Bon Voyage, Reda!

The amazing Reda DeYoung, world’s coolest Office Coordinator, is leaving us in May after more than thirteen years with the History Department. She is known for her herculean work in making the Great Lakes History Conference successful, her meticulous organization of History Day, her patient listening, and for being Professor McGonagall at Halloween. Asked what she liked about her time with us, Reda said: “Meeting wonderful academics, authors, and speakers from all over the world and getting to know GVSU students who’ve graduated and are doing great things!” She claims she’ll miss walking the halls of MAK and hearing us lecturing as well as “celebrating marriages, births, PhDs, retirements, and published books.” The history faculty will sorely miss Reda’s presence, “her good-natured witticisms, optimistic outlook, and even an occasional eye-roll.” Colleagues describe her as “always cheerful, ready to help in any way she can, asking after how we and our families are doing, and bringing the steadying and much appreciated qualities of good humor and good sense to our office.” Thank you Reda! We wish you all the best with “your” lighthouse and other new adventures, in Culleoka and beyond.

AWARD WINNERS
BREEN PRIZE:
Charles Calcaterra
OUTSTANDING HISTORY MAJOR:
Chrystina Ochsankehl
OUTSTANDING SOCIAL STUDIES MAJOR:
Mary Meyer

PHI ALPHA THETA INDUCTEES
Chelsea Benoot
Rebekkah Bowen
Coltrane Bodbyl
Mast
Carolyn Corey
David Dehn
T.J. Friedgen
Ysabela Golden
Sophia Kaminski
Alex Michnick
Chrystina Ochsankehl
A Reflection on Teaching
by Prof. Jason Crouthamel

Teaching the history of Nazi Germany (HST 200) and the Holocaust (HST 400) over the last year has generated intense discussions. Students in these courses initiated interesting comparisons between the 1930s and contemporary encounters with extremist rhetoric, the mainstreaming of racism in politics, and the normalization of violence. Conversations about Christopher Browning’s book, Ordinary Men, a study of the motives and behaviors of German soldiers engaged in mass shootings, resonated with students who reflected on the universal lessons of the Holocaust and what ordinary human beings are capable of doing under certain conditions. While I emphasize differences in particular social, political and economic circumstances, it’s been rewarding to see how students can apply the lessons of the past to the present.

A Message from the Chair

COVID has taken its toll. The teacher-scholars of the GVSU History Department persist in their mission to inspire student learning, expand historical imaginations, and advance the discipline through scholarship, teacher education, and public presentation. This is my first year as chair of this department, and it indeed has been a difficult one. But the year has also shown our mettle, our grit, our versatility in the face of daunting pressures. The inspiration continues via new teaching media. Remarkable scholarship is hitting the press. New Social Studies teachers are entering classrooms. I am privileged to serve a faculty and staff as outstanding as this one. Our students are remarkable as well. This year over sixty new graduates in History and Social Studies enter the world, extraordinarily prepared, with degrees from our department. GVSU is turning sixty-years old as an institution, and the History Department has been there since the start. We continue this labor of liberal-arts, democratic education with pride. -Prof. Mike Huner