The fifty-word assignment challenges students to consolidate their ideas about discussion questions into a single, fifty-word sentence. In class, students often work in groups to help refine group members’ responses or collaborate to write a single fifty-word response for the group.

Students in Dr. Mengerink’s class examine a major question in each class session that encourages them to make connections among important concepts encountered in the readings. For example, a class session on the Gilded Age saw students analyzing the links among capitalism, Social Darwinism, and “The Gospel of Wealth.” For example, her classes have discussed the parallels between the murder of Emmet Till and the recent trial of Michael Dunn, the man at the center of the “loud music” trial in Florida.

The History Department proudly announces the selection of Drs. Yasuko Sato and Mark Mengerink as ACES fellows for the 2013-2014 academic year.

As part of the Quality Enhancement Plan to improve the student learning experience at Lamar, the university implemented ACES five years ago. The Active and Collaborative Engagement for Students (ACES) program trains faculty to develop student-centered learning environments that rely heavily on collaborative and active learning for courses in the core curriculum.

ACES fellows met regularly and spent fall semester 2013 examining their course learning outcomes, determining the best way to measure and assess those outcomes by using active and collaborative learning, and writing a learning-centered syllabus. Fellows have implemented the course redesign for spring semester 2014.

The experience has proven transformative for students and professors alike. Dr. Sato thanks the ACES program for reinvigorating her classroom. “Thanks to the ACES program, I am more passionate about teaching than ever before,” she replied when asked to reflect on how ACES has impacted her teaching.

This renewed passion has reaped huge benefits. Dr. Sato stated she is utilizing in-class group quizzes to help students “consolidate each other’s knowledge.” At the same time, she constructs class discussion questions that encourage students to examine “how the past resonates with real world issues in the present.” For example, her classes have discussed the parallels between the murder of Emmet Till and the recent trial of Michael Dunn, the man at the center of the “loud music” trial in Florida.

Students in Dr. Sato’s introductory American history survey courses only hear one short lecture per week and spend the rest of the week engaged in activities to reinforce key concepts and encourage students to extend those concepts. Dr. Sato encourages students to think about how studying history “should...help build a better tomorrow.”

The students seem grateful for the learning environment cultivated by Dr. Sato. As one student stated, “I never knew history was something like this!”

The students seem grateful for the learning environment cultivated by Dr. Sato. As one student stated, “I never knew history was something like this!”

The ACES experience has also rekindled a passion for teaching in Dr. Mengerink. No longer bound by the more traditional lecture format, Mengerink has started challenging his students to explore history through short, low-stakes writing assignments.

(Cont’d. on page 5)
More than one hundred fifty students, teachers and parents filled the Setzer Center Thursday, February 13th as the Lamar University History Department hosted its annual History Day competition. The day-long event is a regional scholastic competition that qualifies entries from Southeast Texas for the Texas History Day State competition held in Austin at the Bob Bullock State museum. This year that event will be held on May 3rd and 4th. The Lamar History Day regional competition, as well as the Texas History Day event, are in conjunction with the National History Day competition held each summer in Maryland. The regional and state events are overseen by the Texas State Historical Commission.

Thirty entries from the Lamar competition qualified for state. Heading the list was the Individual Paper by Penelope Miller from Livingston Junior High. Her work entitled “Religious Freedom in Public Schools” not only won first place in the Junior Division but was also judges to be the best paper submitted overall in both the Junior and Senior divisions. Ms. Miller received a Barnes and Noble gift card, presented by College of Arts and Sciences Dean Brenda Nichols in recognition of her achievement. In all, Dean Nichols handed out awards to more than fifty entries in all categories of the competition.

In addition to presentation of the winner’s medals and ribbons and announcement of the state qualifiers, the Lamar History department also honored History Department chairperson, Dr. Mary Scheer, for her contributions to the continuing success of the History Day program, which began under her auspices five years ago. This year’s coordinator, faculty member Ken Poston, was pleased with the turnout and said that the event next year will be scheduled around the same date in February. He also expressed his sincere appreciation to all of the department members who helped judge the entries in the various events, pointing out that “everyone willingly volunteers to take on this extra duty each spring.” Special recognition goes to department faculty members Cassandre Durso, Beverly Williams, Christina Wilbur, and the department’s “Gal Friday” Patty Renfro who all went “above and beyond”, according to Mr. Poston, to see that the event ran smoothly.

The Texas Social Studies Supervisors Association selected Emily Kosh, a senior history major currently student teaching, as the 2014 recipient of the Ann Rogers Scholarship.

Named in honor of Ann Rogers, a champion of social studies education in Texas, the award annually goes to support a student completing the student teacher requirement in social studies.

At Lamar, Emily is a member of the Honors Program, Honors Student Association, Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, and Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society. She is passionate about traveling and experiencing different cultures. Over the past five years, Emily has taken three trips to China and three trips to Vietnam to teach English workshops to university students. Her experiences abroad have led to her decision to teach overseas after her graduation in May 2014.

Cody Dailey was selected as history student of the month for February 2014. Cody graduated from Hamshire-Fannett High School in 2010.

Our Standout Students have bright futures.

History Day at Lamar Marks Fifth Anniversary

The awards ceremony. L-R: Cassandre Durso, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences Brenda Nichols, and Ken Poston. Photo courtesy of Tina Kibbe.

“Special recognition goes to department faculty members Cassandre Durso, Beverly Williams, Christina Wilbur, and the department’s “Gal Friday” Patty Renfro...”

Dr. Scheer receiving recognition for her dedication to History Day. Photo courtesy of Tina Kibbe.

Standout Students

The Texas Social Studies Supervisors Association selected Emily Kosh, a senior history major currently student teaching, as the 2014 recipient of the Ann Rogers Scholarship.

Named in honor of Ann Rogers, a champion of social studies education in Texas, the award annually goes to support a student completing the student teacher requirement in social studies.

At Lamar, Emily is a member of the Honors Program, Honors Student Association, Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, and Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society. She is passionate about traveling and experiencing different cultures. Over the past five years, Emily has taken three trips to China and three trips to Vietnam to teach English workshops to university students. Her experiences abroad have led to her decision to teach overseas after her graduation in May 2014.

Cody Dailey was selected as history student of the month for February 2014. Cody graduated from Hamshire-Fannett High School in 2010.

(cont’d. on page 4)
Kudos to Faculty!

HH would like to congratulate assistant professor Dr. Yasuko Sato for receiving a faculty develop leave for the 2014-2015 academic year. Dr. Sato will complete her book, tentatively titled *Neither Past Nor Present: The Pursuit of Classical Antiquity in Early Modern and Modern Japan*.


Dr. Jeff Forret continues his work on slaves and disability. In November, he presented his preliminary research, “‘Deaf & Dumb, Blind, Insane, or Idiotic’: A Disability History of Southern Slavery, 1850-1860,” at an Academic Enhancement workshop on campus. An encore presentation is scheduled for March 20, 2014. In April, Dr. Forret will present “‘Deaf & Dumb, Blind, Insane, or Idiotic’: Slaves, Disability, and Paternalism in the Late Antebellum South,” at a conference of the Association of British American Nineteenth Century Historians at Rice University.

The History Department was well represented in March at the Texas State Historical Association annual conference in San Antonio. Cassandre Durso and Sharon Michelle Courmier, part-time instructors for the department, comprised a panel titled, “Women’s Suffrage & Racial Ambiguity in Progressive-Era Texas.” Ms. Courmier presented “Progress in a Conservative State: Woman’s Suffrage in Texas, 1900-1920,” while Ms. Durso presented “Texas as a Safe Haven & the Dangers of Racial Ambiguity for Italian Immigrants.”

Terry Rioux continues to combine her love of history research and her love for Hollywood. Ed Begley, Jr., famed actor, director, and environmentalist, has agreed to write the forward to her biography of Eddie Albert, actor, WWII hero, and environmentalist. The biography will appear in summer 2015 through BearManor Media.

History and Memories

As historians, the past remains alive for us. As we examine the past, memories from our own past flood our minds. Part-time instructor Tim Knight remembers his childhood visits to Mr. William Daniel Townsend, resident of Ruston, LA. In 1951, Mr. Townsend was the oldest surviving Confederate veteran in Louisiana.

Mr. Knight remembers the veteran admitting to lying about his age to get into the Confederate army. He was only 15, but he liked the grey uniforms and wanted to follow his older brothers’ footsteps.

Mr. Townsend served in Company A of the First Louisiana Infantry Regiment. He participated in battles near Alexandria and Pineville, LA, and was eventually transferred to Vicksburg, MS. Townsend survived the extended siege of that important Mississippi River city, but witnessed many people succumb to starvation.

Townsend credited his survival to a diet consisting occasionally of lizards as well as the assistance of a “saintly woman” who used home remedies to help him recover from a bullet wound to his left arm, saving it from amputation.

After an honorable discharge from the Confederate army, Townsend returned to the family farm near Ruston, where he spent the rest of his life. At age 90, Townsend’s doctor forbid him to continue riding his horse into town because the automobiles made his treks too dangerous.

Townsend died just a few hours short of his 107th birthday.

“...At age 90, Townsend’s doctor forbid him to continue riding his horse into town because the automobiles made his treks too dangerous.”

Tim Knight used to sit on the front porch and visit with Mr. Townsend.
Standout Students (cont’d.)

He is currently a senior history major, with a minor in Communications. He works at Long Architects, Inc. in Beaumont where he enjoys the challenging atmosphere it provides, while allowing him the chance to develop new skills. He loves soccer, and his favorite team is Liverpool F.C. (GO REDS!!) After graduating in December 2014, he plans on attending seminary in Dallas and looks forward to applying the skills he learned as a history major to seminary.

Cody loves meeting new people and exploring different cultures and countries. He has been to France and spent time in the Middle East teaching English and learning the culture. His months in the Middle East greatly influenced him, creating a deeper appreciation of the region’s vast history. He is passionate about world history as well as history of the Middle East. Although uncertain of what the future holds after seminary, he desires to dedicate his life to helping others.

Alecia Ross has been selected as the history student of the month for March 2014. Alecia graduated from Big Walnut High School in 2004. She is originally from Columbus, Ohio, but she moved to Texas in 2008. She is a sophomore history major and has been on the Dean’s List every semester since she began at Lamar University in the spring of 2013.

Alecia attends Lamar full-time and is engaged to be married to a Beaumont Police Officer upon the completion of her Bachelor’s degree. After the wedding, she will return to Lamar as a graduate student to complete her Master’s degree. When she has finished college, she has plans to pursue a career as a writer of both fiction and non-fiction and intends to use her writing to explore her fascination with theology.

Alecia began her college career as an English major but chose to change her major to history when she realized that her love of literature, creative writing, and psychology were more fulfilled by her history courses. She is a speed reader that loves to read just about anything she can get her hands on, other than Shakespeare, and an avid couch potato. She loves/hates to write and is currently working on her first novel that she hopes/prays to have finished this summer. Alecia most enjoys spoiling her beloved animals, a beagle-corgi mix named DeeDee and two gerbils named Artemis and Persephone.

Role-Playing Games and History — Reacting to the Past in the Classroom

Dr. Boone’s History of Ancient Greece and Rome students have been meeting this semester at the rotunda near the Maes building to recreate the assembly at Athens in 403BC. Using the Reacting to the Past program initiated by Barnard College to promote student engagement through role-playing games, she has students read a foundational text and debate its ideas within a political context. This game uses Plato’s Republic as a centerpiece to talk about the nature of democracy and the best form of education in a free society. Students hear arguments and vote on laws, which determines what faction of students will win the game. The competitive nature of the games insures that the class sessions often become contentious and sometimes even loud and unruly. As such, they provide a historically accurate portrayal of the assemblies of democratic Athens.
ACES Fellows (cont’d.)

A lively debate ensued about wealth, poverty, and unregulated capitalism during the late 19th century. Students then attempted to trace parallels between the Gilded Age and American society today, examining through primary sources the rhetoric used to describe poverty and the working poor.

While the ACES program’s emphasis on active and collaborative learning has the potential to revolutionize history education, Mengerink admits to experiencing some growing pains during the implementation in his classes.

Students at times are skeptical about the methodology because it differs from how they have learned history in their earlier academic careers. However, once students experience the benefits of active and collaborative learning, they embrace it.

Both Dr. Sato and Dr. Mengerink agree that their participation in the ACES program has been a particularly rewarding and transformative experience.

Kudos to Faculty! (cont’d.)

Rioux will also serve as consulting producer for a television production using dog-based therapy called “The Canine Cure.”

Dr. Mary L. Scheer, chair of the Lamar History Dept, received the Leadership in Education award from the Texas State Historical Association at their 2014 state meeting held in San Antonio. This award is the highest in the state and recognizes outstanding “enthusiasm for Texas and its history, leadership among your peers, and use of innovative teaching methods to generate student involvement.” According to past president J. P. Bryan, who endowed this award, it was based on her service to the TSHA Education Committee, her promotion and teaching of Texas history while a Fulbright scholar in Germany, and her founding and continued support of History Day in the state of Texas.

Webb Society News

The annual Webb Society Chili Supper provided students and faculty the opportunity to gather and welcome in a chilly (chili?) new year. Attendees were tantalized by homemade chili with all the fixins. Dr. Heather Green Wooten, educator and independent historian, provided the evening’s educational component.

Dr. Wooten discussed her research for her book, *The Polio Years in Texas: Battling a Terrifying Unknown.*

The Lamar Chapter of the Webb Society was recognized as “The Chapter of the Year” for 2013 at the annual Texas State Historical Association meeting held in San Antonio.

President Jamal Lavergne of Nome, TX, accepted the award on behalf of the chapter. Congratulations to the students of the Webb Society for their achievements. Thank you to Dr. Mary Scheer and Ms. Beverly Williams, faculty advisors to the Webb Society, for guiding Lamar’s award-winning chapter!
Edited, compiled, and written by Dr. Mark A. Mengerink, who could not accomplish any of this without assistance from Patty Renfro, the department’s administrative assistant, and colleagues who submitted materials for inclusion in this edition of “History's Happenings,” especially Dr. Yasuko Sato, Dr. Rebecca Boone, Dr. Tina Kibbe, Dr. Mary Scheer, Ken Poston, and Tim Knight.

Have History Department related news to include in the next issue? Praise or complaints? Contact Dr. Mengerink:

mark.mengerink@lamar.edu

Pet Corner

Pet Corner has gone to the dogs! This semester we feature 3 adorable pooches.

Holly and Mickey are the proud owners of department chair Mary Scheer, and her husband, Richard. Holly is a German Shepherd mix who likes to “hunt” the neighborhood cats and squirrels. Mickey was a shelter dog and is named after Mickey Charles Mantle, one of Richard and Mary’s favorite baseball players. Holly and Mickey enjoy a friendly game of wrestling as well as howling at sirens in the neighborhood.

Ella, owner of visiting assistant professor Dr. Tina Kibbe, is a beautiful maltese/shih-tzu mix who loves showing off her collection of fashionable sweaters. Think Ella is just a pretty face? Think again! She helps grade papers and do research as well. But even the best scholar needs a nap every once in a while...

Photos courtesy of Tina Kibbe.