A Pope Wrote a Dictionary: You Figure Out How

Project Background

Our story starts a millennium ago, in the ninth century. A young man named Photios, who would one day become Patriarch of Constantinople, decided to write a Greek dictionary. OK, as if this weren’t weird enough already, this wasn’t just any dictionary, but one that sought to explain ancient Greek literature from more than a 1000 years before his time (even in his day, and even among devoted Christians, the intellectual, scholarly, and cultural attachment to pagan ancient Greece was strong!) This work is a precious resource for scholars of ancient Greece today. It almost wasn’t: only one complete manuscript of the work survives today. Our best modern edition of the work is yet incomplete—the editor died before completing the gigantic task. What’s more, the Lexicon has never been translated into a modern language. A team of Duke grads and undergrads has set out to remedy that situation, by translating the work, one entry at a time (or as much of it as they can; there are about 20,000 entries!).

But even this will give us only a partial picture of what this important scholar was up to. See, Photios did not write the work from scratch. Like every other ancient lexicographer—all of whom lived and worked before plagiarism was invented as an ill—he built his dictionary out of thousands of re-used bits and pieces that he took from other books; and his own Lexicon was subsequently mined and re-used by others. If we could understand how he sliced and diced that intellectual tradition in order to compose his own work, we might begin to understand in a way that no scholars have, how some of our earliest ‘academics’ thought about humanistic inquiry, about literature, about the meaning of words, about the importance of history, about their place in a long and evolving scholarly tradition.

Project Objectives

But how in the world is a team of Duke students going to do all that?! Fortunately, scholars have generated lists of sources that Photios used and that used Photios. But these are locked away in the pages of printed books. And the current Duke team has already made a start. A team of 2 undergrads will work closely with a graduate student (who is specializing in this weird material) to:

- Migrate strategic selections from that source-use data to a simple database
- Develop questions to ask of the data, with which to start trying to understand how this early scholar thought about his research
- Use that emerging understanding to ask new questions, cycle back to the data, and repeat, until slowly, carefully, the whole team acquires understanding sufficient to
- Write brief descriptions of Photios’ work habits and methodologies, principles of text re-use, and other short-form analysis that will help scholars—for the first time—to understand how this important figure worked and thought.

These short analytical pieces will be added to the website in which the current team is doing its translation work. And next time the class is taught, these pieces will function as introductory teaching materials for the students!

About the Sponsoring Organization/Faculty

The sponsor for this project is Prof. Joshua Sosin, who holds a joint appointment in Duke's Classical Studies Department and the Duke University Libraries. His interests range from Digital Classics to more "traditional" scholarly questions about the intersection of ancient law, economics, and religion. He directs the Duke Collaboratory of Classics Computing (DC3).
Skills Required

Successful applicants will be: excited about working with primary sources, comfortable with simple spreadsheets or databases, eager to think about the intersection of humanities and data, careful and rigorous, keen to work in a group, passionate about slightly nerdy things (we will after all be trying to figure out how an author a thousand years ago thought about authors a thousand years before him!)

Race and Ethnicity in Advertising

Project Background

Advertising is a powerful force within society—both reflecting and shaping cultural norms. The depiction of race and ethnicity in advertisements in particular is complex and has evolved over time, including stereotypical depictions (such as Aunt Jemima or Frito Bandito) as well as advertising developed within communities of color. Cultural norms have also shifted over time, and many companies create advertising for international markets and must take local cultures into consideration. Duke’s John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History has strong collections on advertising history including the archives of some of the most prominent advertising agencies, trade associations, and people who worked in the industry. These collections include the papers of people of color who worked in advertising, collections that document advertising that targets minority populations as a consumer demographic, and advertising that depicts race and ethnicity.

Project Objectives

The Hartman Center proposes to shed more light on this history through the development of a digital resource featuring materials from its collections. There are visual collections with a wealth of imagery and document-based collections that put agencies’ and marketer’s campaigns and goals in context. A team of undergraduates will work together with guidance from the graduate student team leader and from the team’s faculty advisor to research this topic and then to determine how best to share their findings. The new resource will help students and researchers to more easily locate examples of advertising that touch on issues of race and ethnicity and to contextualize these examples within the larger story of race and ethnicity in advertising. An important element of the larger story is the growing inclusion of people of color as employees in advertising agencies during the twentieth century, spurred on by the Civil Rights Movement and the narrowing of target markets. Through their participation, project team members will further develop their own visual literacy and expand their understanding of the evolution of cultural norms related to race and ethnicity, while at the same time creating a lasting resource that will share their findings with the larger scholarly community.
Description of Sponsoring Organization/Faculty

The John W. Hartman Center contributes to the study of sales, advertising and marketing in society by preserving historical archives and sponsoring related programs at Duke University. Holding an extensive collection of more than 3 million items throughout the past two centuries, the Hartman Center provides the most comprehensive archive of industry history available today.

Skills Required

- Interest in scholarship surrounding imagery of race and ethnicity and/or advertising
- Interest in using primary source materials for research
- Experience building websites
- Attention to detail
- Self starter
- Ability to work with a team

RTI International 60th Anniversary Commemoration

Nearly sixty years ago, a group of visionaries from the North Carolina business, government and education sectors had a bold idea. These leaders envisaged a vibrant, transformative research community anchored by Duke University, North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 1958 the centerpiece of Research Triangle Park, RTI (then known as the Research Triangle Institute), was formed to inspire graduates of North Carolina institutions of higher education to remain in the state and provide research services for government and business clients.

Today, RTI International is one of the world’s leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. The essence of our mission at RTI—a mission we share with our clients—is to make the world a better place. We apply rigorous research methods and science-based solutions to complex challenges facing people and communities around the world.
Our staff of more than 5,000 provides research and technical services to governments and businesses in more than 75 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy and the environment, and laboratory testing and chemical analysis. (Our annual report conveys the depth and breadth of our project work: [http://annualreport.rti.org/](http://annualreport.rti.org/).) Headquartered in Research Triangle Park, NC, we maintain offices in the United States and around the world to support our ongoing projects and changing client needs.

**Project Objectives**

RTI International will retain a team of Duke Story+ students to help shape story-making across disciplines in advance of its upcoming 60th anniversary commemoration and celebration.

This research would be invaluable for use in presentations and publications. Eventually, this research could result in one or more of the following:

- Written document, interactive timeline, or exhibit conveying RTI contributions to RTP and NC
- Written document or interactive timeline, or exhibit communicating the impact of women leaders at RTI
- Written document or interactive timeline, or exhibit drawing attention to the history of university collaborations at RTI.

During the Summer of 2017, members of the Duke Story+ student team will be expected to accomplish the following:

- Understand the goals and objectives of the RTI’s 60th Anniversary Committee and the related Office of Public Relations and Corporate Communications work plan
- Familiarize themselves with the existing secondary literature, including materials relating to the 50th anniversary commemoration
- Conduct some preliminary oral interviews with key stakeholders
- Inventory related materials housed at North Carolina State University, Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill special collections libraries and begin researching primary sources
- Meet with members of RTI’s 60th Anniversary Committee
- Begin to develop “My RTI Stories”

**About the Sponsoring Organization/Faculty**

RTI’s [Dr. Jacqueline Olich](http://www.duke.edu), Director of University Collaborations and a member of the Versatile Humanists at Duke Advisory Committee, will meet regularly with and advise members of this Story+ Team.

As a final deliverable, members of this Duke Story+ will present their recommendations to RTI’s senior leadership, including members of RTI’s 60th Anniversary Committee, notably Ms. Lisa May, Executive Vice President, Human Resources and Ms. Kami Spangenberg, Senior Director, Communications.
Skills Required

- Ability to interact with, influence, and act on multiple internal and external organizational levels; possess a strong collaborative mindset and global perspective.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, as well as strong interpersonal skills.
- Ability to research, organize, and document.
- Ability to follow through and meet deadlines effectively.
- Ability to manage time efficiently and effectively.
- Ability to maintain the highest level of confidentiality and engender trust.
- Demonstrate a proactive attitude and flexible approach that combines energy, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn.

Suckers and Swindlers in American History

Project Background

American capitalism has always created opportunities for charlatans. Fascination with technological breakthroughs, appreciation for new approaches to finance and new modes of organizing commercial activity, an enthusiastic sales culture tolerant of exaggeration have all given flim-flammers room to operate. As a result, for more than two centuries, American consumers and investors have faced dilemmas about whom to trust, while policy-makers have confronted complicated trade-offs between facilitating entrepreneurial activity and curbing marketplace deception. All of which is to say that the history of business fraud in America is filled with compelling stories – about con artists and victims of rip-offs; about deceit perpetrated by flight-by-night firms and large corporations; about journalistic exposes, campaigns by NGOs, and regulatory innovation; about the challenges of drawing the often fuzzy line between illicit lies and acceptable puffery and truth-stretching.

This Story+ team will work on an historical website linked to the publication of a recent book, *Fraud: An American History from Barnum to Madoff*. Among potential mini-projects: telling the stories of fraud-related images (cartoons, advertisements, photographs, and other primary documents); crafting capsule biographies of especially intriguing perpetrators of business fraud; finding ways to convey the changing nature of fraud-related slang; creating a chronology of major fraud scandals; showing how different constituencies try to shape the narrative and wider meanings associated with a specific fraud scandal; and tracing the efforts since the early twentieth-century to quantify fraud costs.

Project Objectives

- Completing research necessary for a set of mini-projects described above;
- Translation of those research findings into short, engaging narratives (or well-designed chronologies) for pages on the website, with the goal of achieving sufficient quality that those stories go up on the website
About the Sponsoring Organization/Faculty

The sponsor for this project is Duke History professor Edward Balleisen, the author of Fraud. Balleisen is developing the website in partnership with Duke Libraries. This endeavor reflects a growing trend to amplify more traditional forms of scholarship with companion digital resources and analysis.

Skills Required

- Excellent writing skills
- Coursework across some mix of the social sciences (history, political science, economics, public policy, psychology, cultural anthropology)
- Research background in primary sources a plus
- Experience in website design a plus

Talking Wages: The impact of Fight for 15 on the Political Discourse of Minimum Wage

Project Background

The United States has seen an explosion of efforts to raise the minimum wage at the state and local level - both traditionally conservative states like Arkansas and Nebraska and more progressive areas like California, New York, and San Francisco have all raised their minimum wage above the federal standard of $7.25 an hour since 2014. At the heart of this policy momentum stands the Fight for 15, a national movement of labor unions and community leaders who are organizing for $15/hour minimum wage and the right to form a union. Initially dismissed as impossibly high, the $15 an hour wage target is now accepted as a reasonable level in the policy debate about the minimum wage, despite representing a historically unprecedented doubling of the current federal level wage floor (currently $7.25).

Although the role of Fight for 15 remains indisputable in boosting the number of state-level wins and the growing normalization of $15 an hour, the movement’s precise role in shaping the terms of state-level debates around the minimum wage is less well understood. Specifically, there is still much we don’t know about how the Fight for 15 shaped the political discourses in these states, or how it influenced the arguments made by proponents and opponents of the wage increase. Did states with a Fight for 15 presence involve different political discourses than those where the movement did not engage? And did these differences translate into different political outcomes—were states with Fight for 15 engagement more or less likely to pass wage increases than those without? Lastly, is there evidence that states without Fight for 15 engagement also began using similar discourses as those where engagement occurred?

Project Objectives

To answer these questions, students will be asked to complete the following:

- Briefly review the scholarly and policy literature on the political discourses and “messaging” involved in minimum wage fights
- Develop an analytical framework for assessing the different political discourses in state minimum wage fights, looking specifically at media articles in relevant states
- Use this framework to develop and analyze a dataset of relevant discourses across the study area, both before and after the advent of the Fight for 15
• Write a policy memo that explains their results and answers these questions

About the Sponsoring Organization/Faculty

The project will take place with the partnership of the NC Justice Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization dedicated to eliminating poverty. The Justice Center has deep ties to the state’s labor movement and is currently helping to lead a broad coalition dedicated to raising the state’s minimum wage. As a result, students will have the opportunity to interface with labor and community partners in the course of the project.

Skills Required

Undergraduates should have a basic understanding of American politics. Experience with a text-coding software package like Atlas-ti would be fantastic, but not required. The graduate student mentor should have experience with methods and theories of discourse analysis and should be able to train the undergrads on appropriate software packages.