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150 YEARS AFTER HIS BIRTH, W. E. B. DU BOIS IS STILL TRENDING

1968
LOOKING BACK: 50 YEARS AGO IN PHOTOS

2018
SECRETS OF LOVE AND POETRY
REAL TRUTH ABOUT FAKE NEWS
When students returned in the fall, they found the lobby of the W. E. B. Du Bois Library refurbished with new furniture, new paint, and two large screen video walls.
ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO, W. E. B. Du Bois was born a free Black man in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. From those beginnings, he changed the world. For the anniversary of his birth, University of Massachusetts Press, in partnership with the Libraries, has released a new edition of Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (page 32). In 1909, a few years after the book was published, W. D. Hooper, then Chair of the Department of Classics at University of Georgia, wrote to Du Bois that “many of us feel most deeply the paths of your own position.” Hooper told Du Bois that “my skirts, at least, are clean”—that he has never wronged anyone of Du Bois’s race and has trained his children in respect, yet still he felt powerless, “I cannot break away,” wrote Hooper. He asked Du Bois to look, “as leniently as you can on feelings which have been made part of us, and we must labor together in all ways to lighten the gloom.”

Du Bois answered Hooper personally five weeks later, writing “you and I can never be satisfied with sitting down before a great human problem and saying nothing can be done. We must do something. That is the reason we are on Earth.” A highlight of anniversary efforts has been working with the people of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, an ambitious band of volunteers and organizations committed to lifting Du Bois to his proper place of prominence in town. By the time Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868, “GB,” as it is commonly known, was a gilded-age summer getaway on the banks of the 150-mile-long Housatonic River where big-city bankers and industrialists built summer mansions. It had typical New England roots, settled by colonists in the late 1600s after violent clashes ousted resident peoples. Its original inhabitants, the Mahican Indians, called Great Barrington Mahahwee, meaning “the place downstream.”

The sesquicentennial of Du Bois’s birth has inspired Great Barrington to embrace Du Bois anew. In addition to exhibits, performances, and colorful Du Bois banners lining Main Street, there are plans to illuminate his legacy in lasting ways throughout town, from naming streets to painting murals and opening an interpretive center. Last fall, the Libraries helped town officials display the first-ever images of Du Bois. The permanent exhibit “Let Freedom Ring: A Gallery of Du Bois Images” opened in the Town Hall Gallery this year. The centerpieces of the exhibit are six enlargements of the original typewritten pages of Du Bois’s 1909 address, “The Souls of Black Folk,” delivered for the annual reunion meeting of Searles High School, from which Du Bois graduated 46 years earlier. The Housatonic, he wrote is the river of his boyhood, the one he swam across like “every real Great Barrington boy.” Du Bois decried that like many cities, Great Barrington has let its Housatonic become “the place downstream.” Du Bois’s beloved Housatonic. Like all change, cleaning the Housatonic has proved complicated and taken longer than many, including Du Bois, had hoped; the refusal to do nothing has made all the difference.

Great Barrington has always been “the place downstream” from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, whose early grit and lumber mills gave way to a century of wool industry dominance, and all their associated effluents. The date of Du Bois’s address was around the time General Electric starting dumping PCBs into the Housatonic River where the townspeople burned effluents. The date of Du Bois’s address was around the time General Electric starting dumping PCBs into the Housatonic River where the townspeople burned effluents. /T_he date of Du Bois’s address was around the time General Electric starting dumping PCBs into the Housatonic River where the townspeople burned effluents.

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A new dedicated study space for GRADUATE STUDENTS opened in the Du Bois Library in December

Dean of Libraries Simon Neame presided at the ribbon-cutting accompanied by Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy, Provost John McCarthy, and Dean of Graduate School Barbara Krauthamer. “In my mind, the Graduate Commons is an excellent example of space as service, one of the many services that the Libraries provide to this diverse and ever-changing campus,” says Neame. “It is a place dedicated to building community among students pursuing advanced degrees—a space for them to work, to relax, and to connect with colleagues inside and outside of their disciplines.”

The Graduate Commons features a mix of desks, tables, and seating with movable whiteboards and accent furniture to accommodate individual and group study. There are two all-glass group meeting rooms and remote printing services. The commons occupies half of Floor 5 of the Library. There is swipe card access for graduate students during all hours the Library is open.

The impetus for the Graduate Commons came from surveys and focus groups conducted as part of the Libraries’ ongoing assessment and data-informed improvement efforts.

The Graduate Commons was funded by Library donors, the Graduate School, and the Provost’s Office. The design was sponsored in full by KI New England. The UMass Physical Plant will sponsor three years of a portable charging system. Plans call for expanding to the full floor as funding becomes available.

View a video of the construction: bit.ly/gradcommons

“Having an adequate study space is an intrinsic part of the graduate school experience. For many semesters, UMass graduate students have advocated for the need of a flexible space to support our long and varied working hours, as well as space to accommodate different types of work and scholarship. Between taking classes, maintaining assistantships, and conducting research, graduate students spend many hours a week on campus, doing what is necessary to succeed in our chosen fields... and often we are searching for a place, just for us.”

—Ashley Carpenter, Graduate Student Senate PhD candidate, College of Education

Ashley Carpenter
MICROSOFT NEW ENGLAND recently awarded software to the Libraries valued at $745,824. This sixth such grant—in sum, more than $6M total since 2006—enables the Library to offer up-to-the-minute Microsoft products on computers available to the public and to students. Users can access the university’s vast store of print and digital resources in an integrated information environment, a place where there is free access to technology and where librarians still personally answer questions and guide research. The generous gift allows the Library to embed technology in the most visited space on campus—the Learning Commons—where resources, people, and ideas come together from across the community and the university. Thank you, Microsoft!

Thanks to a $7,500 preservation grant from the MASSACHUSETTS STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD, selections from more than a dozen archival collections related to the major wars of the 20th century have been digitized and will soon be freely accessible on the Internet. Highlighting World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars through the perspectives of individuals who took part in them, the collections include those of UMass alumni and faculty (such as Maida Rigs [right], Joseph Langland, Conrad Totman, John Maki, and others), university records (William Machmer, Hugh Potter Baker), and others who served in or witnessed war (including female marine Mary Lauman, USAID worker David Entin, and photojournalist Barr Ashcraft). Special Collections and University Archives’ award for “Digitizing the War Experience” is being matched in kind by the Libraries and will produce over 4,000 digitized letters, photographs, reports, ephemera, and more.

ANNIE SOLLINGER, Digital Image Metadata Librarian, won a 2017 DIGITAL LIBRARY FEDERATION & KRESS CROSS-POLLINATOR AWARD. A member of the Libraries’ Digital Scholarship Center, Sollinger works closely with the Department of the History of Art and Architecture to provide quality digital images, metadata, and research support. The award provided a travel fellowship for Sollinger to attend to the annual Digital Library Federation Forum, a meeting place, marketplace, and congress for digital library practitioners from member institutions and the broader community.

A Little Help from Our FRIENDS

Grassroots Data Management

As the role of the library in today’s society is constantly being redefined, librarians are tasked with meeting these new user needs with minimal training.

With regard to academic libraries and a move towards digital scholarship, for example, there has been an increased demand for librarians to become familiar with research data services to help with the acquisition, management, and storage of scholarly information.

“It’s a particular subset,” says Thea Atwood, Data Services Librarian at the UMass Amherst Libraries. “Data management and data services are newer facets of librarianship; there are few specializations available in library education, and little guidance exists on how to develop a data services program that fits the unique needs of each organization. We have to rely on one another for guidance and community development.”

That is exactly what Atwood and a few of her colleagues have done. In her recent publication, “Grassroots Professional Data Management via the New England Research Data Management Roundtables,” she describes her collaboration with Carolyn Mills, University of Connecticut, and Tom Hohenstein, Boston University, to create Research Data Management (RDM) Roundtables: peer-led professional development sessions for people in the field.

According to the publication, “The RDM Roundtables planning committee developed a low-cost professional development day divided into two parts: a morning session that detailed an idea or solution relevant to our practice, and an afternoon roundtable discussion on practical aspects of research data services. Evaluations from these events were coded in NVivo and we report on the common themes” (Atwood 2017). NVivo is software that supports qualitative and mixed methods research.

Looking at the data from these evaluations, Atwood and her colleagues identified five key themes behind the success of the RDM Roundtables: learning new skills and techniques; sharing examples and materials; networking with other professionals; the informality of the format; and the shared empathy among fellow data management workers.

Since its development in March 2015, the RDM Roundtables have grown in popularity. Atwood and colleagues host at least three each year and upload content reports to the eScience Community Blog for those unable to attend.

“We hope that if we share how we created these processes and procedures, as well as the value of these initiatives, others can reproduce them in their own areas,” Atwood says.

—L.W.
At one time or another, most of us have asked whether there could be any better preparation for becoming a university administrator than working as a clown. If anyone knew the answer, it would be George “Red” Emery. Developing a passion for the circus while growing up in Marlboro, Mass., Red seized an opportunity after graduating from Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1924 to hit the road as a white-face clown and would-be aerialist with a small-time troupe. Even after his 1932 marriage brought the wandering to an end and he settled into a sedentary job in the Alumni Office at his alma mater, Red never forgot his first love. Until his retirement in 1972, he stayed as close to the big top as he could, acting as a talent agent for the Tri-County Fair and writing and lecturing on his experiences.

Filled with letters and photographs from his clowning years, the Red Emery papers include memoirs, ephemera, posters, and books on circus history along with a special bonus: three spectacular turn-of-the-twentieth-century scrapbooks documenting the international tours of Fred Kerslake’s Pigs, an educated company of porcine performers originally from Turners Falls. Red knew a good pig when he saw one.

Other new collections in Special Collections will be announced in our annual report. Visit us at scua.library.umass.edu.
John William Bennett

When John William Bennett '52 died last summer at the age of 86, he left behind a remarkable record as a supporter of organized labor, historian of the movement, and philanthropist. A native of Holyoke who was educated at UMass Amherst (BA), Yale (MA), and the University of Pittsburgh (PhD), John devoted his life to education and the workers’ cause.

While making a career as a labor educator at Indiana University and SUNY Empire State College, John was active in his union, the American Federation of Teachers. He went on to leadership roles in the movement, serving as president of the Springfield Federation of Teachers, vice president of both the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers and the Pioneer Valley Central Labor Council, and even after “retirement” he held office at both the local and state levels in the Massachusetts Senior Action Council. As a philanthropist, he established scholarships at UMass Amherst as well as at Elms College and Springfield Technical Community College.

SCUA remembers John as an advisor, friend, and a key contact with labor leaders and union members. It would be hard to forget his most visible gift: the extensive collection of labor memorabilia, a valuable visual record of the labor movement that includes thousands of badges, buttons, and knickknacks issued by labor organizations. Typical of his generosity, John also supplied funds to support graduate students from the UMass Labor Center who worked with SCUA to catalogue and preserve the collection.

John’s support never waned. In 2016, he helped secure the donation of a remarkable photograph album from his aunt, Mary Frances Healy, kept while she was serving as a nurse in France at the end of the First World War, and his other donations over the years have grown, too. With John’s support, SCUA recently hired two interns to process and digitize labor history collections and make them more accessible to scholars. Even as our friend has passed, his contributions persist.
The issues and events that marked the year 1968—the civil rights movement and legislation, protests, assassinations, the war in Vietnam—were seen, heard, felt, and confronted at UMass Amherst. Just the year before, the Collegian had become a daily newspaper and offered Associated Press wire service news stories in addition to its own reporting, allowing fuller coverage of and access to news on campus and beyond.

Students were deeply engaged in the world beyond their own campus. The Distinguished Visitors Program brought guests to UMass including Dick Gregory, William F. Buckley, John Kenneth Galbraith, former South Vietnamese ambassador Tran Van Dinh, Elie Wiesel, and Linus Pauling and hosted a program on urban affairs, “The American City: 1968 and Tomorrow.” Established and emerging musical acts played to eager crowds at Winter Carnival and Homecoming. Students participated in protests and demonstrations on campus and off, as rules were loosening to allow them freedom to make decisions about their daily academic and social lives. And, of course, the construction transforming campus continued apace.

Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) preserves many of the most memorable moments through images from our collections, particularly the University Photograph Collection and the recently acquired Jeffrey Drucker Photograph Collection. Drucker ’69 majored in production management and was the WMUA studio engineer; many of his photographs appeared in the Index yearbook as well as the Collegian. A complete photographic documentation of 1968 is not possible for lack of space or photos, so this is just a glimpse of what was happening fifty years ago during a year when so much changed, or was shaken up, or was set on a new, transformative course.

On June 1, 1968, UMass held its 98th commencement in Alumni Stadium. Nearly 2,320 undergraduate, graduate, and Stockbridge students received degrees: the largest class to date in UMass history.

The principal speaker was John W. Gardner (right), chair of the Urban Coalition and former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Lyndon Johnson.
Changing landscape

During the 1960s, the transformation of the campus landscape was constant. In the fall of 1968, five new buildings were completed and opened for use (four of them part of Southwest Residential Area, plus Thompson Hall), and three major buildings were under construction: Herter Hall, the Campus Center, and the Lederle Graduate Research Center (which would not open until 1970).
1968 saw an array of nationally popular acts—musical and comedic—come to campus, including some verging on stardom.

The lineup for Winter Carnival in late February, with the theme “Our Favorite Things,” included the Buckinghams, the Byrds, the Righteous Brothers, Glen Campbell, and Johnny Carson, along with the old-timey, banjo-packed band Your Father’s Mustache.

With spring came the Association, the Yardbirds, and the Cowsills. (Little) Anthony and the Imperials came for Fall Greek Week. Homecoming brought Janis Joplin, Hugh Masekela, and the Rascals.

Ending the year with S.E.N.D.O.F.F. were Sam and Dave, and Martha and the Vandellas.

With students newly arrived for the fall semester, the Committee for Student Awareness held a Day of Awareness on September 26 to bring the UMass community together to discuss issues of concern to the campus, the nation, and the world, and to make an appeal to students to take action themselves.

Events began with marches from dorms to the Student Union and continued with a series of speeches on a number of topics—race relations, housing and services in minority communities, the war in Vietnam, human rights in Africa—given by both students and faculty, to an audience of about 300.

Over several days in February, protestors filled the Student Union for a five-hour sit-in and lined the ramp to Whitmore in a demonstration against Dow Chemical and the Vietnam War.
“Demonstrations are a sign that students care. I don’t approve of these activities when they become violent, but I would rather have enthusiastic, activist students than docile students.”

—John W. Lederle
President
University of Massachusetts
1960-1970

Many students opposed the presence on campus of ROTC, with the Student Senate calling for academic credit for some ROTC courses to be abolished.

In October, a Students for a Democratic Society-sponsored group held a protest on the intramural field while ROTC companies drilled.

Chemist and two-time Nobel laureate Linus Pauling arrived on campus days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. to deliver four invited lectures on "Scientific Discovery: Its Impact Upon Man." His remarks ranged over science, politics, economics, social forces, and ethics, but the most memorable moment of his visit came on April 9, the day King was buried in Atlanta. Marching with members of the UMass community from campus to the Amherst Common, Pauling (below with hat) took part in a silent vigil and a memorial service held outside the Student Union, where he addressed the crowd. A number of other events on campus and in the Amherst area—marches, vigils, services—honored King in the days following his death.
“Change is now, change is now
Things that seemed to be solid are not
All is now, all is now
The time that we have to live”

Change Is Now, The Byrds (1968)

Photos by Jeffrey Drucker
In October 2017, we asked students to wear their favorite t-shirts to the Du Bois Library.

T-SHIRT DAY IN THE LIBRARY
As Director of the W. E. B. Du Bois Center at UMass Amherst, I am often asked about what aspect of Du Bois’s work most fascinates me. I must admit that a part of that answer is continuing to learn about the variety of genres that Du Bois engaged. Many of us know Du Bois for his classic and influential works like The Philadelphia Negro, The Souls of Black Folk, and Darkwater, but Du Bois wrote pageants, speculative fiction, detective stories and mysteries, and poetry, too. He also laid the foundation of data collection and modern visualization methods used in the fields of sociology and anthropology today. He was an intellectual whose work has stood the test of time. Here in this moment, 150 years after his birth, Du Bois’s work is still relevant, even groundbreaking.

Aldon Morris, professor of sociology and African American studies at Northwestern University, considers Du Bois to be the father of modern sociology (The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology, 2015). Du Bois’s life work was “the production of careful sociological studies of African Americans steeped in empirical data,” writes Morris, “that could be used to discredit the dominant sociological and popular doctrine that Blacks were forever stuck at the bottom of human civilization because nature made them inferior.”

One of the most profound examples of the significance of Dr. Du Bois’s work to engage the world on behalf of Black people in the United States was to collaborate with Thomas J. Calloway, then Vice President of Tuskegee University, to curate the Exhibit of the American Negroes for the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, after being denied an invitation to exhibit at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition. For Du Bois, this exhibit was a chance to finally present facts about the challenges faced by African Americans. “The exhibit in Paris was important for a number of reasons,” writes Eugene Provenzo, Jr., in his 2013 book, W. E. B. Du Bois’s Exhibit of American Negroes. “For contemporary historians and sociologists, it provides an extraordinary snapshot of the conditions of Black culture and society in the United States at the turn of the century. At the same time, it represents an important stage in Du Bois’s work as an empirical sociologist and a critical commentator on race in the United States.”

The exhibit featured Black people in everyday situations—owning businesses, participating in organizations, and working at various occupations. In particular, Du Bois’s Georgia Negro Exhibit was an even closer look at the variety of experiences that Black people in the Southern U.S. He included pictures of business owners: images of Black women and men as jewelers and watchmakers, newspapermen, physicians, barbers, pharmacists, and shoemakers. There were images of churches and the religious life of rural Blacks as well as glimpses into the burgeoning Black middle class inside and outside of their homes. Du Bois provided tangible evidence to challenge accepted notions of the connection between race and poverty.

One of the most celebrated parts of the exhibit was the photographs from Black colleges and universities throughout the Southern states, places like Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University) in Virginia, Tuskegee Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Alabama, and Howard University in Washington, D.C. The images depicted Black (and in the case of Hampton Institute, indigenous) students experiencing campus life. Photos showed the students learning trades, studying in classes and working in labs, taking field trips, and socializing and interacting in ways that demonstrated that the lives of Black people in the United States were as varied as those of every other ethnic and racial group.

In addition to the images, Du Bois provided colorful, beautiful, and thought-provoking infographics to complement the assertions provided in the exhibit. These data visualizations of detailed information were collected by his students at Atlanta University.

Infographics are a graphic representation of information designed to make data easily understandable at a glance. They can be used to communicate a message quickly or simply to present large amounts of data and show patterns and relationships over time and space. The information Du Bois displayed demonstrated population distribution, income levels, ownership of property, material wealth, and much more. Du Bois and his students had compiled data that scholars did not know existed. That is what amazes me the most: Du Bois’s use of infographics to appeal to all types of people, from working class folks to intellectuals and scholars, and all of those in between. It was what Columbia architecture and history professor Mabel O. Wilson describes in her 2012 book, Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums, as “the first ever Negro Building dedicated to the exhibition of black culture in America.”

More than 100 years later, we are awash in visual data. We live in a world where information is instantly available at our fingertips. W. E. B. Du Bois understood the power of accessible data in 1900. He provided a way for all people to glimpse the true lives and experiences of Black people in the United States. The exhibit is an example of the timelessness of Du Bois’s intellectual legacy, and a testament to how important his work remains in our contemporary context.
Artist Diana Weymar discovered W. E. B. Du Bois's infographics when they became public domain, and she began translating them into thread. Weymar will exhibit her 20 thread translations on campus in Fall 2018 in conjunction with the publication of W. E. B. Du Bois's Data Portraits: Visualizing Black America (Princeton Architectural Press).
from our peers in the archival world of providing... Du Boisian tradition," says Danielle Kovacs, Curator of Collections in Special Collections and University Archives. "We borrowed an idea... annual fellowships for visiting scholars to utilize... resource available to scholars, students, and the public. In 2010, the Library funded its first two annual fellowships for visiting scholars to utilize the collection.

"We began to think about how we can expand our support for emerging scholarship in the Du Boisian tradition," says Danielle Kovacs, Curator of Collections in Special Collections and University Archives. "We borrowed an idea from our peers in the archival world of providing fellowships to support advanced graduate students directly, offering them an opportunity to spend one month in residence and immerse themselves in our collections and, just as important, to build connections with other Du Bois scholars."

Bromery had said his highest hope for the papers was "to have an impact on the world, to bring us back to what I think is the primary mission of higher education"—to train students to understand other people and in doing so, create a better world for all of us. Before his passing in 2013, he created an endowment that supported the annual Du Bois Lecture, the formation of the W. E. B. Du Bois Center, and the fellows program.

Over the years, we have hosted an impressive group of Du Bois fellows from Northwestern, Brown, Cornell, North Carolina, and Harvard, among other places, as well as our own stellar UMass students. Last year, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant which amplified the program, providing fellowships for twelve scholars per year starting this past summer.

One 2017 fellow, James M. Thomas, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Mississippi, said his summer as a Du Bois Visiting Scholar "was among the most intellectually stimulating of my career. In the reading room, the value materialized the first moment I ran my fingers across a handwritten letter of W. E. B. Du Bois, feeling the indentation of his penmanship," said Thomas. By the end of his stay, he said, "I felt I knew Du Bois in a way only possible through deep engagement with his writings in their original forms."

Thomas's current project, Du Bois and the Jewish Question, proposes to address this query through a reexamination of Du Bois's scholarship, "considering, whether, and to what degree, Du Bois's concept of Black double consciousness was inspired by 19th-century Western European scientific and medical discourse on Jewish pathology and difference." Thomas is confident in the timelessness of Du Bois's lengthy and multifaceted scholarship. Du Bois's writing, he notes, "is over one hundred years old and still so prescient...There are many Du Boises, and scholars working with, on, and through Du Bois and his legacy have to document his many iterations."

For Charisse Burden-Stelly, postdoctoral research associate in the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, the plan for her fellowship was to look at the Du Bois papers, the antislavery pamphlet collection, and the James Aronson Du Bois Collection for her work on radicalism. "Once I actually got to the archives, I found that there was much more available that was germane to my research," says Burden-Stelly. "I ended up spending a lot of time in the David Levering Lewis Papers (Du Bois's two-time Pulitzer Prize winning biographer), the Bernard Jaffe Papers (Du Bois's personal attorney), and Series 21 of the Du Bois Papers (accretions). The interviews conducted by Lewis for his biographies on Du Bois were particularly interesting and generative." For Burden-Stelly, it is Du Bois's later, more radical scholarship that provides the basis for her manuscript, The Radical Horizon of Black Betrayal: Toward a Theory of Antiradical/Antiblack Subjecivity. The Cold War period, Burden-Stelly says, is "often erased from Du Bois's life, or not mentioned as much." She also noted that for Du Bois, "joining the Communist Party was not an aberration; it was the logical development of his ideology, which had been moving left since at least 1935, and it was a really important era of his life."

She hopes that this content and her manuscript will inspire people to realize how strong Du Bois's influences have been in shaping social activism. "He lived so long and did so much. You can learn about the Black radical movements if
you study him, his interactions, and his affiliations.”

Another 2017 visiting scholar, National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellow Michael Saman, enjoyed studying alongside W. E. B. Du Bois – give or take a few centuries. “Du Bois read the same stuff I do,” he explains. “He went to high school, university, undergraduate school studying the culture I’m studying from a distance of 200 years. He had it when it was still new… I have to excavate it.”

Like Du Bois, Saman has a background in German literature and intellectual history, with a special focus on the 18th and 19th centuries. After receiving his undergraduate degree, Saman spent time studying in Berlin.

Saman followed this thread to the Du Bois Center, where he has been researching his first book, The Voice of Time: Classical German Thought and the Ethics of Progress in W. E. B. Du Bois’s The Souls of Black Folk. Looking at the collections of Du Bois’s personal papers, particularly his extensive international correspondence, provided Saman with surprising revelations.

“There’s a perception that Du Bois was neglected in America in many ways during his lifetime,” Saman said, “and that’s true to some degree, but the number of very esteemed German social scientists that acknowledged him as an equal and were eagerly seeking his insights and publications took on bigger dimensions than I was aware of.”

Saman believes that this regard for Du Bois’s scholarship is both continuous and timely. “Reading The Souls of Black Folk would be something anyone would do well to do… Du Bois is starting to get on people’s radar again, and I think that will increase with time.”

For 2017 UMass scholar Brittany Frederick G’22, knowledge and access to learning opportunities mean everything. “I am a big champion of education,” she stated.

Frederick, a second-year PhD student in history at UMass Amherst, has made education the subject of scholarship in her project Expanding the “Talented Tenth”: Du Bois and the Educational Evolution of UMass Amherst. She used her Du Bois Fellowship to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships among the University Libraries, the W. E. B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies, Special Collections and University Archives, and of course, W. E. B. Du Bois himself.

“I’m interested in student protests, civil rights, and the role of universities and protest in social and cultural change,” said Frederick. “There are a lot of things centered on Du Bois here [at UMass]; I’ve never heard of an educational space to tailor its mission to fit the philosophy of a person. I wanted to pursue that as a research topic.”

According to her findings, that philosophy promotes a surprisingly direct link between education and Frederick’s current fields of study.

“I never realized how much Du Bois championed the connection between education and social justice,” Frederick said. “Reading his correspondence and publications, I see an inherent connection between education as social and racial uplift for Black people in America and the role universities play in that mission and in social justice.”

For Andrew Grim ’14, G’22, the fellowship gave him the opportunity to look at Du Bois’s work in the area of incarceration. He said it was activist Angela Davis who led him to Du Bois. “She is an inspiring scholar to me,” Grim said. “In her writing on criminal justice and prison abolition, she points to Du Bois as a seminal figure for her who inspired her ideas about racial disparities in the criminal justice system and how prison abolition could be pursued.”

Once Grim began looking at Du Bois’s work for himself, he quickly realized why Davis cited his scholarship so fervently.

“I’m interested in the history of mass incarceration from the 60s onward… in what it looks like for activists as they try to counter the rapidly expanding prison system,” Grim explained. “Du Bois is one of the earliest and most incisive critics of the American criminal justice system… his critiques from the early 20th century still apply, not only in the 1970s and 1980s, but today as well.”

Grim has been working on a project titled Prison Abolition and Criminal Justice Reform in the Era of Mass Incarceration. In combing through the Du Bois collection, Grim was surprised to discover the multitude of personal connections Du Bois made with prisoners.

“He received a lot of mail from prisoners seeking out help of various kinds,” Grim said, “asking for advice on how to turn their lives around, for him to donate his books to the prison where they were, to write a letter to the prison officials to seek a transfer for a prisoner who could not see his family. The prisoners saw him as an ally; he almost always responded. It surprised me to look at how he was sought out in this way and how he acted in any small way he could to help out incarcerated folks reaching out to him.”

With the current social and political climate in the United States, Grim noted that Du Bois’s work with and on criminal justice couldn’t be timelier: “Du Bois’s critiques of the criminal justice system resonate so much today—and they are equally applied to the current system as the time he was writing.”

With the interwoven challenges of college affordability, student debt, and racial equity, the gap in graduation rates between white and Black students at larger public universities is widening. The national conversation has become infused with debate about student debt and the importance of college degrees in the future job market. Yet, even the most affordable state colleges are a long way from providing access to those who need it most.

Motivated by these realities, librarian Kate Freedman G’10, and her husband, UMass IT instructional designer Sam Anderson, created the W. E. B. Du Bois Community Scholarship. They wanted to name it for Du Bois to honor his educational journey. He was able to attend Fisk University beginning in 1885 due to a number of scholarships and gifts from friends and members of his community in Great Barrington.

After earning his bachelor’s degree from Fisk, Du Bois entered Harvard University, paying his tuition using money earned through summer jobs, scholarships, and loans from friends and supporters. He took time off after earning his
Where did you grow up?

Trust: I grew up in Springfield, MA.

Why did you apply to and come to UMass Amherst?

Trust: I fell in love with UMass Amherst when I first visited on a field trip in eighth grade. From that moment, I told myself, whether I end up coming to UMass or not, I will at least get accepted… and here I am now.
Tarra: Although UMass Amherst wasn’t my first choice, I applied because I knew it was a great school and because when I stayed here every summer throughout high school for Upward Bound, I could see myself going here.

What is your major of study?

Trust: I am a Computer Science Exploratory major.
Tarra: My major of study is Psychology but I do plan on pairing it with Legal Studies.

So far, what is your favorite thing about UMass?

Trust: Besides the food, my favorite thing about UMass is the amount of student groups and networks that are available on campus. My least favorite thing is that I can’t join them all.
Tarra: My favorite thing about UMass is the large variety of courses. I’m an indecisive person so it’s helpful that I can choose from a wide range of the many different subjects that interest me.

Describe your prior knowledge of Du Bois:

Trust: In terms of the actual person, I learned about Du Bois in high school and during a sociology course I took. As for the Library, I heard it was renamed for the famous sociologist after Black students on campus protested for representation many years ago. I’m not sure if that’s true [editor’s note: it is!] but the thought of it always makes me feel a bit proud.
Tarra: I learned about Du Bois a while ago and I knew how much he valued education and the advancement of the Black community.

After winning the scholarship did you learn more about Du Bois?

Trust: I have, actually. It’s funny because around the time I received the scholarship, I recall talking about Du Bois in my current sociology class.
Tarra: I didn’t necessarily learn more about Du Bois himself, but I know that his dream is being fulfilled still today with scholarships like this one.

What about Du Bois has personal meaning to you?

Trust: I see Du Bois as a beacon. Wherever you are on campus, the Library is always above it all. It’s like the North Star, guiding you towards a destination rich in resources and support. It’s comforting.
Tarra: Du Bois’s determination to fight for integration means the most to me because he didn’t want a compromise like Booker T. Washington did. He knew an education needed to be offered equally for us all and he made sure that happened.

How will the scholarship help you?

Trust: I can’t even put this into words. My family doesn’t have much financially, so any bit of support matters. It will help alleviate my financial worries and reduce a lot of stress on my family but most importantly, it makes my mother proud of me.
Tarra: The scholarship will help me continue my studies at UMass.

How do you feel about the tower library being named for Du Bois?

Trust: It’s awesome that a famous Black author, educator, and civil rights activist is being paid homage in such a huge (literally) way. From my perspective as a young Black male, it’s inspiring. Maybe one day I will make an impact so great that my name and legacy are immortalized.
Tarra: I feel honored to attend a school that appreciates Du Bois and his efforts to forward important causes.

Any additional thoughts?

Trust: I would just like to thank those who made this scholarship possible and those who chose me to receive it. I genuinely appreciate the individuals who put in the time, effort, and money to help me in such a great way. I hope this scholarship expands because there are many students on this campus who need the support. This scholarship could be the difference between a student dropping out or continuing to strive.
In honor of the 150th anniversary of W. E. B. Du Bois’s birth in Great Barrington, Mass., in partnership with the UMass Press, the UMass Amherst Libraries have prepared a new edition of Du Bois’s classic *The Souls of Black Folk*. Originally published in 1903, *Souls* introduced a number of now-canonical terms into the American conversation about race, among them double-consciousness, and it sounded the ominous warning that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.”

The new edition features an introduction by alumnus Shawn Leigh Alexander G’01 G’04, associate professor of African and African American studies and the director of the Langston Hughes Center at the University of Kansas. Alexander outlines the historical context of this critical work and includes rare documents from Special Collections at the W. E. B. Du Bois Library at UMass Amherst. Alexander writes, “A decade after its publication, William Ferris declared *Souls* ‘the political Bible of the Negro race.’ He remembered the ‘thrill and pleasure’ of opening the book: ‘It was an eventful day in my life. It affected me just like Carlyle’s *Heroes and Hero Worship*…Emerson’s *Nature and Other Addresses*…*Souls* came to me as a bolt from the blue. It was the rebellion of a fearless soul, the protest of a noble nature against the blighting American caste prejudice. It proclaimed in thunder tones and in words of magic beauty the worth and sacredness of human personality even when clothed in a black skin.’ Decades after William Ferris praised *Souls*, Langston Hughes wrote to Du Bois explaining that he had just read the book “for perhaps the tenth time—the first having been some forty years ago…Its beauty and passion and power,” wrote Hughes, “are as moving and as meaningful as ever.”

More than fifty years after Hughes’s letter, *Souls* remains just as relevant, compelling, and timely as it was when it was written. The problem of the color-line has not been erased; indeed in some instances, it might seem that America has not made much progress since Du Bois first published *The Souls of Black Folk*. While the nation no longer has strict legal segregation casting a veil between the races, African Americans are still demanding recognition of their humanity.

As co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Opal Tometi explains, the movement is a “battle for full civil, social, political, legal, economic and cultural rights.” Central to the struggle, according to Tometi, is a “demand for the recognition of [our] dignity, humanity.”

Like Du Bois, Tometi and other activists today are still struggling to have the nation recognize the dignity, the humanity, the souls of the Black community; a dignity that continues to be denied and violated through systematic police brutality, racial profiling, other forms of state-sanctioned violence, and institutional racism.

Until the murders of individuals such as Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, or Sandra Bland end, and the water pandemic in Flint, the unequal educational system, and the egregious rollback of voting rights cease, there will always be a space for the Du Boisian wisdom found in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Activists, scholars, and the general public will continue to look to the “fugitive pieces” assembled between the book’s covers for some guidance because, the questions and answers that so absorbed Du Bois in 1903 still resonate today.
Bernard Jaffe died on January 1, 2016, at the age of 100, perhaps the most recently living person to have enjoyed a long and intimate relationship with both W. E. B. Du Bois and his wife Shirley Graham Du Bois.

Jaffe first met Du Bois in 1950 when he was recruited by lead attorney, Congressman Vito Marcantonio, to join Dr. Du Bois’s ultimately successful defense team responding to his prosecution by the U.S. government. Jaffe first met Du Bois in 1928 when he was recruited by lead attorney, Congressman Vito Marcantonio, to join Dr. Du Bois’s ultimately successful defense team responding to his prosecution by the U.S. government.

Impressed by his legal brilliance, Du Bois retained Jaffe as personal attorney and adviser for matters including pursuit of the return of his passport which had been confiscated in spite of his acquittal. When the passport was restored, Du Bois resettled in recently independent Ghana at the invitation of President Kwame Nkrumah. Jaffe continued to manage his legal affairs, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Bernard Jaffe possessed an extraordinary intellect, graduating from high school at the age of 14, college at 18, and Columbia Law School on the Law Review at just 21. Yet he called Du Bois “the most intelligent person I have ever had the privilege of knowing, the second being Paul Robeson.”

While Jaffe and Du Bois enjoyed a warm companionship, he diligently sustained his role as attorney and spoke sparingly about his experiences with the great man even after his death. With close family, however, he did share some glimpses of their friendship.

He recounted conversations they had about current events, such as musing together about Khrushchev’s motivations for denouncing Stalin at the Soviet Communist Party congress in 1956.

He admired Du Bois’s aesthetic sensibilities, noting, for example, how moved he was by the music of Beethoven and the Ninth Symphony in particular.

He spoke about the fascination Du Bois held for what he termed the “universal visage,” a human face evoking cross-cultural, multiethnic hues and features as though a melding of all places and peoples.

Du Bois thought this visage suggested the future of humanity.

Du Bois died in Africa in 1963 leaving no instruction for the disposition of his papers, which included more than a hundred thousand items comprising a singularly important trove of documentation of the most learned participatory witness to, and expositor about, the history of “the color-line” from the latter half of the 19th century into the 1960s.

This was the time when there was burgeoning interest in establishing departments of Afro-American studies at major universities. Wherever this incomparable collection reposed would attract scholars from around the world. Harvard, where Du Bois was the first African American to receive a doctorate, was among the universities eagerly campaigning to acquire it.

Jaffe, in consultation with Du Bois’s widow, the brilliant and indomitable Shirley Graham Du Bois, was confident that he would have preferred the collection be granted to the great public university of the state of his birth. He persuaded then University of Massachusetts Chancellor Randolph Bromery to accompany him to Africa to physically gather and package the papers and transport them back to Amherst to be housed in the new and as yet unnamed tower library. It is in significant measure due to Jaffe’s determined activism that the treasured collection is in the library that now bears Du Bois’s name.

Death came to W. E. B. Du Bois the night before the March on Washington led by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whom he had inspired. International news, particularly from Africa, travelled much more slowly in 1963. Jaffe said that Dr. King was most likely informed of Du Bois’s death on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial just before stepping to the microphone to deliver his iconic “Dream” speech.

After the death of Du Bois, Jaffe’s devoted companionship with Shirley Graham Du Bois continued until the end of her life, including assisting her resettlement in Tanzania and Egypt, and accompanying her to the People’s Republic of China in the early 1970s as a guest of Premier Chou Enlai. Subsequently, he collaborated for many years with her son, David Graham Du Bois, in the founding and direction of the W. E. B. Du Bois Foundation.

Jaffe was reluctant to have his collection of papers relating to his friendship and service to W. E. B. and Shirley Du Bois, including intimate personal correspondence as well as contracts and other legal documents, be made available for public scrutiny. He was, after all, their lawyer, as well as an intimate friend. His response to the initial proposal was that the files must be destroyed upon his death. Visits to his home for conversations about the relevance of Du Bois’s legacy today by professor Whitney Battle-Baptiste, professor emeritus William Strickland, former UMass library director Jay Schafer, and UMass Libraries Head of Special Collections Robert Cox proved ultimately persuasive and the unique collection, perhaps the final trove of original documents with such intimate and historically consequential information about these singular figures, is now available for study.
How do you feel when you walk into a public place: energized or intimidated? Secure? Uneasy?

Walk into the W. E. B. Du Bois Library just about any time of the day or night, and the vibe can be summed up in a word: busy. Students are making the most of Du Bois’s spaces and services, whether hunkered down at computer stations, poring over texts in quiet study areas, putting their heads together over a class project, or building a 3D prototype in the Digital Media Lab. Of course, there might be someone taking a study break, aka a nap, on one of the lime green couches in the “microclimates” area—a space for students to test out new furniture. There’s more to this obvious success story than meets the eye—at least the untrained eye. For starters, this academic hive didn’t just happen. The Library works hard to cultivate and sustain the busy-ness. Underpinning efforts is research: into how students learn, how they use technology, how they interact the busyness. Beyond adapting to changes in study habits and modes of learning, the Libraries strive to be proactive in responding to larger societal shifts.

The evolution of the Library environment takes many forms and comes in all sizes, from updating a sign on a restroom door to reconfiguring the Learning Commons’ layout, and the adaptations are data-informed, not random.

Gathering information on how students use the Library is a unique team of researchers: other students.

“Data keeps us grounded,” is how Sarah Hutton, Head of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Services, puts it.

This ethnographic approach to research began with a conversation five years ago between Hutton and anthropology professor Art Keene. Out of that talk came a pilot course bringing anthro students into the Library to do research. Anthropology professor Krista Harper took over the project when Keene retired a year later. Since then, Harper, Hutton, and Learning Commons Coordinator Carol Will have been steadily deploying students—about 70 so far—to find out what their peers think and feel about the Library’s design and services. "It is an extremely fruitful partnership," says Hutton. "The Library gets the perspective of someone outside it; it’s been through a fresh lens. It’s like having a student advisory board, but with turnover, so that there are always new eyes on us. And their insights have had impact and application."

Among the several advantages of this research is that students tend to open up to their peers more than they might to librarians or other staff. In addition, unlike studies found in professional journals, these are site-specific. For example, the presentation "Journeys through the Library" observed that traffic "clustered around the elevators and Floors 1-6, 9, and 23." And the colorful term "hellevators" seems a uniquely UMass coinage for the main means of getting to the upper stories.

For students, the research project is an ideal situation, says Harper. "A chance to work with a client committed to the user experience. I’ve never met anyone more service-oriented than people who work at the Library." Students hone their research skills, grow their CVs, and build foundations for careers. "Some of the undergraduates have published their work," notes Harper. “Grad students have presented their work at professional conferences.”

The undergrads do the research through "Ethnography in Action." The graduate qualitative methods course in the School of Public Policy attracts students from anthropology, public policy landscape architecture and regional planning, and education. To collect data, students employ both classic methods—surveys, observation sessions—and newer ones, such as PhotoVoice, where researchers ask participants to take pictures that reflect their perspectives, and Dedoose software, which can detect patterns within qualitative data. The research culminates in public presentations to library staff. Says Hutton, "Staff come from all over the Library; everyone is interested."

Beginning the process are consultations with staff who share their "questions, problems, spaces to be renovated or reimagined." says Harper. How do students use the spaces, and which do they prefer? How does studying at the Library compare with a dorm room or a café? How do students find resources? What’s underused? What’s missing?

Not all insights can be acted on—some students prefer studying in bed, for instance. But many issues that come to light are addressed without delay. For example, one study found that when a group of students who needed a group study room saw it occupied by just one person they were reluctant to oust the student or to complain to Library staff. An online reservation system was set up to make sure groups get first dibs.

Another major change that grew out of the ethnographic research is the renovation of the Learning Commons. Meant to provide “one-stop shopping,” with technical support services, research services, circulation,
reserves, interlibrary loan, and a writing center, all located on the same floor, the LC setup of separate service desks hasn’t been as user-friendly as hoped. Addressing this is no small undertaking—it involves shifting people, desks, equipment, and storage space around—but a plan to reconfigure the layout of the Lower Level and consolidate even more services into one service desk is moving ahead this summer.

“Space communicates messages,” says Harper; we react to its design, the color on its walls, its users, often without realizing it. By their very nature, libraries represent different things to different people, as the findings have shown. Some UMass students see the Library as a place to avoid distractions and focus: “When I’m in the Library, my mental state of mind is that ‘I am studying,’” was how one student put it. To others, it may represent a source of community, of friends. An international student reports she feels at home just seeing a shelf of books in her native language in the stacks.

Users affect each other, too. The fascinating psychological phenomenon of “peerveillance” is alive and well in the Learning Commons. Even though it’s legitimate to write a paper at one of its computer stations, a student may feel pressured to surrender her seat by the line of other students waiting for a spot. The upside is that the impulse to scroll one’s Facebook feed might be curtailed if others are watching.

As the research project has evolved, it has probed more deeply into users’ perceptions, sometimes with unsettling results. Some students of color said they experienced areas of the Learning Commons as “white spaces”—unwelcoming to non-white students.

Ashley Carpenter, a PhD student in the College of Education, looked at interactions between staff and students, interviewing about 40 librarians and staff, and 25 students, all men of color. She noted “nuanced cases,” where a student might have asked for help and been told curtly he’d come to the wrong department, or had similar interactions that made him feel he didn’t belong. Were the slights intended, the dismissiveness real? Whether or not they were real, such experiences still discourage a student from asking for help again anytime soon.

Last year’s research into what and how much students and the larger campus community knew about the tower library’s namesake, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Du Bois Center on Floor 22, has resulted in improving awareness and increasing opportunities to communicate the message that everyone belongs. The research helped the Center increase its visibility and prompted it to become a public space when not being used for meetings and events.

The feedback has provided insight into minority groups on campus; military veterans enrolled at UMass Amherst may feel exposed and anxious in the Du Bois’s wide-open spaces and gravitate to smaller, quieter areas. Comprising a small percentage of the campus population, Native Americans may struggle with feeling invisible. That feeling was accentuated for one student interviewed who watched people stepping on a large rug in the Du Bois lobby bearing the state seal—which contains an image of a member of the Algonquin nation. Notes Harper: “The Library responded immediately.” The rug was removed and replaced.

Not every issue can be so quickly and easily resolved. Resources are finite, and some solutions call for trade-offs. Carol Will acknowledges that creating the microclimates—a big hit with students—meant sacrificing a few group study rooms. During her last sabbatical, Will visited about 75 libraries. “Newly built and newly renovated libraries emphasize flexibility,” she notes. “The furniture is movable.” Libraries, she believes, have to be versatile in a lot of other ways as well. “What happens when students come in with a new device that we need to support? It’s hard to anticipate needs, but we’ve got to be ready to experiment, to try new things. And we can never lose sight of our audience.”

Some UMass students see the Library as a place to avoid distractions and focus: “When I’m in the Library, my mental state of mind is that ‘I am studying,’” was how one student put it. To others, it may represent a source of community, of friends. An international student reports she feels at home just seeing a shelf of books in her native language in the stacks.

L to R: Carol Will, Learning Commons Coordinator; Sarah Hutton G’19, Head of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Services in the Learning Commons.
The October 1938 broadcast of Orson Welles’ adaptation of the novel by H. G. Wells, The War of the Worlds, performed in a style that mimicked news bulletins interrupting regular broadcasting, fooled many listeners into thinking that Martians had landed in central New Jersey and were embarking on a global rampage. Enough people who tuned in after the radio drama was underway panicked to the point where the incident became shorthand for how fake news can roll the real world.

Kate Freedman G’10, Undergraduate Education Librarian for the UMass Amherst Libraries, who teaches a course on information literacy, grew up near Grover’s Mill, the real town named as the landing place for the fictional alien invasion. She has a long-standing interest in that historical curiosity.

“The reason people thought it was real wasn’t because Welles was deliberately trying to deceive them,” she said. It was that radio is what she calls “a chronological medium.” People tuning in couldn’t “just flip back a few pages. Instead, they listened to actors playing extremely frightened broadcasters and drew their conclusions based on their responses in the moment.

“If you think about it, it’s about the history of the media,” says Freedman, whose job includes teaching undergraduates to distinguish between good and bad information. When she looks at the pervasive influence of the jumble of things we currently call “fake news,” she thinks about how the nature of the technology behind new media creates an environment ripe with possibilities and ripe for mischief.

Therein lies the conundrum. The cost of reproducing and distributing information is essentially zero, leading to a proliferation of outlets for all sorts of information pollution. People spread low-quality or even harmful information to promote political agendas, sell products, or just have sick fun. On the other hand, zero-cost communications are pro-social and pro-democratic and can have positive effects, from cute animal videos to the Arab Spring. On a very messy World Wide Web, we can watch videos of police shooting black men or choose from any number of educational, enlightening, heartwarming, distracting, and entertaining posts. Free publishing is here to stay. So is the gaming of a medium that we don’t yet fully understand.

People need to become better consumers of information. Knowing how to evaluate and discern quality information available in ways that allow for vetting, as repositories of reliable information. They also make communications are pro-social and entertaining posts shared by people who already know and love the content. “Who needs data or analysis when truth becomes merely a matter of opinion?” he asked. He challenged researchers, scholars, and teachers “to protect the pursuit of truth on our college campuses… through rigorous, fact-based presentation and dissemination of information based on scholarly processes.” He added, “Today, in this age of ‘fake news,’ ‘alternative facts,’ and increasing intolerance for opposing viewpoints, the defense of this treasured ideal is more important than ever.”

Our devices are screaming at us pretty much 24/7. The challenge is to teach people to take a deep breath and learn how to be skeptical without being cynical.

—Steve Fox, Journalism

Not surprisingly, according to Freedman, it begins with critical thinking, something that is more easily espoused than understood. Universities are not only generators of knowledge; they are also incubators of critical thought. Libraries exist within their larger institutions as repositories of reliable information. They also make information available in ways that allow for vetting, evaluation, and reconsideration in new contexts.

Freedman created a one-credit course called “De-mystifying Library Research,” in which she challenges students to “look at the foundational building blocks of what critical thinking really is.” Part of constantly questioning new information is what she calls “source evaluation.” Often that means drilling down to see where your information is coming from or, in other words, looking at the sources of your sources.

Freedman says that the Library holds a unique place in the university as an institution because it cuts across disciplines. This is important both because its mission is focused on the research process, rather than on the end result, and because it is a resource for every department on campus. Moreover, many students, especially those in the incoming class, may not yet have departmental affiliation, and they are at a crucial stage in their development as thinkers. Having just run the gauntlet of getting a high school diploma, they find themselves at a moment when their intellectual horizons are broadening.

Steve Fox practiced journalism both in print and online at the Washington Post before coming to the UMass Journalism department. One of the courses he teaches, News Literacy, deals specifically with fake news. Because it was recently approved as fulfilling a general education requirement, the course he is attracting more and more non-journalism majors.

“I’m trying to teach students to become better news consumers,” he said.
There’s nothing novel about antagonism between journalists and people in power. What is new is when a prominent politician’s words at a public speaking event makes reporters think twice about their physical safety, said Fox. “Trump and the Trump administration have certainly taken it to another level.”

Similarly, agitprop, concerted rumor mongering, propaganda, information warfare and even the infiltration of newsrooms are not new. What we haven’t seen before is the “firehose of information that comes at us on a daily basis” through any number of electronic platforms, says Fox. “Our devices are screaming at us pretty much 24/7.” The challenge, he says, is to teach people to “take a deep breath” and learn “how to be skeptical to the pitfalls and promises of our rapidly evolving information environment? “Yes, I do,” she said. “I do.”

Law and Public Policy Librarian Lisa Di Valentino aggregated some of those tools on a few pages of the UMass Amherst Libraries website. They are meant to support Fox’s course and others like it as news literacy becomes more of a core requirement in the undergraduate curriculum.

One of the problems is that in the past, the financial incentives were weighted in favor of being accurate and building a reputable brand, whereas today there is a lot of money to be made in simply attracting attention, according to Di Valentino. Over time, she said, stifling through and vetting news items taxes our brainpower. This is partly because “there are only so many minutes in the day” and because algorithms are becoming more sophisticated in their ability to deceive.

The web pages include links to sources of scholarly articles on the fake news phenomenon. Most require a UMass ID and password to access them. “There is a lot of academic research going on right now. It’s sort of exploding,” she said. There are also links to articles and news stories that she knew of or that people are bringing to her attention about various aspects of fake news.

Di Valentino also included links to fact-checking websites such as Snopes, which grabs headlines that are going viral and drills down into their sourcing to determine whether they are reliable, and PolitiFact, which rates the accuracy of claims made by U.S. politicians with a “Truth-o-Meter.”

There is also a link to a guide for evaluating websites based on telltale signs like odd domain names, writing style, sources, design, and how the site describes itself. The LibGuide, which includes a table evaluating hundreds of websites, is 34 pages. The length alone indicates how difficult it would be for any individual to apply a full measure of critical skepticism to everything they read or hear.

“I didn’t want it to be overwhelming, but I wanted it to give people an idea of the scope of the problem,” said Di Valentino. As a librarian, she sees herself as “a curator of resources” people can use to assess verity.

Megan Hayes ’20 is majoring in journalism and also studying environmental science. She hopes to someday cover an environment beat. Her dream job would be with National Geographic. As a consumer of news, she said she often triangulates to make a judgment as to whether something is reliable by searching to see if it has made it onto multiple platforms.

Hayes thinks that there will always be people publishing things that aren’t true. But as the phenomenon gets more attention, she believes the impact of that behavior will diminish.

Does she have faith that news consumers will become savvy to the pitfalls and promises of our rapidly evolving information environment? “Yes, I do,” she said. “I do.”
Enfield Iris

Eighty years ago, state authorities ordered residents of four towns in central Massachusetts to abandon their homes to make way for drinking water for Boston: the Quabbin Reservoir. Beginning in the 1930s, hundreds of houses were removed one by one, as families were expelled and whole towns razed. Even the trees were stripped bare and felled to make way for the floodwaters. Among the meager possessions that Bob Wilder and his family carried with them as they were driven from their longtime home was a unique and hardy memento: the Enfield iris. While its origins are obscure, Bob had childhood memories of this distinctive yellow, puce, and purple flower thriving in their kitchen garden, and wherever he settled in the decades since, he always made sure to plant a patch. After donating his papers to Special Collections last year, shortly before he died, Bob worked with his friend Marc Peloquin to include a few rhizomes for the Oswald Tippo Library Sculpture Garden at the Du Bois Library to serve as a living tribute to lives disrupted.

Enfield beaded irises blooming in the Oswald Tippo Library Courtyard Sculpture Garden. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the garden, which is maintained by Library staff. The courtyard garden relies completely on philanthropic contributions. To donate, please use the enclosed envelope and indicate Tippo Sculpt in the memo field.

Internship is a Home Run for Emily Cooper ’17

Emily Cooper ’17 worked in the Image Collection Library (now Digital Scholarship Center) for four years as an undergraduate. Upon graduation, she acquired an internship at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY. During that time, she wrote an article about Bob Feller, pitcher for the Cleveland Indians, and Hank Greenberg, the first baseman for the Detroit Tigers, now published online.

Above: Emily Cooper ’17, a digital strategy intern in the Baseball Hall of Fame’s Frank and Peggy Steele Internship Program for Youth Leadership Development and former library student employee.

Left: Bob Feller poses for a photograph with Detroit Tigers’ star Hank Greenberg. Feller, standing on the spectator side of the fence, is seen holding a baseball and marker, waiting for an autograph. Courtesy of PASTIME (National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum).

Paperbark

When Green Is All There Is to Be

In the famous words of Kermit the Frog, “It’s not easy being green.” As we are increasingly called upon to better steward our shared earth, we grapple with simple questions of whether it is better for the environment if we eat locally or organically, as well as complex questions of how to manage feelings of hopelessness about environmental degradation and our accountability for it.

Enter Paperbark Literary Magazine. The idea for this new environmental humanities magazine was initiated by an aspiring writer and student of sustainability, Sumedha Rao, with mentorship from faculty in the School of Earth and Sustainability and the English MFA for Poets and Writers. The first issue will be released on Earth Day 2018. Paperbark is supported in part by the Libraries’ Sustainability Fund; all donors to the Fund will receive copies of the magazine.

Paperbark has been accepting submissions of prose, poetry, art, and digital works since November, says Editor-in-Chief Lauren de la Parra, a graduate student in sustainability science and regional planning. “We stated that we want not only to think about the environment, but are committed to living differently.” The editors hope is that the magazine will be a vehicle for those experiencing and writing about environmental injustice. Max Dilthey, managing editor and a PhD candidate in regional planning at UMass Amherst, said the publication will evolve according to the art and writing the editorial staff receives. The theme of the first issue is “Emergence … work that is timely, important, that perhaps has not existed before, that is embodied in the movements of the social, environmental, political, economic, and climate spheres, and their points of intersection.”

De la Parra found her voice in the environmental humanities after spending time in the permaculture garden at Sirius Ecovillage in Shutesbury.

“Often, it can feel demoralizing to care deeply and devote time and energy to developing a personal ethic of environmental responsibility, only to walk outside and find that many people do not share your convictions,” she said. “That’s why Paperbark and resources like it are so important: They remind people that they are not alone, invite them to engage, encourage their explorations, and connect them to the network of people who not only think about the environment, but are committed to living differently.”

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Two Wives Ago
by Lewis C. Mainzer
from the book Two Wives Ago

“She was two wives ago,” his present wife corrected me when, having introduced ourselves, I said, recalling events of forty years gone by. “Ah, if he is Jonah, then you must be Anna.” But she isn’t Anna, she’s Elaine, evidently she’s wife number three. Will they all be buried side by side in proper order of chronology? Who will be honored by being put closest to Jonah, wife number one for being the bride of youthful love, wife number three for being the devoted caregiver, the love of age and illness—we met at a bad time for Jonah, at the hospital, he and I were room-mates for a day—or has wife number two a claim I cannot know? Perhaps she is a saint, too good for any ordinary fellow. Grown children came to offer bedside comfort but which wife or wives was mother I never knew nor whether it leads to special consideration. Perhaps wives one and two have new companions for earthly and perpetual consort and thus no interest in resting forever at Jonah’s side. Wife number one, the Anna I recalled from forty years ago, came into the room, full of deep concern for the suffering patient, not a hint of bad feeling among the principals, everyone on the same side, the side of life and health. Wife three introduced me, explaining my earlier confusion with no sense of reproach or embarrassment. How easy by comparison my life seems, with only wife number one to snuggle up to me under ground as above. That’s quite a comfort, having chosen well at first.”

—K.F

Lewis and Caden have been devoted Friends of the Libraries for more than 28 years. Lewis served on the Friends of the Libraries Board of Trustees for 16 years and was President from 2006–2009.
As I’ve grown into a greater understanding of who W. E. B. Du Bois was during his life, who he is today in the lives of others, and who he is becoming to me in my life, I am constantly amazed. That amazement is not at the heart of the story; it’s in my head, mostly. At the heart of the story is my Grandpa.

Now, to be clear, Du Bois is technically my great-grandfather. But all of my grandparents died before I was old enough to know them except my mother’s father, whom I got to know after my son was born. There are no biographies written about any of them, so what I know comes from stories that I picked up along the way and a few pictures. When I look at all that has been written and said about Du Bois, I sometimes wish my other grandparents had gotten similar treatment so I could know them as well as I know him, alas…

Back to Grandpa: I suppose I’m no different from many grandsons, in some ways. When I was young, grandparents were a mystery because they weren’t around much or mentioned very often. So I was left to discover them later on my own, and of course, Grandpa stands out in any crowd. For many years, I was just a sponge—absorbing what I could about Du Bois, but not really giving anything back. Then, one day, for some unknown reason, I decided I knew enough to talk to a group of students about him. The dam burst! I’ve been talking about him ever since.

Over the years I developed my favorites. Favorite essay: “Of the Passing of the First Born” from Souls of Black Folk. Favorite quote, from Credo: “I believe that all men, black and white, are brothers, varying through Time and Opportunity, in form and gift and feature, but differing in no essential particular, and alike in soul and in the possibility of infinite development.” Favorite photo of Grandpa: where he and Chairman Mao are “laughing like school boys,” according to Shirley Graham Du Bois. Another favorite is this photo [below] of me with Grandpa and his cousin Alice Crawford, just before he leaves for Ghana. I love this picture because of what it says about my heart and his.

The scene around the three of us must have been bedlam. The year is 1961. Grandpa is leaving from Idlewild Airport (later named for the assassinated President John F. Kennedy) to accept the invitation of President Kwame Nkrumah to finish his Encyclopedia Africana Project. But there, in that moment, his gaze is on me, and his smile tells me all I need to know about what he thinks of me. Perhaps more importantly, my small hand on his tells me everything I need to know about how I felt around him.

To the world, he is William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. To me, my hand will always be on his, and he will always be my Grandpa.

**24th Annual Du Bois Lecture**

**W. E. B. Du Bois and the Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement**

**Dr. Reiland Rabaka**

**Wednesday, February 21.** Old Chapel, UMass Amherst (4 p.m.)

**Friday, February 23.** Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington (7 p.m.)

**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Dr. Reiland Rabaka is Professor and Chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. He is the author of several books, including Against Epistemic Apartheid: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology, Forms of Fanonism; Frantz Fanon’s Critical Theory and the Dialectics of Decolonization; Concepts of Cabralism: Amilcar Cabral and Africana Critical Theory; The Negritude Movement, and three books about the Hip Hop movement.
The Graduate Commons Before (above) and After (below).