reconciliation, and ultimate rebirth to a community that seemed otherwise irredeemable."

—Carter Charles (History and Sociology of Religion, French)

Humanities News



Ashley Breinholt

WINNING ON THE WORLD STAGE

BYU sophomore Ashley Breinholt (Neuroscience '28) traveled to Pingtan, China, in August 2025 and took home second place in the international Chinese Bridge language competition. Participating with 155 contestants from 130 countries in the finals, she showcased her language skills onstage performing debates, trivia, poetry, and stand-up comedy before a televised audience of more than 100 million viewers. Mentored and encouraged by Chinese Teaching Professor ShuPei Wang (Chinese Media Curriculum Design), Breinholt took first place in the preliminary regional portion in early 2025. Beyond the stage, Breinholt spent three weeks immersed in Chinese culture, visiting historic landmarks and building friendships with fellow finalists—an experience she described as both academically rigorous and personally transformative.

DEVOTIONALS IN FOUR LANGUAGES

Beginning in 2023, weekly BYU devotionals began to be translated into Spanish and Japanese. Now, in celebration of BYU's 150th anniversary year, devotionals are being translated into French and Portuguese as well. The translation project is made possible by a partnership between BYU Speeches and the College of Humanities and relies on a small student-led translation team. AI produces an initial translation of each speech, the team reviews and cleans the draft, and then the speech is sent off to native speakers for a final evaluation. Through the process, the students are not only sharpening their language acumen but also adding spiritual light to their lives. Former student translator Peter Demars (Linguistics, Portuguese '24) says, "We're learning spiritually from what we're translating."

CELEBRATING JANE AUSTEN

2025 marked not only BYU's 150th birthday but also the 250th birthday of one of literature's most beloved authors: Jane Austen. In honor of this event, the Department of English hosted a celebration in the JFSB courtyard which included a day-long read aloud of the entirety of *Pride and Prejudice* and an Austen-themed tea party, complete with costumes and a calligraphy contest. While Austen's books have become classics, her greatest impact may extend beyond her publications to the sense of community her works continue to foster—even at BYU. Sydney Spencer (International Relations '26) loves Austen's works because of her relatable characters. She says, "I think that makes [the stories] really appealing because we still care about people, and people haven't changed that much."

AWARDING LANGUAGE TEACHING EXCELLENCE

On November 21, 2025, Professor Teresa Bell (Second Language Acquisition and Language Teaching) was recognized for her transformative impact on world language education during the 2025 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention & World Languages Expo held in New Orleans. Upon receiving the Anthony Papalia Award for Excellence in Teacher Education from the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, Bell said, "This award is especially meaningful because teacher education has been central to my career. Helping prepare future world language teachers is both a privilege and a responsibility, and it is work I care about deeply." Bell also serves as associate chair in the Department of German & Russian.

Teresa Bell, second from left



Photos by Sydnie Alder / BYU Photo (LEFT), courtesy of Teresa Bell (BOTTOM), by Joshua J. Perkey (RIGHT)

MENTORING STUDENTS THROUGH BYU CONNECT

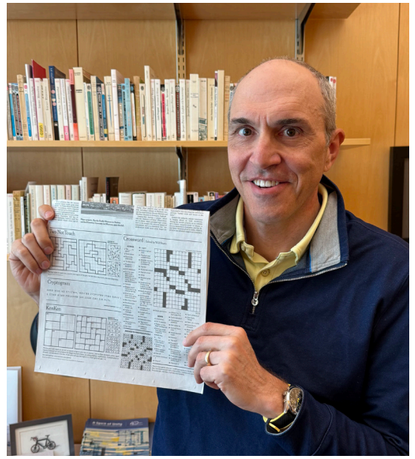
During the November 2025 BYU Connect webinar, Benjamin Dowdy (Japanese '16, MBA '24), associate brand manager of Halloween at Hershey, challenged the idea that a fruitful career is something linear—rising straight to the top. Dowdy shared his own unconventional path, which started with studying Japanese and then accepting a project manager role at a health care tech company. There, he found that he frequently used "the cultural empathy skills that I had gained in my major." Ultimately, Dowdy earned an MBA from BYU and went on to land a role at Hershey as a brand manager. His advice to students was simple: "I challenge you to think about all the experiences that you've had in your life, all the experiences that you will have, and look at how they build. . . . Stay on your path toward your goal, but be open, if something else comes your way, to shift a little bit."

SEMANTICS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Associate Professor Matt Baker (Editing, Business Communication) and Assistant Professor Brett Hashimoto (Corpus Linguistics) won the *International Journal of Business Communication*'s 2025 Outstanding Article for their research on the impact of adversative connectives (ACs) on customer reviews. After analyzing more than 35,000 online restaurant reviews with ACs—words like *but* or *however* that indicate contrast in tone—Baker and Hashimoto found that for every eight negative statements in a review, a star rating is likely to decrease, but with every two positive statements, the odds of raising a review increase. The pair anticipate that this trend can be applied to other business sectors, helping business owners understand and better meet customer expectations.

CRACKING THE CROSSWORD

On October 6 and 7, 2025, *The New York Times* featured a crossword in their print and online publications. The author? Corry Cropper (19th-Century French Literature), professor of French and associate dean in the College of Humanities. Cropper's crossword, selected from hundreds of submissions, was not his first—he had submitted dozens of puzzles already, learning from each round of subsequent feedback. "Each word has to be at least three letters long. Each letter has to cross another letter," Cropper explains. "The tricky part is finding a theme that hasn't been used before and including a reveal that cleverly ties the theme answers together. My puzzle has four phrases, and the reveal is *Icarus*, which ties the phrases together."



Corry Cropper

CROSSWORD ANSWER KEY

ACROSS
1. Asst 5. Mesmer 11. Cha 14. Uhuh 15. Behave 16. AA's 17. General Electric 20. Henri 21. Lin 22. *Otro* 23. Trim the fat 26. Cast 27. Zig 28. Sic 30. Self 34. Grab 37. *Nacho* 41. Over the mountain 44. Yesses 45. Toot 46. Alma 47. Cot 49. Sam 51. Peck 54. Hit the road 61. Oval 62. RNA 63. Sense 64. Like riding a bike 68. Ate 69. Evil*er* 70. Aced 71. RAs 72. Sees to 73. Reds

DOWN
1. Aught 2. Sheer 3. Sunni 4. Therm 5. MBA 6. Eel 7. Shelf 8. Malia 9. Events 10. Rec 11. Carta 12. Hairs 13. Ascot 18. Ritz 19. Toccata 24. High 25. Egret 29. Inn 30. Soy 31. Eve 32. Les 33. Freckle 35. *Amo* 36. Boost 38. Cal 39. Him 40. On a 42. Tso 43. Utah 48. Thrive 50. Mesa 51. *Polar* 52. *Evita* 53. Cakes 55. Indie 56. Tails 57. Rebar 58. On ice 59. Asked 60. Deeds 65. Res 66. Net 67. Gro

The Handprint of Humanities

College alumna Lucy Leishman pivoted from teaching in the US to researching in Cambodia. Now, she uses her humanities education to more effectively teach English to non-native speakers.

by Emma Mafi (Microbiology '25)

Lucy Leishman (English Teaching '22) taught English language arts to middle and high school students for three years before deciding to make a change. Remembering the humanitarian trips she took as a teenager, Leishman reached out to Sustainable Cambodia, a nonprofit organization, and promptly joined their team, trading her New England classroom for a school in rural Cambodia.

FROM CLASSROOM TO CAMBODIA

Leishman became the nonprofit's newest education consultant and English teacher in August 2025. In this role, she is primarily responsible for helping Cambodian teachers instruct English more effectively to native Khmer-speaking students. However, Leishman had no experience teaching English as a second language before arriving in Cambodia. She says, "It was clear from day one that I needed to expand my skill set in order to meet the needs of the students and teachers."



She soon found that many gaps in their school systems stemmed from the Cambodian Genocide that plagued the country from 1975 to 1979. The leaders of the conflict targeted education through the destruction of books and records and the mass killing of the educated, ultimately setting the country's education system back decades.

Working to improve the outdated teaching methodologies in place, Leishman turned to research on second-language learning, studying journals, articles, and books on the topic. She leaned heavily on the skills she developed as a humanities undergraduate—namely those she learned while completing a Humanities Undergraduate Mentoring (HUM) Grant.

ONE HUM GRANT, THOUSANDS OF USAGES

Leishman received a HUM Grant in winter 2021 to study 40 years' worth of secondary-school writing-center research alongside fellow undergraduate Annie Hilton-Haverlock (English Teaching '22). Together, the two scoured dissertations, research, and journals to summarize current work in the field for busy teachers—and after two years, they published a 45-page literature review with their findings.

This process helped Leishman expand her skill set as she confidently and consistently worked to "define search terms, identify credible sources, take strategic notes, and synthesize and present my findings for my audience," she explains.

These skills lay dormant while she taught in the years following her graduation; however, after joining Sustainable Cambodia, she now finds herself relying on these skills daily to compile information about second-language teaching. "Ultimately, the goal is not for *me* to know all there is to know about foreign language pedagogy; the goal is for me to give that to the *teachers*," she notes.

Over time, this process of finding and sharing information on teaching methodology has had big impacts on Cambodian students' ability to pick up English. Prior to Leishman's arrival, teachers relied on repetition to teach English. Students memorized a lot of vocabulary but had very little experience using language to convey their own thoughts. Leishman now trains the teachers to use updated teaching methods that will help students express themselves in English. "The way my research is helping students in their education is that it's improving their communication. It's helping them be confident in their own productive communication abilities," Leishman says.

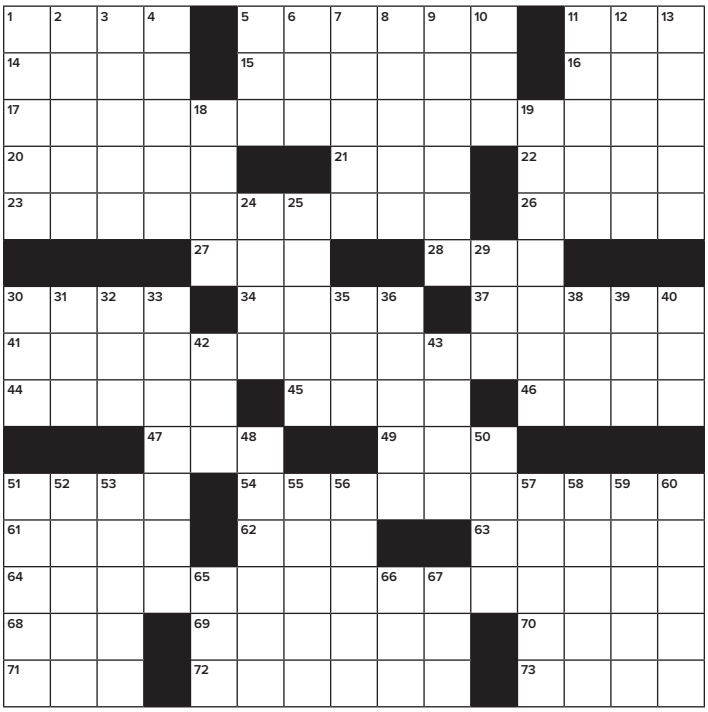
THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF A HUMANITIES EDUCATION

Though she has been in this role for only 11 months, Leishman has already seen both students and teachers benefit from her undergraduate work. "My experience in the humanities taught me to be a critical thinker and to think outside of the box," she says. "So much of what I am, I credit to the education and educators I've been blessed with; thus, I feel it is my duty to do what I can to support others on their path."

Photo courtesy of Lucy Leishman

A Wheelie Fun Puzzle

by Corry Cropper (French, Associate Dean)



ACROSS

1. Stat. for John Stockton (abbr.)
5. Hypnotism pioneer Franz
11. When doubled, a Latin dance
14. "No way!"
15. "Toe the line!" or "Keep the honor code!"
16. Remote batteries, often
17. Corporation headed by Jack Welch for two decades
20. French artist Matisse
21. BYU Spanish professor Sherman
22. Other, in Acapulco
23. Streamline operations
26. Q: Why do we tell actors to "break a leg?" A: Because every play has a ____!
27. Zag's counterpart
28. "____ 'em, Fido!"
30. Focus of psychoanalysis
34. ____ bag (24-hour kit item)
37. ____ *Libre* (film directed by Jared Hess)
41. Where the bear went, in a popular campfire song
44. Approvals
45. Palindromic horn sound
46. Longest book in the Book of Mormon
47. Camp bed
49. Muppet Eagle
51. A kiss one usually gives on the cheek
54. Leave town
61. Shape of a celebrated DC office
62. Genetic letters
63. Spidey ____
64. Learned once and never forgotten . . . or a hint to the ends of 17, 23, 41, and 54 Across
68. Downed
69. More wicked
70. Scored 100 percent on
71. Helaman Halls bigwigs (abbr.)
72. Handles the details of
73. Cincinnati Sluggers

DOWN

1. "And now I ask, can ye say ____ of yourselves? I answer you, Nay." (Mosiah 2:25)
2. Through ____ force of will
3. Many a Muslim
4. Gas bill unit
5. Deg. from BYU Marriott
6. Slithery swimmer
7. Book's abode
8. Sasha Obama's sister
9. Discus and pole vault, e.g.
10. ____ room (play area)
11. Magna ____
12. Splitting ____ (quibbling)
13. Neckwear for Scooby-Doo's serious friend Fred
18. Luxury hotel that opened in Paris in 1898
19. ____ and Fugue in D minor by J.S. Bach
24. Lofty
25. Snowy wader
29. Roadside retreat
30. Tofu source
31. Adam's mate
32. ____ *Misérables*
33. Dot by a dimple
35. "I love" to Lupe
36. Word after turbo or vitamin
38. Berkeley's Bears by another name (abbr.)
39. "That guy!"
40. Stop ____ dime
42. General on Chinese menus
43. The Beehive State
48. Flourish
50. Flat-topped hill or an Arizona city
51. ____ *Express* (animated film that falls in the uncanny valley)
52. Musical set in Argentina
53. Birthday party desserts
55. Sundance Festival film, for short
56. Coin-toss call
57. Concrete reinforcing rod
58. In reserve
59. Queried
60. Accomplishments that are "done" alliteratively
65. Hi-____ image
66. Pickleball court divider
67. Miracle-____ (garden brand)

Check your answers on page 31.

BYU COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

Dean, Christopher (Chip) Oscarson Christopher_Oscarson@byu.edu
Associate Dean, Grant H. Lundberg, grant_lundberg@byu.edu
Center for Language Studies Director and Associate Dean, Ray T. Clifford, rayc@byu.edu
Associate Dean, Leslee Thorne-Murphy, leslee_thorne-murphy@byu.edu
Associate Dean, Corry Cropper, corry_cropper@byu.edu
College Controller and Assistant Dean, Jared D. Christensen, jared_christensen@byu.edu
Liberal Arts Advisement & Careers Director and Assistant Dean, Sherami Jara, sherami_jara@byu.edu
Assistant Dean of Communications, Joshua J. Perkey, josh.perkey@byu.edu

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Asian & Near Eastern Languages, Richard McBride II, richard_mcbride@byu.edu
Comparative Arts & Letters, Kerry Soper, kerry_soper@byu.edu
English, Deborah Dean, deborah_dean@byu.edu
French & Italian, Robert J. Hudson, bob_hudson@byu.edu
German & Russian, Jennifer Bown, jennifer_bown@byu.edu
Linguistics, Dan Dewey, ddewey@byu.edu
Philosophy, David Jensen, davidj@byu.edu
Spanish & Portuguese, Scott Alvord, scott_alvord@byu.edu

DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS OF ACADEMIC CENTERS AND PROGRAMS

Office of Digital Humanities, Jeremy Browne, jeremy_browne@byu.edu
Humanities Center, Rex Nielson, rex_nielson@byu.edu
English Language Center, Ben McMurry, ben_mcmurry@byu.edu
Faith & Imagination Institute, Matthew Wickman, matthew_wickman@byu.edu
American Studies, Jamin Rowan, jamin_rowan@byu.edu
Asian Studies, Marc Yamada, my@byu.edu
European Studies, Rob McFarland, robmc@byu.edu
Global Women's Studies, Heather Belnap, heather_belnap@byu.edu
Scandinavian Studies, Nate Kramer, nate_kramer@byu.edu
Africana Studies, Peter Leman, peter_leman@byu.edu
Global Environmental Studies, George Handley, george_handley@byu.edu

Brigham Young University
College of Humanities
4002 JFSB
Provo, Utah 84602

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PROVO, UT
PERMIT NO. 49



AS LIFELONG STUDENTS OF the humanities, we tend to think deeply about life, literature, the arts, and the world around us. That lens creates the capacity to connect disparate media, concepts, and viewpoints such that they provide illumination and enrich our lives—sometimes in unexpected ways (pages 2 and 4). Take, for example, the BYU Museum of Art's first-ever fashion show—illustrated by the images on the cover and article inside (page 16)—which featured student-created fashion designs and makeup looks based on paintings displayed in the museum. For the audience, the juxtaposition of the fashion and the art hanging nearby created a uniquely layered experience.

This issue of *Humanities* contains many stories that illustrate the intersection between the humanities and our lives. Four articles highlight projects that represent the College's role as a Beacon of Light to the world: International Cinema helps us see the world in a different light (page 8); language choirs create belonging and cultural connection (page 24); the English Language Center provides an extraordinary service preparing individuals for higher learning (page 20); and study abroad programs blend history, language, and culture to transform students' understanding of identity and cross-cultural connection (page 12).

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Humanities* and find these intersections illuminating!

BYU College of Humanities