

Spring 2017



Geography

Alumni Newsletter

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Special thanks to our generous donors and ways you can stay involved

UNIVERSITY OF
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Greetings from the Associate Director

Greetings from Lincoln!

It has been another very busy and exciting year in the program. The really big news first. As you are probably aware, the Geography Program has been housed in the School of Natural Resources since 2008. The College of Arts and Sciences has decided to rebuild the program and move it back to City Campus effective July 1, 2017. This has been received as excellent news by our faculty and students, and we are all looking forward to engaging in the rebuilding process. The hope is to develop a strong well-rounded geography program, but to initially focus on strengthening our background in cultural geography and human-environment interactions in global semi-arid and grassland environments including the Great Plains. The first major step in the process is already underway. Three candidates will be interviewing for Geography Program Director in April and early May. As you can guess we are anticipating an eventful year in the program, so stay tuned for updates.



In other news:

Dr. Becky Buller was hired as an Assistant Professor of Practice in fall 2016. Dr. Buller was a long-time lecturer and alumnus of the program, and we are thrilled she has accepted this position. She will be primarily teaching undergraduate courses and serving as the program's advisor.

Dr. David Wishart has published another book, *Great Plains Indians*. His latest effort is the first publication in a series that focuses on the physical and cultural aspects of the Great Plains. The series is a cooperative effort between the Center for Great Plains Studies and the University of Nebraska Press. We also feature a story on his work inside this newsletter.

As you'll see from reading the student spotlights, both our undergraduate and graduate students are interested in an incredibly diverse range of academic and research topics. You'll note that our undergraduate students are particularly active and extremely well-travelled.

We are saying farewell to our physical geography teaching laboratory on the fourth floor of Morrill Hall. This space had been in use for our Introduction to Physical Geography (GEOG 155) labs for over 10 years. The College of Arts and Sciences has recognized that we needed a more functional and updated room, and has created a new lab on the first floor of Burnett Hall. We are anticipating moving into it this summer and expect to teach all of our labs there starting in fall 2017.

Finally, we are hoping that you can join us for this year's Steve Lavin Memorial Seminar and Gamma Theta Upsilon induction ceremony. We are very pleased to welcome back as this year's speaker renowned photographer and UNL Geography alumnus Michael Forsberg. The event will be at 2 p.m. Friday, April 28, in Hardin Hall. Please join us this year if you can.

Wishing you the best.

Paul Hanson
Associate Director
School of Natural Resources
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
phanson2@unl.edu

New book series kicks off with 'Great Plains Indians'



"Great Plains Indians" by University of Nebraska-Lincoln historical geographer David Wishart covers 13,000 years of the fascinating and dynamic history of Natives on the Great Plains.

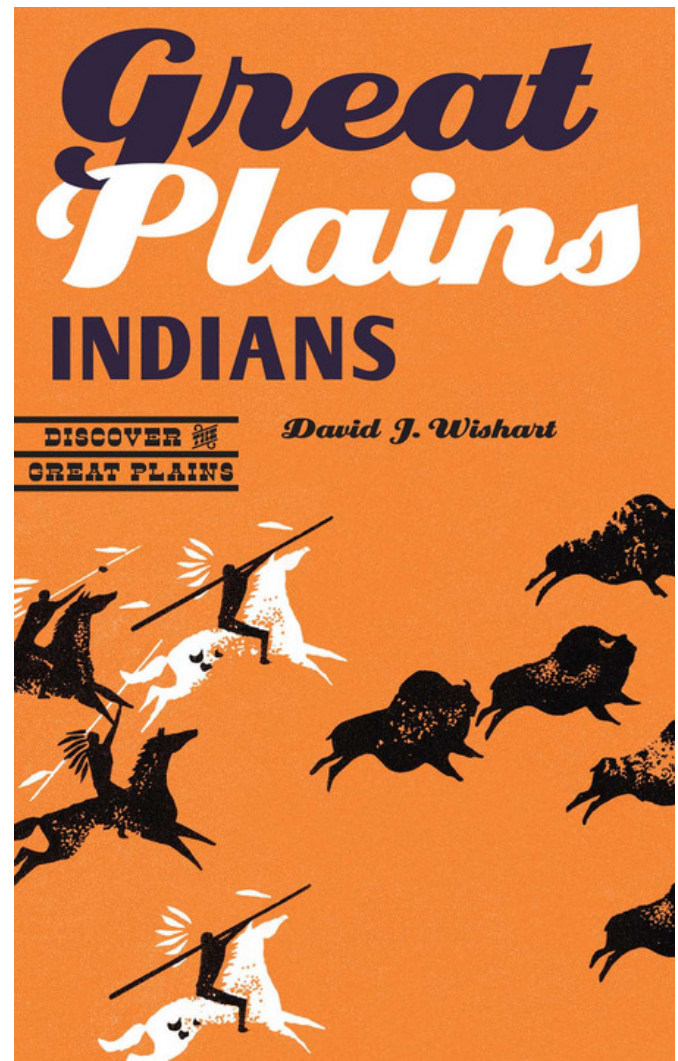
The book is the first in the "Discover the Great Plains" small book series, published by the Center for Great Plains Studies and the University of Nebraska Press. The series will bring a variety of Great Plains topics to a general audience in short, easy-to-digest packages.

The series' authors, experts in their fields, use personal experiences and deep knowledge to create entertaining and authoritative guides to important aspects of the region. The books bridge the gap between the specialized, often-technical writings of scientists and scholars and the interested general reader.

Wishart takes a wide-angle look at the history and lives of Natives on the Great Plains. From hunting and gathering lifestyles to current reservation conditions, Wishart gives readers a compelling introduction to Native life on the Plains.

Elizabeth Fenn, Stubbendieck Book Prize winner and Pulitzer Prize for History winner, says on the book's back cover, "'Great Plains Indians' is a magnificent encapsulation of a story we all need to know."

Forthcoming books include "Great Plains Geology" by Robert Diffendal, research geologist emeritus, School of Natural Resources; "Great Plains Bison" by Dan O'Brien, wildlife biologist and bison rancher; "Great Plains Literature" by Linda Pratt, UNL professor emeritus, English; "Great Plains Weather" by Ken Dewey, applied climate science mission area leader, School of Natural Resources; "Great Plains Politics" by Peter Longo, political science professor at the University of Nebraska at Kearney; and "Great Plains Birds" by Larkin Powell, professor, School of Natural Resources.



Archer uses geography to examine 2012 election

If there's one thing J. Clark Archer knows – and knows well – it's elections.

"I've been writing about elections for 35 years," said Archer, professor of geography. "Before I became a geographer, my undergraduate degree was in political science, so I had a little bit of background from that."

Archer's "Historical Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, 1788-2004" was named Best Single-Volume Reference in Humanities & Social Sciences for 2006 by the Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division of the Association of American Publishers, and was on the Library Journal's Best Reference List for 2006. His "Atlas of American Politics, 1960-2000" was named Choice Magazine's Outstanding Academic Title for 2003 by the Association of College and Research Libraries.

"Elections are an empirical researcher's dream because there's just an enormous amount of data, and the data become available fairly frequently," Archer said. "It's not quite as data-driven as, let's say, climatology. Election data tend to be obviously episodic – but there's a lot of it."

Archer's latest publication, "Atlas of the 2012 Elections," employs a geographical perspective to analyze virtually every aspect of the 2012 U.S. presidential election, in addition to selected state and local elections.

"I've been very interested in research that involves various kinds of quantitative methods and mapping," Archer said. "So some of the tools and techniques that I learned as a graduate student and developed later on, in terms of analysis, are very applicable to the geography of elections."

Archer and Robert H. Watrel, associate professor at South Dakota State University, produced most of the maps featured in the atlas, which is divided into nine chapters. Each chapter contains maps and accompanying narratives. Technical appendices describe the data sources along with cartographic and analytical procedures.



Of the atlas' 40 contributors, six earned doctoral degrees in geography from UNL. "If I knew that they knew something about the subject, then they had a higher chance of being invited to contribute," Archer said.

The contributors provide a comprehensive and detailed assessment of many election issues and results including presidential primaries; newspaper endorsements and campaign stops; the results of the presidential election at regional and national levels; and key voting patterns by race and ethnicity, religion, occupational groups, age and poverty.

Moving beyond the national race, the atlas examines important senatorial and gubernatorial races and considers selected state referenda including the marijuana legalization votes in Colorado and Washington and same-sex marriage referenda in Maryland, Washington, Colorado and Minnesota. The voting patterns identified in 2012 elections are also compared to earlier contests to provide political and geographic context over time.

"These things fit together pretty nicely because there's a lot of numerical data, a lot of locational and geographical patterns, and various kinds of statistics that can be applied to try and extract information," Archer said.

For instance, maps illustrating campaign stops of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates during the week leading up to Election Day indicate that key battleground states like Iowa, Florida and Ohio were fought over until the eleventh hour.

"Because an election is largely determined in states that could go one way or the other, states that are likely to be either very Republican or very Democratic – the candidates won't visit them because they're wasting resources," Archer said. "The folks who guide these campaigns do some analyses that are somewhat similar to what we've done here. There seems to be a fair number of people who are interested in maps of elections."

"Atlas of the 2012 Elections" is available for purchase from the Nebraska Maps and More Store in Hardin Hall. The book can also be purchased online and through Amazon.com. Phone orders are available at 402-472-3471.

SEMINAR SERIES

Radical Presence: Black Faces, White Spaces & Other Stories of Possibility

February 2, 2017 | 3:30pm

Carolyn Finney, Professor in Geography, University of Kentucky.

In her recently published book, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* (UNC Press), Finney explores the complexities and contradictions of the African American environmental relationship. Drawing on “green” conversations with black people from around the country, Finney considers the power of resistance and resilience in the emergence of creative responses to environmental and social challenges in our cities and beyond.



Human Trafficking in the Great Plains

March 14, 2017 | 3:30pm

Becky Buller, Geographer, School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Many people—including some victims, survivors, service providers, and law officials—have recognized that human trafficking regularly takes place within the contemporary Great Plains. Yet, for the most part, the general public is still largely unaware of the phenomenon. This talk, with special emphasis on Nebraska, will briefly introduce the basics of human trafficking in the Great Plains, its impact on the region, and practical ways in which individuals can realize, recognize, and respond.



Could the People of the Great Plains Have Distinctive Character Traits?

April 20, 2017 | 3:30pm

John Hibbing, Foundation Regent Professor, Political Science.

Is it possible that just by residing in the Great Plains, we have our own set of deep and distinct identities, values, philosophies, creeds, and personalities? Based on a recent journal article in *Great Plains Research*, John Hibbing explores how we might answer these questions and what it says about the Great Plains as a region. Hibbing studies how biological variations change the way people respond to politics and the environment. Hibbing is a Foundation Regent University Professor in Political Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



2016 LAVIN SEMINAR

Former faculty member honored with cartography lecture

The memory of Dr. Steve Lavin, a former University of Nebraska-Lincoln geography professor, was honored Friday.

Dozens gathered in 163 Hardin Hall for Dr. Michael Peterson's presentation "Geography and Cartography in an Era of American Exceptionalism" as part of the annual Steve Lavin Memorial Seminar. Peterson is a professor in the Department of Geography/Geology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Peterson is a specialist in cartography, as Lavin was.

"Steve and I had very similar research interests," Peterson said at the beginning of his talk. Both set out to research the information maps convey and how to make it better.

Lavin ended up at UNL and spent three decades in the geography department, several as the chair. He died of cancer in 2011. Peterson ended up at UNO and has traveled the world in his role as professor. Those travels have shaped his lectures in the classroom and out.

"How do you teach (cartography and geography) if the students think they come from the best country?" Peterson asked the crowd. American Exceptionalism is just that: the idea that the United States' history and mission make it unique and therefore is superior to other countries.

Part of that is reflected in his classroom. Peterson described the changes his course textbook has taken since he started at UNO in 1982. His original class used a book, "Fundamentals in Geography," and there was nothing in it of world geography.

Over the next two decades, Peterson saw world geography return to the book and classrooms, only to see that shrink increasingly in the years since 9/11. That isolation is both happenstance and self-imposed, Peterson said, but the result is a disservice to students.

Students should be exposed to the best knowledge that other countries offer; mistakes made elsewhere also have the potential to teach here.

"Go someplace where you are the minority," Peterson urged. "See the world differently."

Peterson's lecture was part of a two-day annual event that honors Lavin. This year's event included a Peace Corps OpenStreet Mapathon, "Mapping in the Cloud" workshop and 2016 Gamma Theta Upsilon reception and induction ceremony.



2017 Lavin Seminar

Michael Forsberg, well-known Nebraska conservationist and wildlife photographer, will give the 2017 Lavin Seminar at 2 p.m. April 28 at Hardin Hall Auditorium. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Geography graduate will present "Flyover Country: A photographer's 20-year journey into the heart of North America".

▼ Jacob Lambert



My name is Jacob Lambert and I am a senior Geography major. Last summer I studied abroad in Amman, Jordan. While in Jordan I studied Arabic language and did independent research on the geography of Jordan. Living abroad for a summer was definitely a highlight of my undergraduate experience because it gave me a new perspective on what life is like in other cultures. Traveling and learning in new environments is in my opinion the best way to learn, and I would strongly encourage everyone to travel whenever they can!



▼ Carissa Raymond

Carissa Raymond, a senior geography and geology major, spent this last summer doing fieldwork in Wyoming. She first took part in UNL's intensive geology field camp in May and June, learning advanced field methods and studying landforms and structures while traveling through the Bighorn Mountains, Wind Rivers, and the Grand Tetons.

For the remainder of the summer she continued to travel around Wyoming, unearthing mammal fossils for the Nebraska State Museum. This was Carissa's third

summer collecting for the museum, working in the badlands of both Wyoming and New Mexico, where she previously discovered a new genus.

This fall, Raymond began a UCARE-funded project investigating the impact of stabilization practices on streambank erosion, her second project with the program. Her previous UCARE work with Paul Hanson, investigating the formation of dunes near the Platte River, resulted in two SNR publications this year. Carissa plans to further her education with master's degree in the fall, continuing to research geomorphology.



► Madison Lockhorn

This last semester, I was fortunate enough to participate in the 2017 Deutsch in Deutschland Program to study German in Berlin, Germany.

Through this program I have had the opportunity to live with a host family, go to a school with students from all over the world, and learn about the German culture. From living in Berlin, I have been able to put a face with history. I have met people who grew up on both sides of the Berlin wall and have listened to their experiences. Studying in Berlin as a geographer has helped me see the complexities of how a city that was split for so long able to unify and become a leading city in the European Union.





▼ Derek Juracek

In the past year, I have been fortunate to work with the National Forest Service as a Wilderness Ranger in Meeker, Colorado. I am also currently studying abroad for a semester in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. In Colorado, I worked with a small crew of four and was responsible for clearing the trails from fallen trees and conducting solitude monitoring. My time in Port Elizabeth, consists of rock climbing, hiking, discovering new cultures as well as new places. When I'm not on long-term trips I take as many days off as I can to go to Utah, Colorado, Arizona or wherever I can make it to.

My name is Cody Vitek, and during the summer of 2016 I was lucky enough to study abroad in New Zealand! My trip lasted three weeks long, and then I stayed an extra week to travel the two islands. I studied at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand which is located on the South Island. While I was there I took two courses, one on the Maori culture and one on the landscape of the South Island. During these courses, we took several field trips to locations across the island. For the Maori class we went to a local Marae which is their meeting grounds and place of worship. We stayed there for a whole day and learned about their customs. For the southern landscape class we took a field trip to the Southern Alps. Not only did we get to travel along the great mountains, but we also got to visit the Tasman Glacier. The Tasman Glacier is the largest glacier on the South Island and is currently retreating at a high rate. Our program coordinator for the entire trip used to be a ranger and allowed us to see some great sites as well. We got to visit the reserves and see the endangered yellow-eyed penguins as well as the little blue penguins! On one of the beaches our coordinator took us too, we actually walked next to seals and we were so close we could almost touch them! It was a great experience and I learned a lot from those courses.

▼ Cody Vitek



After my courses were done, I packed up and traveled the islands. I rented a car with a fellow student and traveled across both the northern and southern island. One of the first stops I made was Queenstown which is a tourist town and location. While I was there I bungee jumped off a bridge! The next major stop I made was Milford Sound and I took a cruise to look at the beautiful scenery. Milford Sound is rated one of the best tracks in the world because of how gorgeous it is. After traveling on the southern island for a few days, I took a ferry across to the northern island. On the North Island I went to a couple locations where they filmed the movie Lord of the Rings. I visited Mount Doom and was actually able to climb Mount Sunday where they did some filming as well. On my last day in New Zealand I visited Auckland which is located near the top of the North Island. While there I visited the numerous volcanic craters and the most infamous Lord of the Rings location, The Shire. The entire trip was a life changing adventure, and I was able to gain so much from visiting and learning about a different culture. I would definitely recommend traveling abroad to everyone because not only is it a great experience, but it also helps you to appreciate the different places and cultures that this planet has to offer.

▼ Ashley Larsen



My thesis project will evaluate the morphology of a dune field located in the Nebraska Sand Hills in Brown and Cherry counties. An original map depicts the study area as being comprised of linear dunes. However, LiDAR images reveal a unique “coupling” phenomenon where each dune has another smaller counterpart, which formed upwind of the larger one. These pairs of dunes have not yet been identified in other types of dunes in Nebraska and provide reason to question the initial dune classification. We will test whether these are in fact linears, or they may actually be transverse dunes. In order to do this, we will identify the primary wind directions that formed the dunes through both their surficial morphology and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR). We will also extract cores to date the dune fills with Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL). This technique is used to estimate the last times sand grains were exposed to sunlight, allowing us to date the activation history of the dunes. Previously, OSL has been successfully used in similar studies in the Nebraska Sand Hills and other major dune fields in the world. We intend to discover the morphology of these dunes and assess the climate in which they formed.

Andrew Husa ►

I’m writing my thesis on the historical geography of six and eight-man football in Nebraska, with a focus on the relationship between rural depopulation and reduced-player football. My writing discusses how school closings, consolidations, and co-operative sports teams create a high school football landscape that reflects areas of declining population.



▲ Victoria Alapo

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Geography studying the historical geography of Pre-Colonial Africa. My dissertation topic is, “The Spatial Organization of Pre-Colonial African Kingdoms: A Comparison of the Empires of Ethiopia & Mali”. The aim of the research is to analyze work that has been done by historians and other academics, in an effort to show how the existing body of work can be conducted from a Geographer’s point of view. Not only that, but I will include the very important and unique perspective of an African academic’s vantage point; that is, the viewpoint of a Historical Geographer, as it were, “From the Inside Looking Out”. This research is important because until fairly recently, historical accounts given by Europeans or Westerners of non-European societies have been tainted with a Western bias; this research will show that Sub-Saharan Africa did indeed have great civilizations during the Pre-Colonial Era (i.e. the period prior to European colonization in 1884).

▼ Theresa Glanz



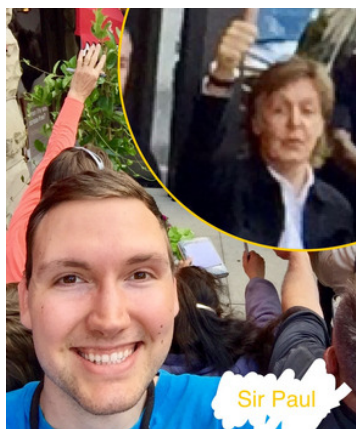
I am a PhD student studying federal land-use policy and resettlement in the Great Plains during the New Deal Years between 1933-1941. Until 1933 aid to United States citizens was largely a function of the local and state governments who themselves were cash poor due to the impact the depression had on tax revenues. It was apparent that greater federal involvement was required to move the country out of the Great Depression. However President Franklin D. Roosevelt believed that the focus of the national recovery had to be on more than just economic recovery as his travels through the United States during his presidential campaign illustrated the diverse needs of the population. Due to the effects of unemployment in the urban centers and the overproduction of large areas of farm land it was determined that the federal government needed to become involved in land use planning. Beginning in 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized a series of programs aimed at rectifying the economic and environmental issues facing the United States.

The Subsistence Homesteads program, while not considered a relief program, was directed at improving the economic and environmental situation of stranded populations. The Subsistence Homestead Act was a policy that encouraged both an urban to semi-rural resettlement and a rural to rural resettlement plan. The policy aimed to discover if it was possible to stabilize household economies and encourage social growth through the experimental development of subsistence communities. This dissertation will add to the limited literature on the origins and outcomes of the Subsistence Homestead Act by first describing the origins of the program and the implementation process which includes a summary of the projects that were approved and completed in the United States. The paper will then focus on the projects that were located in the state of Nebraska and will conclude with an examination of the status of these communities as they stand today.

My thesis is designed to assess landslide susceptibility in Knox County, Nebraska. Six factors were chosen to assess the susceptibility of Knox County. They were slope degrees, slope curvature, slope aspect, parent material, land cover, and soil series. Data were assessed using a quantitative approach using logistic regression within a geographic information system (GIS). Knox County is located in northeastern Nebraska, sharing a northern border with Missouri River valley. The Missouri River valley has significant changes in relief, gradually receding into rolling loess hills further to the south and southeast of the county. Previous investigations in the region (mostly South Dakota) indicate the Cretaceous shale parent material is a major contributing factor in landslide development. Physical map units were acquired to differentiate the soil type and parent material. The land cover map from the National Land Cover Database of 2006 was clipped to the borders of Knox County. DEMs derived from LiDAR were analyzed in GIS to provide slope degree, curvature, and aspect information. Logistic regression data was extracted from randomly selected points inside landslide scarps that were heads up digitized as polygons within GIS. All six factors were reclassified by their odds ratios and the combination of factors was applied to produce a resultant map to show landslide susceptibility. The resultant map locates and distinguishes areas that are more likely to incur landslide activity or areas that have already experienced a significant amount of landslides.

▼ Christian Cruz





Sir Paul

◀ Steven Ritzdorf

I research ethnic communities in the United States. I research them using quantitative techniques, such as visualizing demographic data with Geographic Information Systems, and qualitative techniques such as sensory and historical description. My goal is to provide a thoughtful explication of these places.

During my first coastal archaeological experience in the Atacama Desert in northern Chile, I was exposed to a place like no other. Its barren landscape spoke of resource scarcity and limited water availability. Life in general was not present once away from the littoral zone and the few rivers flowing from the Andes to the coast. And yet the ancient people who occupied the coastal shores, the foothills, and higher elevations of the Andes during the Late Pleistocene and Holocene understood the landscape and the limitations it posed. That experience led me to pursue the question of how prehistoric people adapted to the driest desert in the world and were able to develop agriculture there.

My present research is focused on identifying geomorphic markers of climatic events that may have influenced the transition from coastal fishermen (Chinchorro culture 7,000 BP-3,500 BP) to full time agriculturalists in the interior during the Alto Ramirez period (3,500 BP-1,500 BP). Aeolian sediments and landforms are often used as paleoenvironmental proxies and these deposits in the Atacama can be dated using OSL techniques to put together perhaps a 5,000 year record of climate change in the region.

I believe that the instability that has been observed in the archaeological record should correlate with climatic events that are observable in the landscape. For instance, dramatic climatic shifts between ca. 3,500 and 2,000 BP may have caused changes in the use of the agricultural fields and their eventual abandonment. Questions remain about when people began practicing agriculture and what types of domestic plants were grown in the Atacama Desert. Pollen and starch analyses of materials derived from sediments, artifacts, and coprolites, by distinguishing between environmental and economic pollen, will greatly enhance an understanding of how the peoples of the Atacama adjusted to environmental change.

▼ Luz Ramirez de Bryson



◀ Roy Yao

My thesis is to analyze the spatial pattern of ethnic change in the Chicago Metropolitan Area from 2000 to 2015. African American, Hispanic and Asian as the three largest ethnic groups in Chicago were studied in the thesis. Additionally, racial segregation change in Chicago between each ethnic group is also being discussed and how the change in segregation means to the society.





RECENT GRADUATES

B.A./B.S. Degrees 2014-2016

Lee, Kun-Yuan

Miller, Adam

McBride, Kyle

Wilcox, Daniel

Burg, Tyler

Kelebit, Amanda

Meier, Derrick

Weyers, Ashley

Barrett, Ryan

Bolin, Brooke

Dittmer, Cole

Marean, Marcus

Peck, Beth

Poarch, Jonathan

Venteicher, Rachel

Wagoner, Nicholas

Webster, Emma

Esquitin, Gabrielle

Husa, Andrew

Dearie, Kory

Nelson, Zachary

Allen, Melissa

Cox, Nathaniel

Fischer, Amariah

Holloway, Benjamin

Ritzdorf, Steven

Maddox, Mackenna

M.A. Degrees 2013-2016

McMillan, Kevin

"Geographic Variation of Health Care Spending on Heart Failure in Metropolitan Areas"

Advised by Professor James Merchant

Grosso, David

"Using GIS to Assess Firearm Thefts, Recoveries and Crimes in Lincoln, Nebraska"

Advised by Professor James Merchant

Yeik, Travis

"Proximal Sensing as a Means of Characterizing of Phragmites Australis"

Advised by Professor Donald Rundquist

Baskerville, Brian

"Building a GIS Model to Assess Agritourism Potential"

Advised by Professor James Merchant

Bruhler, Jacob

"Dating Late Quaternary Alluvial Fills in the Platte River Valley Using Optically Stimulated Luminescence Dating"

Advised by Professor Paul Hanson



RECENT GRADUATES

Ph.D. Degrees 2013-2016

Cannon, Molly

"Exploring the Nature of Space for Human Behavior in Ordinary Structured Environments"

Advised by Professor Douglas Amedeo

Cartlidge, Matthew

"The Impact of Subdivisions Designed for Conservation on Prime Farmland Conversion"

Advised by Professor David Wishart

Barnett, Ashley

"We Shall Meet Beyond the River": An Analysis of the Deathscape of Brownville, Nebraska"

Advised by Professor David J. Wishart

Tegeder, Gabrielle

"A Research Framework for the Study of Exotic Pet Mammals in the USA"

Advised by Professors Paul Hanson and Christina Dando

Kalibo, Humphrey

"Simple, Novel Approaches to Investigating Biophysical Characteristics of Individual Mid-Latitude Deciduous Trees"

Advised by Professor Donald C. Rundquist



GAMMA THETA UPSILON Alpha Phi Chapter



2016 Inductees

(left to right) Roy Tianran Yao, Zachary T. Olson, Jesse Reynolds, Taylor R. Cook, and Jacob Lambert.

Not pictured: Jacob E. Baker, Margaret Davenport, Andrew R. Fornoff, Mackenna Rose Maddox, Elizabeth A. Rice, Rob Toth, and Matthew Weidner.



2015 Inductees

(left to right) Brooke Bolin, Zachary Nelson, Nathaniel Cox, Andrew Husa, Cole Chisam, and Marc Marean.

Not pictured: Gabrielle K. Esquitin, Justin Mueller, and Rachel Marie Venteicher.

Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) is an international honor society in geography. GTU was founded in 1928 and became a national organization in 1931. UNL's Alpha Phi Chapter was established on December 9, 1952 and is represented through the activities of the Geography Student Organization (GSO).

Members of GTU share a career interest in geography and have qualified for membership by achieving excellence in academics.

GTU's goals are:

To further professional interest in Geography by affording a common organization for those interested in the field.

To strengthen student and professional training through academic experiences in addition to those of the classroom and laboratory.

To advance the status of Geography as a cultural and practical discipline for study and investigation.

To encourage student research of high quality, and to promote an outlet for publication.

To create and administer funds for furthering graduate study and/or research in the field of Geography.

To encourage members to apply geographic knowledge and skills in service to humankind.

Members of GTU have met academic requirements and share a background and interest in geography. To be eligible, students must complete a minimum of three geography courses with a 3.3 GPA, have a 3.3 GPA overall, and have completed at least three semesters (36 hours) of college course work. Membership forms are sent to eligible students each spring and are inducted during a ceremony held in April.

GEOGRAPHY STUDENT ORGANIZATION



The missions of the Geography Student Organization are to serve as a vehicle for representation of geography students; to promote interaction and unity among different fields of interest within the program; to further the intellectual, cultural, social and professional interests of the program's students; and to support and assist in geographical awareness, on campus and in the community.

2016-2017 Officers

President: Rob Toth

Vice President/Treasurer: Andrew Husa

Social Coordinator/Secretary: Drew Neill

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Buller



UNL professor leads talk on local human trafficking

University of Nebraska–Lincoln professor Dr. Becky Buller said the College World Series, the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and the annual Nebraska State Fair are hotspots for human trafficking.

This dispels the common notion that human trafficking doesn't occur close to home.

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery that involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act.

The Center for Great Plains Studies, located across the street from the Lied Center, continued their Paul A. Olsen Seminar series on March 14 with a community talk titled "Human Trafficking in the Great Plains." The goal of these seminars is to invite members of the community to unite and discuss key topics relating to the Great Plains.

The talk was led by Buller – an assistant professor of practice in the UNL geography department focusing on cultural and historical geography within the Great Plains.

Katie Nieland, assistant director at the Center for Great Plains Studies, said she believes human trafficking in the Great Plains is an important topic to discuss.

"As an interdisciplinary center, we have a mission to talk about regional, timely issues and research in the Great Plains," Nieland said. "Human trafficking definitely falls into this category."

Buller began teaching a course on human trafficking in the Great Plains in summer 2014 as a more effective way to spread awareness to local modern-day slavery.

"I had always taught about elements of human trafficking in a variety of my classes," Buller said. "As time went on, people became more aware that it happens everywhere, even in rural Nebraska and the Great Plains. The frequency hasn't necessarily increased, simply people's awareness of it has increased."

Buller's talk focused on many aspects of human trafficking in the Great Plains, which included where and how trafficking is conducted, ongoing research and common misconceptions associated with human trafficking.

One common misconception Buller said with human trafficking in general is the use and idea of the word "slavery." To Buller, using the word "slavery" can give people false conceptions of what modern-day slavery truly is -- wrongly connecting it with an outdated belief of slavery that occurred centuries ago.

"Often people, when they talk about slavery, have a certain timeframe and a certain type of people-group in mind," Buller said. "Sometimes people won't listen when you talk about modern-day slavery because they have preconceptions about what it involves and where it exists. When you don't use the labels and just use the characteristics, people are more open to listening."

During the talk, Buller highlighted the naivety regarding human trafficking. Buller said many people, including law enforcement, are not fully aware of all the characteristics and symptoms associated with human trafficking.

Human trafficking manifests itself in many ways, Buller said, and it can be hard to identify certain characteristics and classify those as slavery.

"Every individual in any situation has a slightly different combination of red flags," Buller said. "Sometimes even human trafficking victims and survivors don't self-identify simply because they know they've been oppressed and badly beaten, but they haven't put the pieces of the puzzle together themselves."

Buller also said warning signs are often ignored or misclassified. People generally don't believe that human trafficking can occur in their city, in their rural town or even in their own neighborhood.

"It happens everywhere," Buller said. "It happens everywhere that there is a demand, no matter the population."

Buller pointed to trafficking that occurs every day in local areas, as well as trafficking that occurs during large special events.

These special events, such as the College World Series and state fairs, bring in many people with greater-than-normal amounts of both supply and demand, Buller said, which leads to a substantial increase in human trafficking.

Another stereotype Buller sought to dispel was the notion that victims of human trafficking are brought to local areas or large events from overseas. In fact, Buller said, research shows that many victims are taken and transported domestically from other states through circuits.

"You hear about a variety of situations where people are brought under the control of their traffickers," Buller said. "They can be trafficked in place, everyday trafficking or they can be taken and travelled on circuits [across the country]."

Public awareness on human trafficking has steadily increased in recent years, according to Buller.

Unfortunately, Buller said, there is still an incredible amount of work to be done from a judicial standpoint to properly begin eliminating human trafficking in the Great Plains.

"We may have these laws [on human trafficking], but when traffickers are being arrested or convicted under these specific laws, the penalties still aren't enough," Buller said. "It's great that public awareness has been increasing in the last few years and that we're starting to make strides with service providers and law enforcement, but we're just at the tip of iceberg."

Buller said the best way to combat human trafficking in your community is to continue the discussion and learn to recognize the different forms that it can take within a society.

"It's happening all the time in broad daylight, literally in broad daylight," Buller said. "People don't recognize all the clues and put them together. More and more people in their professional niche need to continue to talk about it and learn more, so that we can be a better and more informed citizenry."

Beyond the Classroom



Field Tour of the Western Great Plains and Southern Rocky Mountains

Paul Hanson, associate director of UNL's School of Natural Resources, is offering students the chance to venture outside the classroom for a unique learning opportunity.

"This course is a field tour of natural environments of the western portion of the southern Great Plains and the southern Rocky Mountains of Colorado and New Mexico," Hanson said. "This field tour was designed to show students some similarities and differences between Nebraska's landscape and that of regions further south."

The two-credit course, GEOG 491/891: Geography Field Tour of the Western Great Plains and Southern Rocky Mountains, takes place in the spring after the end of semester.

"We will study landscapes with an emphasis on how they evolved and how humans have adapted to them," Hanson said.

Students will visit the Carlsbad Caverns, Great Sand Dunes National Park, Rio Grande Rift Valley, Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the White Sands National Monument.

"Some of the more interesting portions of the trip will focus on areas that could not be farmed, forested or mined," Hanson said. "We'll experience ancient volcanic terrains, tour Carlsbad Caverns and visit three active dunefields."

Part of Hanson's research focuses on understanding how dunefields, such as the Nebraska Sandhills, were created and how they evolved through time.

While most of the dunes in Nebraska and the surrounding central Great Plains are stabilized by grass cover, the class will visit three active dunefields on this trip, allowing students to see how sand dunes migrate and how they create unique ecosystems.

"I enjoy learning about things as they occur and not always mapping out what we will discuss," Hanson said. "We pull the vehicles over when we find something unique or unexpected, and in my experience these are often some of the highlights of the trip."



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