Aimee Roekle spent her summer studying how mothers enunciate certain sounds to their infants. In August, she presented her linguistics research at a UWM poster session like any typical student – but Roekle is anything but typical. For one thing, she hasn’t even started college yet.

Roekle was one of the 27 high school graduates going through the Undergraduate Research @ UWM, or UR@UWM (https://bit.ly/2P0sgAw) program this summer. Run by UWM’s Office of Undergraduate Research, the program is designed to help high-achieving students connect with faculty-led research opportunities before their regular classes begin in the fall.

This year, UR@UWM celebrated its tenth anniversary. Since its inception, the program has been a resounding success, according to Kyla Esguerra. She’s the Deputy Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research and the creator of UR@UWM.

“It started as a way to get students started early who will hopefully stay involved in research and become ambassadors for our program. If they do stay involved, and many of them do, by the time they’re juniors and seniors, their outcomes are really impressive,” she said. “The students, by and large, thought it was a great experience and a good opportunity.”

UR@UWM works by pairing just-graduated high school seniors with a faculty member working on a research project close to the students’ academic interests. Each year, Esguerra invites high-achieving students who have applied to UWM to apply for UR@UWM. Many times, Esguerra said, the program tipped the scales when it came time for students to decide where they wanted to attend college.

In addition to performing research, the students stay in the campus residence halls during the program. The cost of their housing and meals are paid for by the Office of Undergraduate Research.

The application process is competitive; Esguerra typically receives 100 applicants and accepts a quarter of them. The students all boast impressive high school transcripts, excellent GPAs, and an average ACT score of 29.

The program culminates in a poster session where students present their research to their families, peers, and faculty advisors.
UWM students take charity trip to Haiti
By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

This summer, two UWM students are trying to make a difference in one of Haiti’s poorest communities, Cité Soleil.

The students installed water filters in community centers, as well as supplied food, medicine and shoes during a trip to the country in early August.

The service trip, called Project Haiti, included four people: Emily Ruder, a biological sciences student at UWM; Steven Duclaire, a communication student at UWM; Nikia Johnson, biological sciences major at Marquette University; and Daniel Gonzalez, a professional photographer and cinematographer who went to document the trip for the project donors and to spread awareness.

According to The World Bank, 6 million people out of the 10.4 million Haitian population live under the poverty line of $2.41 a day. Duclaire, a native of Haiti, knows the situation firsthand.

“I know living in poverty in Haiti because I used to not have shoes sometimes and my family lived on less than two dollars a day,” Duclaire said.

Cité Soleil was chosen because it is one of the poorest and most densely packed neighborhoods in Haiti.

“I had lived in Cité Soleil for a few years. It’s very impoverished, beyond what you could imagine,” Duclaire said.

Collecting shoes

The trip started with the idea of collecting shoes to bring to Haiti. Like many impoverished places in the world, scores of children in Haiti do not have shoes. Project organizers worked with schools, community groups and churches to collect donations of lightly used or new shoes.

While doing the shoe drive, the students brainstormed other ideas of ways to help the Haitian community. A need for clean water is critical.
Jewish Studies alum combats lack of Holocaust knowledge

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

In April, a survey (http://www.claimscon.org/study/) about American knowledge of the Holocaust revealed some startling results: Many adults, especially Millennials, lack basic knowledge about the largest genocide in modern history - how many Jewish people were killed, for instance, or how Hitler rose to power. However, most all agree that Holocaust education is vital.

One of the people who helped develop the survey was UWM alum Tony Rodriguez. It is his job to assist in advancing Holocaust research, education and documentation in the United States and abroad by administering grants which further this goal.

Rodriguez is a Senior Program Officer at the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, based in New York City. More commonly known as the Claims Conference, the organization seeks to return property stolen by the Nazis to their original Jewish owners or heirs, and to secure compensation for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. Funds primarily go to Holocaust survivors, but a smaller amount is used to promote Holocaust education through educator training programs and research initiatives.

This mission is critical, especially these days, says Rodriguez. He notes with concern the rise of anti-Semitic political parties several European countries and the controversial Polish law which originally intended to impose criminal measures against those attributing Nazi crimes to Poles during the Holocaust.

“I have to think that one day, one of the students taught by a teacher trained by one of our programs will be in a position to make decisions which will advance our society, advance our democracy,” Rodriguez said. “I’m hoping that the education they receive will make them more thoughtful and ethical citizens.”

Years ago, Rodriguez was that student. The son of a Mexican mother and a Texan father, he grew up in Plover, Wisconsin, and discovered a passion for human rights after reading The Diary of Anne Frank. His mother introduced him to the diary. He started college at Carroll College, but later transferred to UWM, where he was drawn to the newly-established Jewish Studies major. For Rodriguez, human rights is something that transcends all races and religions.

“She’s always been interested in advancing human rights, working to ensure that we learn lessons from history,” he added. “When we talk about human rights abuses, it’s not something that happens to just one group of people. If it happens to one population, it’s just a matter of time before it can happen to a different one.”

He began working for the Claims Conference after his graduation in 2009. Rodriguez laughs as he recounts flying out to New York on a Friday, crashing on the floor of a friend’s studio apartment, learning to navigate the subway system over the weekend, and beginning work on Monday.

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Researchers at the UWM Field Station are about to get support from a $250,000 fund founded by a UWM Botany alum.

The James and Dorathea Levenson Endowment for Ecology and Field Biology was established earlier this year and will provide fellowships to UWM graduate students who are conducting research at the Field Station and/or in Cedarburg Bog. Dr. James B. Levenson, who graduated in 1976 with his PhD in Botany, said the fund is his way to give back to the university that nurtured his education.

“When you get to this stage, you start to look at what comes later,” he said. “The last thing we wanted to do was just let the assets that we accumulated dwindle away. We wanted to put them into something that would continue giving, and I was just so grateful to be at UWM and working with [then-Botany] Professor Forest Stearns.”

Levenson’s endowment will fund several fellowships each year in perpetuity, with a preference for students who are military veterans. Levenson is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. After leaving the military and earning his PhD, he spent most of his career at Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois, where Dorathea also worked in information technology and cyber security. Now that the Levensons are retired, they enjoy traveling and bird-watching, especially pelagic birds that spend the majority of their lives on the open ocean.

Though her background is in computer science, Dorathea says she’s excited to create this endowment that will support graduate student research.

“I think it’s a wonderful use of the money, supporting graduate students who do field work,” she said.

Biology professor Jeffrey Karron is grateful for the opportunities that will be open to current students.

“This wonderful endowment will provide critical summer fellowship support,” Karron said. “One of the major challenges for graduate students in ecology is that they need to focus on field work during the summer months and therefore can’t be on campus supported by a teaching assistantship. With these very generous fellowships, students can spend all of their time doing field work.”

That’s the Levensons’ great hope – that the students who receive fellowships from this fund can get their hands dirty as they work.

“I wanted to be sure with this endowment that we were providing an opportunity where scientific design, hands-on experience, primary data collection, and sound data collection, forms the basis for the recipients in pursuit of their research,” he said. “They’re out there swatting mosquitoes and sweating and working hard.”

The UWM Field Station sits in the Cedarburg Bog, a 2,000-acre piece of undisturbed wetlands that provide students with the opportunity to conduct field research in a natural setting. Located in Sankville, Wisconsin, the Field Station and bog are the ideal place to study plant and animal ecology.

The Cedarburg Bog holds special meaning for Levenson; his grandfather was born in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, to German immigrant parents in 1886. He spent many years of his life exploring the bog on foot and snowshoe. He passed that love of the land onto Levenson’s father, who passed it on to Levenson.

Levenson conducted some of his PhD research at the Field Station, where he studied “forest islands” – woodlots scattered in an urban and agricultural “sea” – and how tree and animal species interacted between the lots, how the islands were distributed, how they sustained themselves, and more.

He’d love to see a 50-year follow-up study done on the forest islands he studied in graduate school. It may just be a project for one of the students who earns a fellowship from his fund.
Menopause on your mind: How estrogen loss affects memory

By Laura Otto, University Relations

Neuroscientist Karyn Frick began studying how hormones affect memory by watching mice at play. She documented how well they navigated mazes, as well as what happened when they encountered a new toy or how they reacted when the expected location of a favorite toy was changed.

“Mice are curious,” says Frick, a UWM professor of psychology. “By watching them in their lab environment, we could see that female middle-aged mice were mentally old compared to males of the same age.”

But such memory problems don’t stop with mice. In humans, women are three times more likely than men to develop memory loss and Alzheimer’s disease as they age. Frick wants to know why.

Scientists already know memory deficits are linked to a decline in estrogens, hormones whose levels plunge during menopause. Estrogens enhance male memory, too, and testosterone is converted to estrogens in their bodies for that purpose.

As with most things regarding the brain, though, researching the answer is not so simple. You can’t just replace estrogens to solve memory problems, and hormone replacement therapy for menopausal women can carry harmful side effects, such as an increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular problems.

Frick’s goal is to identify potential new drugs for dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, ones that don’t carry dangerous side effects and are equally effective for men and women. To do that, she’s unraveling the intricate chain of cellular events through which estrogens enhance memory.

In her undergraduate years at Franklin & Marshall College, Frick decided to pursue psychology. Then as now, complexity was part of the appeal. She relishes fitting the puzzle pieces together.

“For me, the research is like detective work,” she says. “What’s really exciting is when you read something that triggers an ‘I wonder what would happen if…’ moment.”

A fellow of the American Psychological Association, Frick was recently named Investigator of the Year by the Alzheimer’s Association’s southeastern Wisconsin chapter. She’s compiling and editing a book detailing the role of estrogens in cognitive functioning, and through her teaching and mentorship, she’s inspired hundreds of students to pursue careers in neuroscience.

“Karyn is considered a global expert on how estrogen hormones affect memory,” says Joanne Berger-Sweeney, Frick’s postdoctoral mentor at Wellesley College and now president of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

Frick’s research focuses on the brain’s hippocampus region, which is crucial for memory and deteriorates with age and Alzheimer’s disease.

In the brain, signals are sent along “relay stations” between two neurons. The highway for this transport, called the axon, ends at either the outer membrane of the receiving neuron or one of the receiver’s many dendrites. Fringed with extensions that resemble tree branches, dendrites are docking points that play a central role in memory. Frick’s team studies what happens on the molecular level at these docking points.

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Estrogen and memory

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Chemicals called neurotransmitters direct brain communication, and they’re activated when binding to their receptors. Proteins, which carry out genetic instructions, are also part of the cellular machinery, and their work can be influenced by estrogens. When estrogens are involved in the communication process, it improves the outcome, such as helping form a longer-lasting memory.

But estrogens aren’t as plentiful in the body when menopause arrives, so memory problems arise. “It’s not like menopausal women can’t remember anything,” Frick says. “But with estrogens, they remember better.”

Frick took significant steps toward figuring out the puzzle in 2013. For estrogens to be effective, they must attach to specific receptors within the dendrite and the cell wall. Frick’s research team discovered that in order for two receptors to carry estrogen’s message to proteins inside the cell, a third receptor – for the neurotransmitter glutamate – must also be involved.

The combination unleashes a cascade of cellular signaling that enables a protein, called ERK, to enhance memory. Frick’s study was the first to link estrogens to one of the chemical processes known to create memories.

Frick’s latest research has revealed some crucial differences in the memory process for women and men. She’s discovered that, in women, the presence of estrogens links the hippocampus to a different part of the brain – the prefrontal cortex, where long-term memories are stored – and boosts memory mechanisms in both areas.

Frick also has found that the activation of ERK in women occurs at the neuron’s membrane. That’s important, because proteins in the membrane are better drug targets than those inside the cell.

With partners at other universities, Frick is helping kick-start the pharmacology for drug development by testing compounds that bind to one particular estrogen receptor and mimic the effects of estrogens. Early testing of one such compound delivered promising results in female mice.

But when Frick and postdoctoral fellow Wendy Koss investigated the signaling chain in male mice infused with a potent form of estrogen, they got a surprise: It doesn’t happen through ERK activation as it does in females.

“If the biochemical events leading to enhanced memory are different,” Frick says, “then you may need to develop drugs tailored to the mechanism specific for each gender.”

The gender issue is magnified when you consider how important estrogens are in other areas of women’s health. Estrogens are needed to maintain bone density and healthy cholesterol levels, and are linked to the incidence of depression and other mood disorders. But they have adverse effects on the vascular system and promote some kinds of cancer. All of those factors must be taken into consideration when trying to solve the estrogen-memory puzzle.

And Frick notes another complicating factor: One reason so little is known about estrogens’ effects in the body is that, for decades, researchers excluded females in order to simplify their studies.

As a result, medical research is missing vital details on diseases or conditions that manifest differently in women and men. That’s led the National Institutes of Health and the Federal Drug Administration to establish new policies intended to close the gender gap in medical research.

Frick’s work is a crucial part of that process and part of a broader health conversation. “Few women are aware of the importance of talking about hormone replacement therapy with their physicians if they have a family history of Alzheimer’s,” she says.

And yet, some of her research has shown such therapy only supports memory if begun at the onset of menopause. Beginning the regimen later actually has detrimental effects on memory.

“It’s a powerful motivator for me and my students to know that our findings could ultimately help people,” Frick says. “Every finding allows us to see a new aspect of the puzzle and then put the pieces together.”
Welcome back, Panthers! Check out our welcome events!

8/29 - History Department Open House
Drop by the History Department and meet the Co-Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Lisa Silverman. Learn about the major and research opportunities. For information or to request accommodations, email silverld@uwm.edu.
2-4 p.m., Holton Hall, 3rd Floor

8/30 - Italian as an Attitude: Discover Yours
Italian staff and students will hold mini courses in Italian and students will learn to have a brief conversation!
12-4 p.m., area between Curtin & Garland Halls

8/30 - Atmospheric Science Welcome BBQ
The Atmospheric Science program welcomes new and returning students interested in the weather to join us for a BBQ and outdoor activities! Transportation to/from Alumni House available upon request. For information or to request accommodations, email evans36@uwm.edu.
5-7 p.m., Alumni House front lawn

9/5 - Political Science Open House
The Political Science program welcomes new and returning students interested in learning more about the major or minor. Meet and mingle with faculty and current students.
2 p.m., Bolton Hall, 6th Floor

9/5 - LGBT Resource Center and LGBT Studies Meet & Greet
Join us for a chance to mingle with new and returning students while getting to know our staff, and learn what the LGBT Resource Center is all about! You’ll get to check out what we have planned this year!
4-6 p.m., Union WG89

9/6 - JAMS Social
Meet and mingle with Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies students and instructors. Learn more about the major, the tracks within the major, and internship opportunities.
12:30-1:30 p.m., Bolton 510

9/6 - Cultures & Communities Open House
Celebrate the completion of the MKE Civil Rights/Movement for Black Lives mural and join us to learn more about our programs and activities.
4-5 p.m., Merrill 148

9/11 - Celtic Studies Open House and Social
Join us to learn more about the exciting courses you can take in Irish language and culture. Now’s the time to start exploring study abroad opportunities to the Emerald Isle!
4-5 p.m., Merrill G42

9/13 - Center for International Education Open House
Stop by and meet with friends from all around the world while playing games on the lawn! Light refreshments will be served.
2-4 p.m., Garland 138
Meet the new faculty faces in Letters & Science!

Claire de la Cova, Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences
PhD 2008, Columbia University
Previously Associate Research Scientist at Columbia

Research focus: Living cells within us communicate with one another. My research seeks to understand their cellular “language,” meaning the signals they employ and the cellular outcomes that result from their communication.

Research discoveries: In the past year and a half, I have used new techniques to monitor living cells as they respond to a protein signal associated with cancer. The result I find fascinating is that information relayed within cells can be an all-or-nothing signal that is pulsatile – this is something like what you would do if you were trying to communicate with a friend by a blinking a flashlight.

Fun fact: I love the visual arts! I am a die-hard fan of wood and linoleum relief printing.

Erik Gulbranson, Assistant Professor, Geosciences
PhD 2001, University of California-Davis
Previously Visiting Professor at UWM

Research focus: Geochemistry and Paleoecology

Current projects: I am working on a project studying how the most severe mass extinction in the history of life affected forested ecosystems.

Goals for the year: My goals are to utilize the fossil plant and volcanic ash samples I collected last year in Antarctica to better understand the extinction crisis that may have affected them at ca. 250 million years ago.

Fun fact: I am a rock climber and I have had the fortunate experience to be able to travel far to undertake alpine climbing and traditional rock climbing. In pursuit of this I maintain a steady training regime at a local rock climbing gym and I am currently volunteering to help adaptive climbers (climbers with physical or cognitive disabilities) realize their personal goals through the sport of rock climbing.

Patrick Kraft, Assistant Professor, Political Science
PhD 2018, Stony Brook University

Research focus: The psychological underpinnings of political attitudes, reasoning, and behavior. I am especially interested in the development and application of new statistical methods in the area of political psychology.

Current projects: I am working on multiple projects that investigate the role of morality in politics. In one project co-authored with researchers from the United Kingdom and Denmark, we examine when and how party leaders in Europe utilize moral language in major political speeches. In another project, I explore the effects of moral appeals on persuasion and compromise in online discussions on the popular website Reddit.

Fun fact: I am originally from Germany and one of my hobbies is playing a card game called “Skat.” I once participated in a tournament in New York City and won a ticket to an asparagus gala dinner on a Manhattan rooftop. (It turns out that Germans are obsessed with asparagus. It’s a thing.) I went to the dinner and the other guests turned out to be investors, managers, and entrepreneurs looking to network. They were pretty surprised to find a grad student there who only came for the free food.

Rachel Goodman, Assistant Professor, Philosophy
PhD 2013, University of Chicago
Previously Assistant Professor at University of Nebraska at Lincoln

Research focus: I specialize in Philosophy of Mind and to some extent Philosophy of Language. I’m most interested in the nature of representation.

Current projects: I’m currently working on the topic of thoughts that refer to particular objects and, at the moment, I’m thinking especially about the diachronic dimension of such thoughts.

Goals for the year: Getting to know Milwaukee and my new department, and to finish several papers and an edited volume I’ve been working on. I’m also thinking about starting on a book.

Fun fact: I grew up on the southwest coast of Australia, but have lived in 10 different cities over the last 18 years.
David Pacifico, Assistant Professor and Director of the Emile H. Mathis Gallery and UWM Art Collection
PhD 2014, University of Chicago
Previously Instructional Designer - Research, Policy, and Assessment Coordinator at Cardinal Stritch University

Research focus: The archaeology of ancient urban neighborhoods in the pre-Colombian Americas. I study the Casma State, which flourished on the north coast of Peru from about AD 1000-1400.

Goals for the coming year: Ideally I’d like to see our collection used in as many different departments, programs, and courses as possible. We’re a public university, so community members (teachers and other community leaders especially) are encouraged to get in touch with me.

As a professor and archaeologist, naturally, I’m eager to wrap up a number of publications - two edited volumes and a number of chapters on Peruvian archaeology - and to get back into the field!

Fun fact: I have an amateur radio (aka ‘ham radio’) license. It’s an old technology, but I’m fascinated by the ability to communicate across distances great and small without reliance on telecommunications companies.

Sarah Riforgiate, Assistant Professor, Communication
PhD 2011, Arizona State University
Previously Assistant Professor at Kansas State University

Research focus: My research concentrates on the intersections of organizational and interpersonal communication, particularly in regards to public paid work and private life in order to increase understanding and develop practical solutions to improve interactions. Research project topics include communication pertaining to work-life concerns, emotions in organizations, conflict negotiation, organizational leadership, and policy communication.

Research discovery: The data indicates that the longer couples were married, the less likely individuals were to use negotiation strategies when household tasks were distributed unfairly.

Current projects: One study explores how new employees in the nonprofit sector are socialized to understand paid work and private life priorities and the implications of communication for employee commitment and retention. In a separate project, I am exploring communication aspects of identity work among independent consultants who work at home.

Fun fact: I enjoy throwing pottery in my free time. There is something wonderful about shaping and guiding a lump of clay form into something both beautiful and useful.

Amy Olen, Assistant Professor, Translation & Interpreting Studies
PhD 2015, University of Texas-Austin
Previously Senior Lecturer in UWM Translation & Interpreting Studies

Research focus: My research is on interpreter training. I’ve been developing training materials in several languages with the help of graduate students. My goal is to create materials to train students with different language pairs in a consistent, culturally-appropriate way. I spend the rest of my research time on translations of Andean and Guatemalan short stories for collections by two Latin American fiction writers.

Goals for the year: To complete drafts of seven translation of short stories by a Peruvian author for publication.

When not working: I’m playing with my 4-year-old daughter who is starting kindergarten at the Milwaukee French Immersion School this year.

Ryan Shorey, Assistant Professor, Psychology
PhD 2014, University of Tennessee-Knoxville
Previously an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Ohio University

Research focus: I research risk factors for, and consequences of, intimate partner violence (IPV), and I also research substance use disorders and treatment. In addition, my research integrates these two lines of research to examine substance-related IPV and whether treatment of substance use reduces the occurrence of IPV and sexual assault.

Research discoveries: I have shown that alcohol increases the risk for perpetrating IPV, but not for everyone. That is, alcohol only increases the risk for being violent against a partner when you are intoxicated and angry.

Fun fact: Although I was born and raised in the Chicago-land area, I am a lifelong Green Bay Packers fan.
Kevin Thom, Assistant Professor, Economics (starting in 2019)
PhD 2009, Johns Hopkins University
Previously a Clinical Associate Professor of Economics, New York University

Research focus: My primary areas of interest are labor economics, household finance, and the incorporation of findings from biology (specifically molecular genetics) into economic analysis.

Research discoveries: Geneticists have recently discovered robust associations between several genetic markers and educational attainment. These markers can be combined into indices (or polygenic scores) that predict education. My own research shows that such polygenic scores not only predict educational attainment, but also income and wealth, even after controlling for completed education. Furthermore, these genetic associations can be shaped by economic environments. The relationship between these genetic endowments and college graduation is substantially weaker for people who grow up in poor households. This suggests that childhood poverty might be contributing to the waste of genetic potential.

Fun fact: I am a proud Wisconsinite. I was born and raised in Milwaukee, and graduated from Marquette University High School and then Marquette University. Serious Green Bay Packers fan.

Sarah Schaefer, Assistant Professor, Art History
PhD 2014, Columbia University
Previously a Visiting Assistant Professor at UWM

Research focus: My research explores modern European art, with an emphasis on religion and popular culture.

Current projects: I’m working on a book about the biblical imagery of Gustave Doré, a name that may not be very familiar in America today despite that his work is some of the most widely-reproduced worldwide. In fact, Milwaukee has a number of interesting examples: St. Paul’s Episcopal Church has a Tiffany stained glass window based on a Doré painting (the largest window Tiffany ever produced), and at Maria’s Pizza on Forest Home Avenue, you will find a paint-by-number version of Doré’s illustration of Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai.

Goals for the coming year: I’m looking forward to really digging into the book manuscript, and to adding to my collection of religious kitsch (which is in great supply among Milwaukee’s antique stores).

Peter van Elswyk, Assistant Professor, Philosophy
PhD 2018, Rutgers University

Research focus: My speciality is the philosophy of language.

Current projects: I am taxonomizing varieties of linguistic deception (e.g. lying, misleading, exaggeration, loose talk). We don’t always tell the truth. Sometimes that matters, sometimes it doesn’t. I’m interested in understanding what accounts for that difference.

Goals for the year: My goals are to finish the revisions and resubmits accumulated over the summer, to finish editing a forthcoming collection with Oxford University Press, to prepare my dissertation chapters for publication, and, most importantly, to find the best cup of coffee in Milwaukee. Assistance in achieving that last goal is highly appreciated.

Fun fact: My toddler son is an unrelenting fan of the fountain. Whenever he sees it, he runs to wade in. Since my office is in Curtin, I have to avoid walking by with him if I haven’t brought a change of clothes.

Sarah Vanderhaagen, Assistant Professor, Communication
PhD 2010, Northwestern University
Previously Assistant Professor at University of Nevada-Las Vegas

Research focus: My work explores how we use rhetoric to tell and revise stories about the past in order to shape identities, urge action, and create a sense of belonging. I am most interested in how our shared stories about the past affect public perceptions and performances of race and gender.


Fun fact: I am a mediocre amateur accordionist.
September 7-October 26
Planetarium show: Haunted Horizons, Manfred Olson Planetarium. Show runs Fridays Sept. 7-Oct. 26 at 7 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Celebrate spooky tales of cosmic occurrences at the Planetarium and learn about black matter, lost space crafts, and other astronomical mysteries. Family-friendly and open to the public. Tickets are $5. [https://bit.ly/2wqHoQ8]

September 11
The Defiant: Protest Movements in Post-Liberal America with Dawson Barrett (’13, PhD History), Union Fireside Lounge. 5 p.m.

September 12

September 13-November 1
Harmony In Print: J.A.M. Whistler Etchings & Lithographs art exhibition opening reception. Emile H. Mathis Gallery. Exhibit runs Sept. 17-Nov. 1, Monday-Thursdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Curator of Collections Leigh Mahlik delivers a gallery talk on Whistler to mark the opening of the exhibit on Sept. 13 at 5 p.m. [https://uwm.edu/arthistory/]

September 14
Geography Colloquium: “United Kingdom? From the Bronze Age to Brexit and Back.” AGS Library. 3 p.m. Linda McCarthy, UWM. [https://uwm.edu/geography/]

21st Century Studies Fellows’ Presentation and Open House. Curtin 118. 3:30 p.m. Fellows include Xin Huang (Women’s and Gender Studies); Ingrid Jordt (Anthropology); Andrew Kincaid (English); Jesse McLean (Film, Video, Animation & New Genres); Alison Staudinger (Democracy & Justice Studies, UW-Green Bay); and Kay Wells (Art History). [http://www4.uwm.edu/c21/]

September 17
Constitution Day – Screening of RBG and talk-back panel. Union Theater. 6 p.m. View the 2018 documentary RBG about Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, followed by a discussion on the 14th Amendment. Panelists include Sara Benesh (Political Science), Rick Esenberg (Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty), Asma Kadri (Wisconsin ACLU), and Michael O’Hear (Marquette University Law School). Free and open to the public. Tickets must be reserved in advance; seating is limited. [https://bit.ly/2BKmukO]

New faculty faces
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Jangsu Yoon, Assistant Professor, Economics
PhD 2018, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Research focus: I study econometric theory and applied econometrics, focusing on the nonparametric identification of structural economic models with strategic interactions. My research provides a game theoretical framework to empirically measure a heterogeneous entry pattern of two giant competitors - Walmart and Kmart - throughout counties in the United States. The established theoretical finding can also be used to show how differently married couples make their joint labor supply decisions.

Current projects: A paper discussing the identification of sequential game models, and a paper of a nonparametric panel data model with truncated or censored data. I am also interested in identification and estimation of the structural parameters under asymmetric information between strategic players.

Fun fact: I am a long-time fan of the Milwaukee Bucks.

David Spade, Assistant Professor, Mathematical Sciences
PhD 2013, Ohio State University
Previously Assistant Professor at University of Missouri-Kansas City
Alumni Accomplishments

Najiba Benabess (’07, PhD Economics) was awarded the 2018 Academy for Global Business Advancement (AGBA) Fellow Award at the AGBA’s 15th Annual World Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, in July. The award is the highest honor given to an academic scholar or leader to recognize their globally-acclaimed professional accomplishments. Benabess is the dean of the Tabor School of Business at Millikin University. https://bit.ly/2vmIjjP

Dick Strassburger (’76, BA Mass Communication) is putting his marketing skills to use as the new president of the Pewaukee, Wisconsin, Chamber of Commerce. Strassburger was named president on July 23 and hopes to increase the chamber’s membership, build a greater sense of camaraderie, and help Pewaukee businesses grow. https://bit.ly/2KKFPkW

Noah Kamsler (’10, BA Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) was named the Interim Assistant Director of Student Affairs at East Georgia State College in Swainsboro, Georgia. He joined the EGSC staff as an Admissions Recruiter in 2015 and became the Institutional Services Coordinator in 2017. https://bit.ly/2Kzvmc8

Jennifer Thomas (’06, BA Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) joined Zizzo Goup Engagement Marketing as a senior account executive. She will be responsible for overseeing client relationships and managing cross-channel marketing efforts. https://bit.ly/2M9Roba

Scott Winkler (’15, PhD English) gave a book reading of his new novel, *The Meadow*, in his hometown of Gillette, Wisconsin, in early August. Winkler based the book’s fictional setting on his hometown. https://gbpg.net/2Mca1tY

Jason Chatman (’06, BA Sociology) joined the faculty of Waubonsee Community College in Aurora, Illinois, as an instructor of sociology. Chatman was previously a sociology instructor at Midlands Technical College and an adjunct sociology instructor at Aiken Technical College. https://trib.in/2MOiALO

Tonit Calaway (’89, BA Political Science) was promoted to Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer and Secretary at BorgWarner, a company providing technology solutions for combustion, hybrid, and electric vehicles. Calaway was previously the Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer. https://bit.ly/2MKlv8t

Emerald Mills (’04, BA Communication) founded Diverse Dining, a Milwaukee experience that seeks to engage different sectors of the Milwaukee community over a shared meal. Mills was profiled in OnMilwaukee in August for her efforts. https://bit.ly/2BFAHiL

People in print


Students travel to Haiti

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The water crisis has been dire for a very long time due to lack of basic infrastructure, natural disasters and poor planning. The World Bank reports that 38 percent of Haitians do not have access to clean water. Water filters are needed to stop the spread of bacteria and waterborne illnesses such as cholera.

Project Haiti is working with Sakala Youth Community Center to build a water filter there, as well as making sure community members know how to operate and fix it.

“We want to keep it very local. We are going to use a lot of the donations to buy food for them from local places and buy medications because they don’t really have health care down there,” Ruder said before the trip.

Sustainability important

Project Haiti is constantly thinking about the sustainability of their service trip. The students want to help local communities help themselves, and not only bring American goods down to Haiti. The one thing not bought in Haiti will be the donated shoes.

Project Haiti will co-facilitate trainings with Clean Water for Haiti about the use and maintenance of the water filters. Haitians employed by Clean Water will build the water filters.

The students will be paying $100 for the water filters to be built and for a one-year warranty. Sakala will need to pay just $5 for the water filter.

Working with Clean Water for Haiti is one of the ways the students are being sustainable. The organization is based in the Port-au-Prince area, staffed with Haitian employees and uses local materials for their product. It has built and installed 24,500 water filters since 2001.

With an eye on the future, Project Haiti organizers plan to create a nonprofit organization called Sustain the Future. The students hope that this service trip will be the first step to facilitating solutions for the issues Haiti is facing.

Project Haiti is funded through donations. Anyone who wants to help can contribute at the project’s GoFundMe page.
In the Media and Around the Community

Tami Williams (Film Studies) as a curatorial advisor collaborated with organizers from the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York to bring audiences a survey of the work of French avant-garde and queer cinema pioneer Germaine Dulac.  [https://bit.ly/2M6SBvl](https://bit.ly/2M6SBvl)

It’s critical to reach a diplomatic solution to the remaining tensions from the Korean War while there is still time for war-separated families to be reunited with loved ones, Nan Kim (History) said in an article published on Truthout.org.  [https://bit.ly/2KeNloa](https://bit.ly/2KeNloa)

The Thomas A. Greene Geological Museum, run by the Geosciences Department, was recognized by the Milwaukee Record as one of the city’s lesser-known (but still very cool) museums.  [https://bit.ly/2vu73aZ](https://bit.ly/2vu73aZ)

Kohler Co. is working with the Anthropology Department’s Cultural Resource Management program to preserve historic artifacts unearthed at the site of Kohler’s proposed golf course in Sheboygan, according to the Sheboygan Press.  [https://shebpr.es/2MiQ3YR](https://shebpr.es/2MiQ3YR)

Glen Fredlund (Geography and Conservation and Environmental Science) is alarmed by the permits issued to the Foxconn Plant that will soon be built in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin, saying that the emissions produced will have a harmful effect on air quality in The Shepherd Express.  [https://bit.ly/2w8U0kg](https://bit.ly/2w8U0kg)

What’s the story behind the new boxer mural on the side of the RedLine Gallery? Learn about Marc Tasman’s (Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) newest collaboration in this OnMilwaukee article.  [https://bit.ly/2PtxEx0](https://bit.ly/2PtxEx0)

Social Security has a complex history, but it’s not going broke, Bill Holahan (emeritus Economics) reassured in a Shepherd Express article.  [https://bit.ly/2w8YNg5](https://bit.ly/2w8YNg5)

Did archaeologists studying an Egyptian tomb unearth the oldest cheese ever found? Well, that depends on how you define “cheese,” said Bettina Arnold (Anthropology) told Newsweek.  [https://bit.ly/2MsMZA5](https://bit.ly/2MsMZA5)

It’s will be harder to fly the friendly skies as commercial airlines, freight, and the military all compete for pilots in the coming years, James Peoples (Economics) told CBS 58 News.  [https://bit.ly/2PyJAhe](https://bit.ly/2PyJAhe)

Jasmine Alinder (History) served as a guest curator for the “Someday, Chicago” photography exhibit featuring images by Yasuhiro Ishimoto at the DePaul Art Museum in Chicago. The exhibit is part of the museum’s fall displays.  [https://bit.ly/2MBrhG0](https://bit.ly/2MBrhG0)

Birds have found creative ways to adapt to climate change, Peter Dunn (Biological Sciences) said in The New York Times.  [https://nyti.ms/2LWTQks](https://nyti.ms/2LWTQks)


Is embedding microchips in our bodies the next wave of human innovation to enhance our medical technology and our home life, or do they represent the possibility for privacy violations? Noelle Chesley (Sociology) was quoted in a Washington Post article discussing the advent of implanting microchips.  [https://wapo.st/2wgWmJ6](https://wapo.st/2wgWmJ6)
Laurels, Accolades, and Grants

Gladys Mitchell-Walthour (Africology) was named the president of the Brazil Studies Association on July 28 in Rio de Janeiro. Brasa is an international, interdisciplinary organization of scholars who focus on Brazilian studies. Mitchell-Walthour is the first African-American woman to lead the organization.

Rebecca Dunham (English) received support to present at the Living Writers Series after SUNY Oswego’s “Artswego” and other departments were given a mini-grant to help bring her to speak in New York. 

https://bit.ly/2M5OrEt

Carol Hirschmugl, Marija Gajdardziska Josifovska, and Marvin Schofield (all Physics) received a grant from the Department of Energy to support their university-incubated startup, SafeLi, LLC, and their project, “High Energy Safe Anodes for Lithium Ion Batteries.” This is a Phase I award from the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program in the amount of $154,800, with a sub-award to UWM, that will make the startup eligible to apply for the larger Phase II grants with budgets in the $1-1.5M range.

Peter Blewett (English) received an NEH fellowship to participate in the NEH Summer Institute on “The Book: Material Histories and Digital Futures” at Salt Lake Community College during June and July 2018. Blewett’s “See Something? Say Something!” an artist book interrogating tour books that was created during the institute, is on exhibit at the Salt Lake Public Library through September 13, 2018.

UR@UWM

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Roekle, a graduate from Neenah High School whose parents also attended UWM, wants to major in Linguistics. She worked with Linguistics professor Jae Yung Song on a project called “The Impact of Mothers’ Speech on Language Development,” which analyzed if the way that mothers pronounce “t” sounds changes whether they’re speaking to another adult or to their children. The theory is that the different enunciations play a role in helping children learn to speak. Roekle acted as a research assistant and helped graduate students analyze sound files.

“It was tedious, but it never felt unimportant,” Roekle said. “[Professor Song] never would have gotten as far as we did without someone helping her.”

That’s one of the benefits of the program, Esguerra said: Professors can connect with students who they might retain as a research assistant for years to come. And the students benefit too.

“UR@UWM was certainly worth the summertime I put toward it,” Roekle said. “It gives me a leg up on my education and gave me a good rapport with the Linguistic Department. I made a lot of friends and this is going to look really good on my resume.”

Students in UR@UWM who continue to do research can have great outcomes, Esguerra said.

“Many of those students did continue in research, and one of those students from the first cohort just got his PhD,” she said. “We’ve seen students be published as coauthors and attend disciplinary conferences. Continuing participating in academia, whether it’s going to conferences, publishing, or going to graduate school – those are outcomes that we see frequently.”

Roekle, for one, plans to continue working as a student researcher in the Linguistics Department. Someday, she too might pursue her doctorate, aided by her experiences in UR@UWM. In the meantime, she’s still waiting for her freshman year to begin.

Students in UR@UWM present their research at the culminating poster session. Photo by Sarah Vickery.
Alum educates about Holocaust

He was in the midst of daunting company: The Claims Conference draws employees from some of the most competitive universities in the world.

“I wanted to show that you can be from Wisconsin, that you can be from a public school, and you can compete,” Rodriguez said. “One year turned into nine years. I have had many experiences and have traveled a lot for this organization. I feel really blessed.”

In fact, Rodriguez has traveled around the world, overseeing grants awarded by the Claims Conference and working with educators to help them improve the way they teach about the Holocaust. His work has taken him from Buenos Aires to London to Athens, and everywhere in between.

Traveling is exciting, but visiting Holocaust-related sites can be harrowing.

“There was just something so awful about the Jewish cemetery ([https://bit.ly/2LjR7Nv](https://bit.ly/2LjR7Nv)) in Warsaw. It hit me hard and I was so angry,” Rodriguez said, recalling his 2016 visit with a group of British teachers to a cemetery desecrated by the Nazis and their collaborators. Headstones had been knocked over and the place was neglected. The descendants of those buried in the cemetery had largely been killed in the Holocaust and few were left to tend the graves.

“None of us had relatives in that cemetery, but that wasn’t the point. No one should have to see their family memorials in such way,” he said.

But, he said, he’s heartened by the teachers who make such journeys. Teaching the Holocaust can be a daunting task, and he’s seen many who want to get better at imparting such heavy historical knowledge to their students.

“There’s a lot of ways to teach about the Holocaust without having to traumatize student with graphic images,” Rodriguez said. “I’ve seen this done. It’s awful. … There’s no shortage of pedagogically sound materials, but teachers need to be introduced the right resources. In the United States, it must be a joint effort between the state, school districts and the teachers.”

And as schools get better at teaching about the Holocaust, the next survey Rodriguez helps to develop just might show Americans have a greater understanding of one of the most defining events of modern history.