

rare research experience in

DUSTY OLD BOOKS

Led by professor, students travel to Spain to read centuries-old manuscripts

Spring Break is often a time for students to relax at home, go on a beach vacation with friends, or maybe complete a short internship. However, at the College many students had the opportunity to conduct one-of-a-kind research during the usual week of break. Supported by the Mellon Foundation through the Charles Center, history professor LuAnn Homza and three undergraduate students Amanda Scott, Eric Schmalz, and Kimberly Bassett traveled to Pamplona, Spain in the Navarre region to conduct research on early modern Spain.

However, the students didn't simply fly over the ocean and get to work. The entire research experience began in the fall semester with weekly paleography-reading classes. "Professor Homza personally lead a weekly paleography seminar to teach Amanda, Kim and me how to read and translate the early modern calligraphy we were confronted with in Navarra," Schmalz said. "She made photocopies of actual archival texts, which we studied each week and went over with her on a regular basis. Additionally, Professor Homza taught us other techniques in preparation for such work, such as what to bring to the archives and what sections of each text to focus on while we were there."

The students read and transcribed material at the two main archives in Pamplona: the Archivo General de Navarra (AGN) and the Archivo Diocesano de Pamplona (ADP). The students learned to balance their time and work like professional historians in both archives. "By working with these documents in the same way that professional historians do, I became aware of many of the challenges and rewards of such investigation on a level I simply could not have before," Schmalz said. "I learned many practical things, such as how the condition of the document is a major factor in whether I can realistically work it. Finally, the staff at the AGN and the ADP were extremely helpful and friendly. I am particularly grateful for the generous assistance of Peio Monteano, archivist of the AGN, and Don José Luis Sales Tirapu, the archivist of the ADP. Both men earned my deep admiration and without their support, I simply could not have had the experience I did."

Although all the students worked on different cases, all three students believed the research experience shaped their future career choices. "I know that I have learned a lot and that what I have learned will be useful and foundational for more advanced studies," senior Amanda Scott said. "I am going to grad school now!"

>Meredith Howard

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In the belltower of the Cathedral of Pamplona, researchers Amanda Scott, Eric Schmalz, and Kimberly Bassett ring "Maria," the second-largest bell in Spain, under the direction of the Diocesan Archive Director Don Jose Luis Sales Tirapu. Although the students were busy with their research in two archives, they made time to tour the old cathedral.



Photo courtesy of LuAnn Homza.

>humanitiesinshort

With four of the seven General Education Requirement categories falling into the humanities realm, the majority of the College's courses focused on the study of the human condition.

The graduate programs in the liberal arts received some of the highest commendations. The US World Report ranked the College's U.S. Colonial History within the top four of the country in 2009.

Some of the unusual majors offered in the liberal arts category included a major in Africana Studies, Literary and Cultural Studies, and Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

The Interdisciplinary Degree Program grew in popularity as students sought studies that combined their many interests. The Charles Center helped these students to create a multifaceted degree.