AUP Students Travel to Texas

This past June, eight AUP students travelled to Texas to volunteer at Karnes Detention Facility, located in a rural patch of land in southern Texas, where migrants are detained. The students who participated were all History or History, Law, and Society (HLS) majors: Sydney Scarpa ’20 (HLS), Paula Aguirre ’21 (HLS), Eva Bonsignour ’20 (HLS), Safira Newton Matza ’20 (History), Alessandra Campbell ’20 (HLS), Sofia Kaligorou ’19 (HLS and ICP), Lauren Nanes ’21 (HLS and Journalism), and Indigo Golub ’20 (HLS & MEP).

Led by Professors Kuo and Wu, students got a firsthand glimpse of what detained migrants endure. They learned both about the legal process itself as well as the nature of immigration to the US. Among their wide-ranging duties, students did intake, gathered information, helped prepare asylum seekers for interviews with asylum officer, drafted legal declarations, and gave guidance to migrants who were being released. The bulk of their work was “CFI prep,” or “Credible Fear Interview.” By law, an asylum seeker needs to prove that he or she face imminent danger of being persecuted on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group, or political opinion if not granted asylum in the US. Students worked one-on-one with detained migrants, helping to prepare them for their interviews with asylum officers.

Students report that some of the most difficult work was having to tell a detained migrant that he or she has been denied asylum and will be deported. However, students then were also able to work on appeals for these decisions, as they were tasked with writing legal declarations that were submitted to immigration judges.

Students worked grueling shifts at Karnes from 9 AM to 8 PM Monday through Friday. These shifts do not include the one hour commute from San Antonio to Karnes, or the many late nights—often past midnight—spent drafting and submitting legal notes on the cases.
The planning of this project began over a year ago. Last summer, Professors Kuo and Wu—disturbed, moved, and compelled by stories of children being separated at the border—traveled together to Texas to volunteer at RAICES (Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services) for a month. RAICES, one of the America's leading non-profits, provides legal services to detained migrants and also leads social actions to defend the rights of migrants.

Professors Kuo and Wu volunteered at a detention center, where they helped recently reunited families apply for asylum. Mobilized by their experience, Profs. Kuo and Wu told RAICES staff that their college students at AUP would bring energy and passion if given the opportunity to volunteer. This planted the seed for a partnership with AUP. AUP’s George and Irena Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention has generously helped support the travel and work of the students.

Indigo Golub ’20, a double major in History, Law, and Society and Middle Eastern_pluralities, said that for her the most difficult aspect of her time with RAICES was the endurance it required: “My time volunteering with RAICES required incredible stamina. I put a lot of effort into each legal form, case, and individual. Given the importance of the work, I felt that every job, whether it be a photocopy or a declaration, deserved my full attention and effort. This, of course, made the days extremely exhausting. By 8 pm, I was emotionally and physically drained.” Indigo also said that the work helped her understand the challenges of doing direct legal aid counseling-based. Students with Spanish-speaking fluency and/or interest in doing direct services work with migrants are especially welcome to apply. Indigo and Alessandra received word that their declaration was a success on an hour car ride to the detention center. Two days later, Indigo and Alessandra received word that their declaration was a success and the young woman was granted asylum by the judge. Indigo “felt genuine pride for the asylum seeker, for Alessandra, and myself. It was truly a team effort and I absolutely relished the empowerment we shared.”

Despite the arduous and sometimes daunting nature of their work, students had their share of success as well. Alessandra Campbell ’20, an HLS major and our current elected Student Government Representative for the History Department, experienced tangible victory when she took a case involving a young woman from El Salvador. With the guidance of Professor Kuo, she worked tirelessly past midnight drafting a declaration, a legal document that is submitted to an immigration judge in order to appeal the asylum officer’s denial. The declaration stated the legal case for asylum, which involved religious discrimination and harassment. In the morning, Indigo then helped Alessandra revise the declaration, fervently typing and proof-reading on the one-hour car ride to the detention center. Two days later, Indigo and Alessandra received word that their declaration was a success and the young woman was granted asylum by the judge. Indigo “felt genuine pride for the asylum seeker, for Alessandra, and myself. It was truly a team effort and I absolutely relished the empowerment we shared.”

To find out more about RAICES and their mission, head to www.raicestexas.org

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JASMINE COWEN & TEACHING IN TAIWAN

AUP student Jasmine Cowen ’21, a double major in History and Global Communications and one of the two Communications Directors for the HI/HLS Executive Board, returned to Taiwan for the summer. Jasmine said she was inspired to do so after traveling in March with the AUP History department as a part of the revolutionary class called “Practicing Democracy in Taiwan,” led by Professors Kuo and Wu. “During our trip, we visited Tainan, a port city in Southern Taiwan, and the old capital of Taiwan,” Jasmine said. “I think I was instantly drawn to Tainan because it reminds me a lot of my mom’s hometown in Hokkaido (located in Japan), which was also once a prosperous port city but has been widely abandoned by younger generations moving to more urban areas in recent years. Since we only had two days in Tainan during the trip, I really wanted to find a reason to go back and stay for a little longer.”

AUP students and Profs. Kuo & Wu in Texas

Special thanks to Sydney Scarpa for providing this photo
Jasmine then sought out an internship through the Taiwanese Ministry of Education as an elementary school English teacher. Jasmine said that at first it was difficult adjusting because she had no experience teaching young students and did not know how to speak Mandarin or Taiwanese. To add to the language complexity, students in Tainan regularly switch between both languages. Once she became more comfortable, Jasmine said that she fell in love with teaching. The student's eagerness to learn English and mentorship of older teachers helped her to improve her classroom management skills and lesson plans.

Connecting back to her trip to Taiwan with AUP, Jasmine said that working in Tainan allowed her to meet native Taiwanese people who had lived through Japanese colonization first-hand. Jasmine said that she "had the opportunity to speak with locals about their experience with national identity, and how they thought their identity as a Taiwanese person has changed throughout the course of their lives. The idea of an evolving Taiwanese identity is something we discussed deeply during the practicum, and I'm really grateful for the knowledge from the course which allowed me to ask more thoughtful questions while talking to locals."

Thank you to Jasmine for sending these photos.

A New Club Comes to AUP this Fall: Migrant Justice Club

This semester, consider joining the newly formed Migrant Justice Club. Led by Alessandra Campbell '20, this club's mission is to provide hands on international opportunities to go out and work firsthand with organizations in their efforts to help migrants. This may include volunteering at a detention center in Texas; working at a legal aid organization; and doing humanitarian work at refugee camps across Europe. Through connections made with organizations, the club aims to supply club members with opportunities and the tools needed to be resourceful. Upon return they can share their experiences with the rest of the club and the university community.

How is the Migrant Justice Club different than AUP Campus UNICEF and BV Syria? BV Syria is focused on helping specially Syrian refugees, while the MJC hopes to connect students with refugees from all parts of the globe. Additionally, while UNICEF offers opportunities for engagement in Paris, the MJC hopes to provide students with a network to find opportunities across the world.
Prof. Spieler believes that Paris has a unique relationship with slavery, saying that, “When we think about the relationship between plantation slavery and domestic France, we normally think about French port cities—Bordeaux, Nantes, Le Havre—with maritime economies that revolved around the slave trade.” Paris has long been seen as a “haven” city for slaves with the law being principally opposed to slavery. However, as Prof. Spieler discovered in the Bastille files, the documents “draw attention to the role of administrators and even lawyers in helping masters with unruly domestics who sought to become free in the city.” Discovering this difference is important, she explains: “So long as we picture imperial slavery as a marginal phenomenon in France, an oddity of the Atlantic coastline, French imperial slavery will remain extrinsic to the general narrative of French history. My book aims to connect eighteenth-century Paris—the hub of French finance, the seat of national courts, the center of intellectual life, of aristocratic society, and of European consumerism—to plantation slavery and the slave trade.”

Prof. Spieler hopes that her students discover the pleasure of conducting archival research and that they understand the “detective-like quality” of what historians and researchers do. Prof. Spieler’s extensive use of not only primary sources, but also unpublished primary sources, certainly highlights how exciting archival research can be! Using these sources as her guide, Prof. Spieler will be able to portray a new perspective on the lives of slaves in Paris. To help inspire the love of research, Prof. Spieler aims to include primary source research into all of her classes.

In exciting news, this semester Prof. Spieler will hold a workshop about some unpublished sources she is using in her book. These sources relate to slave trading and the lives of enslaved domestics in Paris. A sample of possible materials for this workshop would include correspondence about a French naval campaign to destroy British slave ships and intercept slaves off the coast of Africa; a slave trading account book; a Parisian police file involving the stakeout of a slave woman; and a Parisian marriage contract in which the bride’s property consists of a huge slave plantation in the Indian Ocean, and Asia from the eighteenth century to the present.”

Prof. Spieler’s book is under contract with the Harvard University Press. Although a work in process, she hopes to finish the book by Summer 2020.

Keep your eyes peeled in future newsletters for the exact date.

Additionally, there will be other opportunities to acquaint students with these materials in spring 2020, when Prof. Spieler is teaching both a course on comparative slavery and a seminar with Professor Kuo called “Becoming Free.” The course “explores the lives of former slaves and former convicts” and considers the “problem of liberation in the Americas, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and Asia from the eighteenth century to the present.”

Prof. Spieler holds a workshop about some unpublished sources Prof. Spieler is working with in the archives. Thank you to Prof. Spieler for sending the photo.

### Upcoming Events

**HLS Open House—Open House for those interested in the History, Law, and Society major. September 12th, 6:30 PM on the 8th floor of Quai**

Interested in applying for fellowships and not sure where to start? Stuck on writing your personal statement in an application? There are a number of fellowships, including the Fulbright (due date is coming up: October 8th), the Truman, the Coro Fellowship, and others, that will financially support your travel, research, or desire to do social justice work. Please come to a session led by Albert Wu, Assistant Professor of History and Department Chair of the History Department. Professor Wu is the recipient of fellowships such as the Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers; the Fulbright IIE for Germany; and the Academia Sinica, Taiwan, Fellowship for Doctoral Candidates in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Additionally, Professor Kuo, recipient of fellowships such as the Truman, the Soros, and the Skadden, will Skype in for this session. It will take place on **September 12th, 4:30 to 5:30 PM, in C-104**.

Elizabeth Foster, Associate Professor of History at Tufts, researches the French empire and African history. She will be giving a talk on Catholicism and the decolonization of Africa. This takes place on **Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 6 PM, in C-104**.

A l’occasion du 75ème anniversaire de la Libération de Paris

Led by The First Alliance, a foundation which promotes the bilateral relationship between the United States and France, this upcoming colloquium will feature presentations by prominent historians and a number of current and recently retired French and American senior officers. For more information or to register, contact mecenat@musee-armee.fr or +33 (0)1 44 42 32 72. **Friday Sept. 13 from 9 AM to 4:30 PM at the Grand salon - musée de l’Armée - Hôtel national des Invalides.**

This edition of the newsletter was brought to you by Zach Egan, the Newsletter Editor. If you have anything you want to share with our community, such as local events, book and podcast recommendations, internship experiences, or suggestions please reach out to me at a102513@aup.edu to be featured in upcoming editions!
HLS/HI Executive Board is run jointly by two of our majors: Sydney Scarpa, the Director of the History/HLS Executive Board, and Alessandra Campbell, our Student Government Senator (SGA).

Executive Board

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