

Caltech

DIVISION OF
THE HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

2016

IN REVIEW

2017 PREVIEW

THE RONALD AND MAXINE
LINDE
INSTITUTE
OF ECONOMIC AND
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

HWC
HIXON WRITING CENTER

T&C CHEN
CENTER
FOR SOCIAL AND DECISION
NEUROSCIENCE

EINSTEIN
PAPERS
PROJECT

SISL
SOCIAL AND INFORMATION
SCIENCES LABORATORY

CHHC
CALTECH-HUNTINGTON
HUMANITIES COLLABORATIONS

SSEL
SOCIAL SCIENCE
EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY

CBIC
CALTECH BRAIN IMAGING CENTER

2016 IN REVIEW

2017 PREVIEW

DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

We approach the winter solstice having mined meaning from words and numbers all year long. This is a good time to reflect on the past year and the 50 years before it that made HSS what it is today. Oh! the nuggets, books, and articles published, read, cited, and reviewed. Oh! the precious dust of data sets sieved, visualized, and archived. We welcomed new colleagues, old friends, and curious students as the division continued its growth. We celebrate that ceaseless ebb and flow of intellectual connections, as we also celebrate the extraordinary gifts of philanthropists that allow us to open new paths of discovery. Read all about our news and accomplishments in 2016 and what lies ahead in 2017—and *carpe anno!*

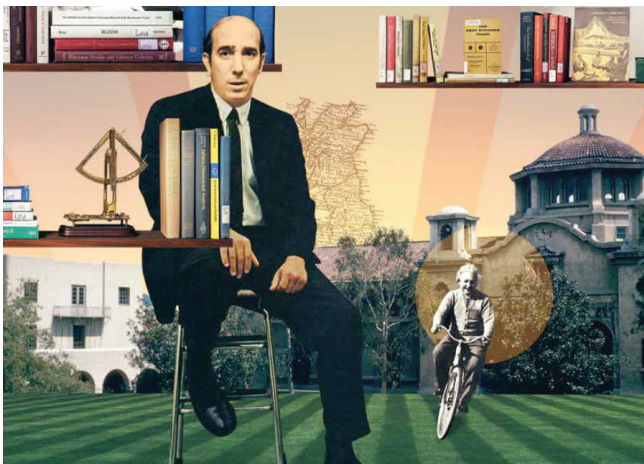
JEAN-LAURENT ROSENTHAL

Rea A. and Lela G. Axline Professor of Business Economics;
Ronald and Maxine Linde Leadership Chair,
Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences

DECEMBER 2016

2016 IN REVIEW

WINTER



HSS Marks 50th Anniversary with Lecture Series

During the 1965–1966 academic year, Caltech's original Division of Humanities became known as the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Fifty years later, HSS faculty organized a lecture series with a diverse group of distinguished speakers to commemorate the anniversary. The series began on January 28 with Daniel J. Kevles, Caltech's J. O. and Juliette Koepfli Professor of the Humanities, Emeritus, and the Stanley Woodward Professor Emeritus of History, History of Medicine & American Studies at Yale University. The talk, titled "Between the Archives and the Athenaeum: Caltech as Living History," was based on Kevles's more than 35 years (1964–2001) as one of the leading scholars in the history of science at Caltech.

A video of the Kevles lecture as well as a written version, which he authored for the fall 2016 edition of *Engineering & Science*, are available online.



Camerer Research Finds Social Hormone Promotes Cooperation in Risky Situations

Colin Camerer, the Robert Kirby Professor of Behavioral Economics, published research in the online edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* finding that a hormone implicated in monogamy and aggression in animals also promotes trust and cooperation in humans in risky situations. Camerer, as quoted in Caltech News, observed: "One of the reasons humans rule the world rather than apes is that we do things that require a great deal of trust. We cooperate in large-scale groups."



Visiting Writer Brings Muslim History to Life

In February, HSS presented a public lecture by award-winning novelist and UC Riverside professor Laila Lalami in its ongoing writer-in-residence series, which brings professional writers to campus for brief visits and lectures.

Lalami's talk, titled "Muslims in America: A Forgotten History," included readings from her historical novel *The Moor's Account*. The series continues in 2017 with writers Danielle Dutton, Louisa Thomas, and Andrea Wulf.



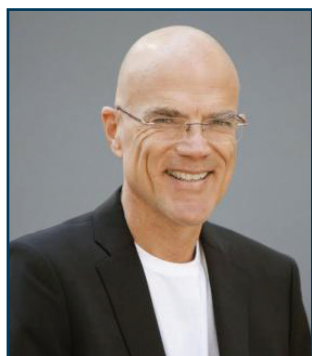
Historians of Science Convene with Physicists on the Centennial of Einstein's Theory of Relativity

HSS partnered with the Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy and The Huntington to host the sixth biennial Francis Bacon Conference in honor of the centennial of Einstein's general theory of relativity. The three-day conference, referred to as "GR 100," involved physicists and historians exploring topics from the early history of general relativity to ongoing experimental projects. They gathered one month after Caltech announced that scientists had observed ripples in the fabric of spacetime called gravitational waves, which confirms a major prediction of Einstein's and opens an unprecedented new window onto the cosmos. GR 100 highlights included the presentation of the Francis Bacon Award to Jürgen Renn, director at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, for his influential studies of structural changes in systems of knowledge, as well as a public lecture by Kip Thorne, Caltech's Richard P. Feynman Professor of Theoretical Physics, Emeritus, to a capacity audience at The Huntington.



Caltech Alumna Pioneers Research in Election Forecasting Methods

During the 2016 presidential primary season, Caltech News and the Alumni Association featured online stories about Erin Hartman (BS '07), who served as an analyst during the 2012 election cycle. Tasked with studying data from the Obama campaign's massive polling operation, Hartman realized that if she synthesized detailed demographics and voting histories and applied them to her prediction models, she could rebalance results to account for those who don't participate in polling—the "most significant improvement in public-opinion survey methodology in more than 30 years," according to one campaign official. Hartman, who is now an assistant professor of statistics and political science at UCLA, notes that her interest in politics was sparked as a Caltech freshman while poll watching in her American politics class with Professor of Political Science Michael Alvarez.



Caltech Appoints Cvitanic as Director of The Linde Institute

Caltech announced in March that Richard N. Merkin Professor of Mathematical Finance Jaks Cvitanic was appointed as the new director of The Ronald and Maxine Linde Institute of Economic and Management Sciences. In the Caltech News story on his appointment, Cvitanic explained that The Linde Institute creates "an environment in which interdisciplinary, original research involving the social sciences and quantitative fields can thrive" through various means, including alumni career panels, graduate and postdoc fellowships, student internships, and faculty research support.



SPRING

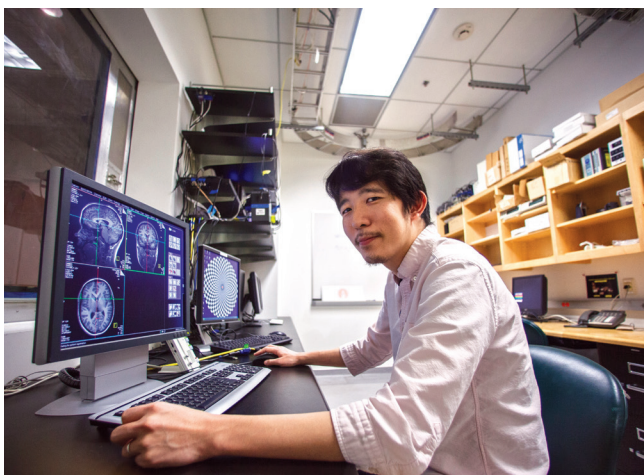
**Caltech
Announces
Ronald and
Maxine Linde
Leadership
Chair for HSS**

As part of Caltech's current capital campaign, Ronald (MS '62, PhD '64) and Maxine Linde made a \$50 million commitment—one of the largest single gifts ever pledged to Caltech. In April, Institute leaders announced that some funds from that commitment would be allocated to endow the Ronald and Maxine Linde Leadership Chair in the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, which supplies discretionary funding for high priorities and new endeavors in the division year after year. According to HSS Division Chair Jean-Laurent Rosenthal (PhD '88), the Rea A. and Lela G. Axline Professor of Business Economics and the inaugural holder of the Linde Leadership Chair, "HSS faculty continuously generate promising, original ideas to push the frontier in research and teaching, [and] the Lindes' generosity helps us make these ideas real and seek new challenges in understanding the human experience."



**Caltech Capital Campaign Launch
Features Social Science Graduate
Student Research**

At the April 29 community celebration for the Caltech capital campaign, the party included "experiential stations" featuring research in each of the six academic divisions. The HSS station presented the work of graduate student Chujun Lin, who studies how cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity between the candidate and the voter may provide clues about candidate evaluation. Lin, along with classmates Alejandro Robinson Cortes and Han Seo, invited attendees to participate in a mini voter experiment to show how attributes inferred from candidates' faces can predict election outcomes. Lin designed her research project to further our understanding of voter choices, campaign strategies, and the political dynamics of racial and ethnic representation in culturally diverse regions like Southern California.



**HSS Neuroscientists Demonstrate that
Risk-Taking Behavior May Be Contagious**

Why do we sometimes decide to take risks and other times choose to play it safe? Caltech News featured a new study led by Shinsuke Suzuki, then a Caltech postdoctoral scholar in neuroscience, with John O'Doherty, professor of psychology and director of the Caltech Brain Imaging Center, which explores the neural mechanisms of one possible explanation: a contagion effect. The study's findings, published in the March 21 online early edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, show that risk-taking behavior and the neural processing of risk in our brain are both changed when we observe the risk-taking behaviors of others.



Caltech News Asks Tamuz Why We Do What We Do

Caltech News interviewed Omer Tamuz, assistant professor of economics and mathematics, about his research into how people make decisions based on what they know and what they don't know, and how

they exchange this information with one another. Tamuz explained: "We make assumptions about how people behave and we try to model this behavior with math. . . . There is this huge, rich theory you can build, with unending depth and interesting turns and twists and beautiful math, and very non-trivial things going on that you can learn . . . and maybe sometimes this assumption is not so outrageous and can give us insights about the real world."

Ciaran and Deirdre Carson Visit for an Evening of Poetry and Music

On May 17, Irish poet Ciaran Carson and his musician wife, Deirdre, explored the *aisling* tradition with a performance in Dabney Lounge. The Carsons visited Caltech at the invitation of Professor of English and Dean of Undergraduate Students Kevin Gilmartin, with the support of the James Michelin Distinguished Visitors program. In the days following the performance, Carson worked with Caltech undergrads in Gilmartin's Modern and Contemporary Irish Literature class and in Lecturer in Creative Writing Judith Hall's Writing Poetry class.



HSS Congratulates Its New Doctors

At its 122nd commencement exercises in June, Caltech awarded PhDs to seven accomplished scholars completing their degrees in the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences. The HSS 2016 graduates (with their dissertations) are:

- Yifei Huang ("Essays in Economic History and Applied Microeconomics")
- Taisuke Imai ("Essays in Revealed Preference Theory and Behavioral Economics")
- Sergio Montero ("Essays in Econometrics and Political Economy")
- Samantha Myers ("Three Essays on Inequality and Political Economy")
- Euncheol Shin ("Essays on Social Networks and Political Economy")
- Gerelt Tserenjigmid ("Essays in Behavioral Decision Theory")
- Qiaoxi "Jackie" Zhang ("Three Essays on Information Economics")

SUMMER



Gilmartin Named Dean of Undergraduate Students

On July 1, Professor of English Kevin Gilmartin became Caltech's newest dean of undergraduate students. In announcing the appointment, Joseph E. Shepherd, vice president for student affairs and the C. L. "Kelly" Johnson Professor of Aeronautics and Mechanical Engineering, described Gilmartin as "an accomplished scholar and author who brings to this position 25 years of experience in teaching and mentoring our students, and who has shown a keen interest in the welfare of our undergraduate students in and outside of the classroom." This appointment follows Gilmartin being awarded Caltech's highest honor in teaching, the Feynman Prize, in 2015.

HSS WELCOMES ITS NEW FACULTY



**Maura Dykstra,
Assistant Professor
of History**

Dykstra arrived last summer following a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies. She received her PhD from UCLA in 2014.

She is fluent in modern and classical Chinese, and her research interests include legal and economic history as well as the history of the transition from the late imperial to the modern Chinese state.



**Sarah Gronningsater,
Assistant Professor
of History**

Gronningsater is a historian of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century United States, with a focus on slavery and abolition. She works at the intersections of legal, political, constitutional, and social history. She earned her PhD from the University of Chicago in 2014 and was a Barra Postdoctoral Fellow at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania from 2014 to 2016. Gronningsater's current book project is titled *The Arc of Abolition: The Children of Gradual Emancipation and the Origins of National Freedom*.



**Dean Mobbs,
Assistant Professor
of Cognitive
Neuroscience**

Previously an assistant professor of psychology at Columbia University, Mobbs joined the HSS neuroscience faculty during the summer. He is interested in the intersection of behavioral ecology, economics, emotion, and social psychology. By understanding the neural, computational, and behavioral dynamics of human social and emotional experiences, Mobbs wants to develop theoretical models that merge those fields. His awards include the APS Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions (2015) and the NARSAD Young Investigator award (2015).



**Luciano Pomatto,
Assistant Professor
of Economics**

Pomatto is a theorist interested in understanding economic interactions in situations of uncertainty. His research focuses on matching markets with incomplete information, the theory of Bayesian learning, the problem of strategic forecasting, and the evaluation of aggregate risk. Prior to his arrival in HSS, Pomatto was a postdoctoral associate at Yale University's Cowles Foundation for Research in Economics, after earning his PhD from Northwestern University in 2015.



Caltech Graduate Argues Before the Supreme Court

Will Peterson (BS '02) was offered the chance every lawyer dreams of, to argue before the United States Supreme Court, by none other than the late Justice Antonin Scalia. The law might seem an unexpected career path for a Techer, but Peterson credits part of his interest to J. Morgan Kousser, the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of History and Social Science at Caltech—specifically his class on the Supreme Court. “He made the justices approachable,” Peterson said. “We understood the personalities, gained a sense of constitutional issues, and learned how to read the Court’s opinions.”



SURF Studies Domestic Violence in Nineteenth-Century English Literature

Grace Lee, a senior double majoring in applied mathematics and English, studied the shifting attitudes toward spousal abuse in nineteenth-century Britain for her 2016 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF) project. In a Caltech News article on her research, Lee explained what drew her to the mid-1800s in England during the Industrial Revolution—a period of rapid cultural development, particularly in the area of women’s rights: “As a modern woman and feminist, I was interested in learning more about women’s rights of the period and, to an extent, what kind of legal changes took place to progress toward the rights women enjoy today.”



Jin Discusses Developing Realistic Models of Financial Markets

Caltech News profiled Lawrence Jin (MS '06), who joined the HSS faculty as an assistant professor of finance in 2015 after working as a research and trading analyst on Wall Street and then earning his PhD in financial economics at Yale University. Jin explained that his behavioral finance research involves developing “psychologically plausible and realistic models to better understand financial markets.” Jin’s arrival at Caltech marked an important step in building a finance faculty to support the Institute’s business, economics, and management (BEM) option and to expand the research activities of The Ronald and Maxine Linde Institute of Economic and Management Sciences.

FALL



The Caltech-Huntington Humanities Collaborations Debut

Caltech and The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens first formalized their joint research efforts in 2013 with the Materialities, Texts and Images (MTI) program. This fall, the institutions expanded their ambitions to serve as world leaders in bringing interdisciplinary research to the humanities through what is now known as the Caltech-Huntington Humanities Collaborations (CHHC). The CHHC program is organized around an ongoing series of ambitious and targeted interdisciplinary research projects—or thematic research “modules”—developed and coordinated by a small group of Caltech faculty members and Huntington residential research fellows. The 2016–2018 CHHC module, titled *Violence and Order Past and Present*, studies the various roles that violence has played in political and social order, as well as the norms and cultural attitudes that have governed its use.

Hixon Writing Center Welcomes New Writing Specialists

The Hixon Writing Center (HWC) added two new writing specialists (professional tutors) for this academic year—a generalist to support ongoing center work and a new STEM writing specialist to help expand it. Emma Burris-Janssen is the new generalist, who is currently writing her dissertation for her PhD in literature from the University of Connecticut. She is an experienced tutor, and her excellence as a teacher of literature and writing has been recognized with a teaching award at UConn. Christina Birch is the HWC’s first STEM writing specialist. She has a PhD in biological engineering from MIT, where she was also a fellow in the Communication Lab. Birch deepens the HWC’s ability to work with students on technical, quantitative writing in varied genres, and she will work with students on translating their ideas for varied audiences, in both written and oral contexts.



New School Year Introduces HSS Students to New Faculty and New Courses

HSS shared an article about course offerings by its new faculty in 2016–2017. In addition to the new HSS professorial faculty listed on page 6, HSS introduced Stefano Gattei as the Eleanor Searle Visiting Instructor in History, whose courses examine the lives and discoveries of Galileo and Kepler. Leah Klement, the first postdoctoral instructor in the CHHC program, is teaching a course called *Strangers, Foreigners, and Others: Encountering Difference in Literature* and a spring course on the ethics of war. The offerings from Aleta Quinn, Ahmanson Postdoctoral Instructor in Philosophy of Science, include courses on environmental ethics, philosophy and biology, and bioethics. Eran Hadas will visit Caltech as an artist-in-residence through the Israel Institute, which is dedicated to enhancing knowledge of modern Israel. This spring, he will teach computational literature, covering the evolution of poetry and poets from the end of the Romantic era until 2045, when futurist Ray Kurzweil predicted the singularity.



Caltech and the Tianqiao and Chrissy Chen Institute Launch Major Neuroscience Initiative

On December 6, Caltech announced a \$115 million gift from visionary philanthropists Tianqiao Chen and Chrissy Luo, which will spearhead a campus-wide neuroscience initiative to create a unique environment for interdisciplinary brain research. The goal of the new endeavor is to deepen our understanding of the brain and how it works at the most basic level, as well as how it fails because of disease or through the aging process. The Tianqiao and Chrissy Chen Institute for Neuroscience at Caltech will comprise five interdisciplinary research centers—including the existing Caltech Brain Imaging Center (CBIC) and the new T&C Chen Center for Social and Decision Neuroscience.

Under the direction of Colin Camerer, Caltech's Robert Kirby Professor of Behavioral Economics, the T&C Chen Center for Social and Decision Neuroscience will investigate two important higher-order core functions of the human brain: making decisions and processing and guiding social interactions. Using the center's resources for computational modeling and brain imaging, researchers from different areas of science will collaborate to understand these two core functions. Their findings will help improve how we make personal decisions, allow researchers to design devices and interventions to benefit society, and inform new treatments for neurologically based disorders such as anxiety and autism.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

AMONG OUR GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED THEIR PHDS IN 2016 . . .

Yifei Huang is a data scientist at Microsoft Research.

Sergio Montero is an assistant professor of political science and economics at the University of Rochester.

Samantha Myers is a postdoctoral associate in social science at New York University's global campus in Abu Dhabi.

Euncheol Shin is an assistant professor of economics at Kyung Hee University.

Gerelt Tserenjigmid is an assistant professor at Virginia Tech.

Qiaoxi "Jackie" Zhang is a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Chile.

AMONG OUR POSTDOCS WHO COMPLETED THEIR HSS APPOINTMENTS IN 2016 . . .

Julien Dubois is a postdoctoral scientist in the Department of Neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Charles "Chip" Sebens is an assistant professor in the Philosophy Department at UC San Diego.

Damian Stanley is an assistant professor at the Gordon F. Derner Institute of Advanced Psychological Studies at Adelphi University.

Shinsuke Suzuki is an assistant professor at the Frontier Research Institute for Interdisciplinary Sciences (FRIS) at Tohoku University in Japan.

Shuo Wang is a postdoctoral research associate at the Princeton Neuroscience Institute.

CONGRATULATIONS

HSS recognizes and congratulates its faculty, students, and friends for honors and awards bestowed this year.

In February, the Association of American Publishers conferred the **2016 Award for Excellence in Physical Sciences & Mathematics** and the **2016 Award for Best in Physical Sciences & Mathematics/Eproduct** on Princeton University Press for the digital edition of *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*. With Caltech Professor of History **Diana Kormos-Buchwald** as its director and general editor, the **Einstein Papers Project** (EPP) established *The Digital Einstein Papers* as an open-access site for the ongoing publication of Einstein's massive written legacy, comprising more than 30,000 unique documents—"the Dead Sea Scrolls of physics," according to the *New York Times*. The EPP recently announced that its latest volume is now available online, covering April 1923 to May 1925, when Einstein fled Germany in the wake of threats to his life while pondering a unified theory of gravitational and electromagnetic fields.

Caltech announced in March that its 2016 **Distinguished Alumni Award** recipients include **Janet Campagna** (MS '85, social science), the first Caltech social scientist to receive this highest honor that the Institute bestows upon its graduates. Caltech recognized Campagna for her contributions to quantitative investment and for her leadership in the financial industry. Campagna is the founder of QS Investors, LLC, a leading customized solutions and global quantitative equities provider.

Professor of Political Science **Alex Hirsch** was awarded tenure in HSS as of April 1. Hirsch uses game theory and quantitative methods to study political institutions. His main focus is on American political institutions and, in particular, how a learning-by-doing approach affects the efficacy of policy for legislative organization and bureaucratic management.

In June, Caltech held its 61st annual **Staff Service & Impact Awards** ceremony to celebrate Caltech staff members and the important work they do to advance the mission of the Institute. Awards are presented in recognition of length of

service, with the first award bestowed at the 10-year mark. HSS was well represented in 2016, with six staff members receiving service awards:

- **Sheryl Cobb**, Administrative Assistant (30 years)
- **Chris Crabbe**, SSEL Technical Manager (10 years)
- **Jey Giuliano**, Financial Manager (30 years)
- **Rudy Hirschmann**, EPP IT Manager (15 years)
- **Jennifer Nollar James**, EPP Assistant Editor (10 years)
- **Gail Nash**, Academic Affairs Manager (20 years)

The HSS student prize winners honored at Caltech's commencement in June included:

- **Leo Balestri** (Gordon McClure Memorial Communications Prize in history)
- **Arjun Goswami** (Alexander P. and Adelaide F. Hixon Prize for Writing)
- **Sirus Han** (Mary A. Earl McKinney Prize in Literature for prose fiction)
- **William Hoza** (Gordon McClure Memorial Communications Prize in philosophy)
- **Matthew Lim** (Mary A. Earl McKinney Prize in Literature for poetry)
- **Suchita Nety** (Gordon McClure Memorial Communications Prize in English)
- **Ellora Sarkar** (David M. Grether Prize in Social Science)
- **Lucas Núñez** (John O. Ledyard Prize for Graduate Research in Social Science)

Nominated by students for their ability to inspire and motivate through teaching, **Ben Saltzman**, the Weisman Postdoctoral Instructor in Medieval British Literature, and **Keith Pluymers**, the Howard E. and Susanne C. Jessen Postdoctoral Instructor in the Humanities, received **ASCIT Teaching Awards**, which are presented once a year by ASCIT, the Associated Students of the California Institute of Technology. Pluymers recently learned from the University of Pennsylvania Press that his manuscript *No Wood, No Kingdom: The Political Ecology of the English Atlantic World* has been approved by its editorial board for publication. It will be his first book. Saltzman joins the faculty at the University of Chicago in the fall of 2017.

HSS is pleased to support the work of its social sciences graduate students with the following fellowships:

- **Jun Chen** (2016 Linde Institute Summer Fellow)
- **Marcelo Fernandez** (2016 Linde Institute Summer Fellow)
- **Tatiana Mayskaya** (2016–2017 Linde Institute Graduate Fellow)
- **Welmar Rosado Buenfil** (2016–2017 HSS Chair’s Council Graduate Fellow)
- **Myungkoo Song** (2016–2017 HSS Chair’s Council Graduate Fellow)
- **Pengfei Sui** (2016 Linde Institute Summer Fellow)
- **Jun Zhang** (2016 Linde Institute Summer Fellow and 2016–2017 Linde Institute Graduate Fellow)

HSS also congratulates third-year graduate student **Hao Zhao** on his receipt of a Resnick Sustainability Institute Graduate Research Fellowship.

Over the course of the last fiscal year (ending September 30, 2016), the research of several HSS faculty members and scholars was recognized with competitively awarded external funding, including:

- Bren Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience and Professor of Biology **Ralph Adolphs**, for 2016 summer undergraduate research, from the Simons Foundation
- Professor of Political Science **R. Michael Alvarez**, for “Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project: The Past, Present, and Future of Election Administration in the United States,” from the Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Robert Kirby Professor of Behavioral Economics **Colin Camerer**, for “A Large-Scale Interdisciplinary Meta-Analysis on Behavioral Economics Parameters,” from UC Berkeley’s Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences
- Former postdoctoral scholar **Julien Dubois**, for “Developing Neural Markers to Evaluate Social Skills Training,” from the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation (BBRF/NARSAD)
- Professor of Philosophy **Frederick Eberhardt**, for “RI: Medium: CompCog: Automated Discovery of Macro-Variables from Raw Spatiotemporal Data,” from the National Science Foundation
- Allen and Lenabelle Davis Professor of Economics and Executive Officer for the Social Sciences **Federico Echenique** and Assistant Professor of Economics **Kota Saito**, for “Revealed Preference Tests and Experiments

for Choices under Uncertainty,” from the National Science Foundation

- Professor of History **Diana Kormos-Buchwald**, for *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, from the National Science Foundation
- Allen and Lenabelle Davis Professor of Economics and Social Sciences, Emeritus, **John Ledyard**, for “Efficiency and Effectiveness Study of the JPL Operating Systems,” from JPL/NASA; and for “Developing New, Viable Approaches to Managing Ground Water Aquifers,” from the Max Factor Family Foundation
- Professor of Psychology and Director of the Caltech Brain Imaging Center **John O’Doherty**, for “Neuronal Substrates of Hemodynamic Signals in the Prefrontal Cortex,” from the National Institutes of Health; and for “Determining the Neural Substrates of Model-Based and Model-Free Learning During Pavlovian Conditioning,” from the National Institutes of Health
- William D. Hacker Professor of Economics and Political Science **Charlie Plott**, for “Efficient Government Service Provision: Replacing Administrative Processes with Smart Market Designs,” from the Templeton Foundation
- Assistant Professor of Economics and Mathematics **Omer Tamuz**, for “Group Actions: Invariant Random Subgroups, Entropy and Genericity,” from the Simons Foundation
- Professor of Economics **Leeat Yariv**, for the Caltech Cohort Study, from the National Science Foundation; and for “An Experimental Study of Matching Markets with Incomplete Information,” from the International Foundation for Research in Experimental Economics

The **Brass Division Awards** honor service to HSS and recognize teaching, mentoring, or other activities that enhance learning among Caltech students. The 2016 winners, who received their awards at the December 5 HSS holiday lunch, are:

- Professor of Social Science History **Tracy Dennison**
- Special Assistant to the Humanities **Sini Elvington**
- Lecturer in French **Christiane Orcel**
- Jessen Postdoctoral Instructor **Keith Plumyers**

Last but certainly not least, HSS congratulates **Kota Saito** on his promotion to professor of economics in December. The main focus of Saito’s research is in decision theory, which is the branch of economics concerned with the mathematical properties of individual preferences. Using a specific axiomatic route, Saito develops mathematical models of decision making that account for some of the behavioral regularities documented in experimental economics and psychology.

ALSO IN THE NEWS

There was a lot of interest in the observations of Professor of Political Science **R. Michael Alvarez** surrounding the 2016 presidential election. His piece “Are U.S. elections ‘rigged?’ Here’s how to help voters believe that they’re not” appeared on the *Washington Post*’s Monkey Cage blog, and his essay “The Future of Voting” ran in the *Wall Street Journal*. On Election Day, Alvarez was interviewed on KPCC’s program *Take Two*.

Caltech News featured a study led by **Colin Camerer**, the Robert Kirby Professor of Behavioral Economics, that found that published results from experimental economics—a field pioneered at Caltech—are better than average when it comes to reproducibility. “Trying to reproduce previous results is not glamorous or creative, so it is rarely done. But being able to get the same result over and over is part of the definition of what makes knowledge scientific,” says Camerer.

Continuing the collaborations between HSS and The Huntington, Professor of English and Dean of Undergraduate Students **Kevin Gilmartin** spoke about Jane Austen to a group from the Caltech Associates at The Huntington in November. Caltech News described the event this way: “Surrounded by first editions of some of Austen’s most famous novels—including *Pride and Prejudice*—as well as letters, books, and even a fan imprinted with the music of the time, Gilmartin talked about how Austen’s work fits with his study of the Age of Revolution, an era of social and political upheaval in Europe and the Americas.”

Alumna **Sarah Hill** (PhD '07, social science), now an associate professor of political science at Cal State Fullerton, was featured on a KTLA live election panel to analyze voter response on the evening of November 8.

Following the release of his latest book, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World*, Professor of Economics and History **Philip Hoffman** was interviewed by KPCC’s Larry Mantle about the reasons why Europe was able to achieve such a feat despite competition from far more advanced powers—China and Japan, for instance. “The big difference,” according to Hoffman, “is Europe’s military superiority, which started its rapid growth from the Middle Ages on.”

In an interview for the *Caltech Undergraduate Research Journal*’s summer 2016 edition, Assistant Professor of English **Jennifer Jahner** described her research at the intersection of poetry and politics. She attributes her interest in medieval poems to their mysterious nature, explaining, “You have to approach [each] poem as an investigator or a detective.”

The media sought the voting-rights expertise of **J. Morgan Kousser**, William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of History and Social Science, during this election year. Kousser was quoted by NBC in its story about how California law strengthens a provision of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 that prohibits racial discrimination. Kousser also was cited in an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, among other outlets, about poll monitoring on Election Day.

In the spring, social sciences graduate student **Lucas Núñez** learned that his paper “Expressive and Strategic Behavior in Legislative Elections in Argentina” would be published in the December 2016 edition of *Political Behavior*—a particularly impressive accomplishment for a student only in his third year of graduate study at the time.

Caltech News ran a story on the novel conversation course taught by **Christiane Orcel**, lecturer in French. “In general, a conversational French class focuses on

food, sports, housing, family, transportation, et cetera. But these [Caltech] students wanted to become more comfortable in scientific French,” Orcel says, in order to continue their studies abroad.

The Caltech Campaign website recently posted a piece about **Keith Plumyers**, Caltech’s inaugural Howard E. and Susanne C. Jessen Postdoctoral Instructor in the Humanities. According to Plumyers, “The instructorship gives me complete freedom to teach far beyond what is normally taught in a history department and to design the courses, which is amazingly liberating.”

There’s a lot more to being “cool” than meets the eye: it turns out it’s all in our heads. An online feature on Professor of Philosophy **Steven Quartz** and colleague Anette Asp highlights research from their book *Cool: How the Brain’s Hidden Quest for Cool Drives Our Economy and Shapes Our World* (2015).

In August, *Philosopher’s Annual* announced that the paper “Quantum Mechanics as Classical Physics” (published in *Philosophy of Science*) by then-outgoing

Ahmanson Postdoctoral Instructor in the History and Philosophy of Physics **Charles “Chip” Sebens** had been selected as one of the 10 best articles published in philosophy for 2015.

Caltech News interviewed last year’s Eleanor Searle Visiting Professor of History at Caltech and The Huntington, **Asif Siddiqi**, about his research into the history of space exploration and the often forgotten global contributions to the space race beyond the US and Russia.

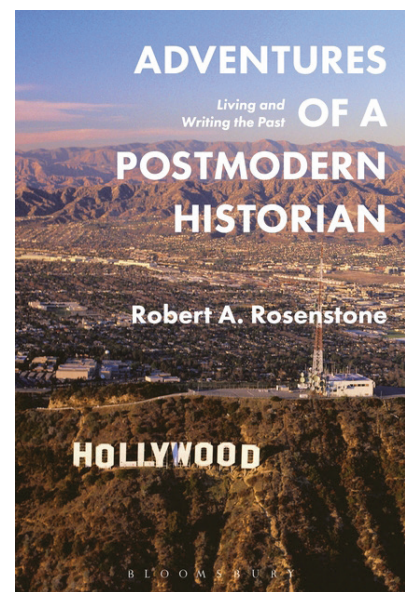
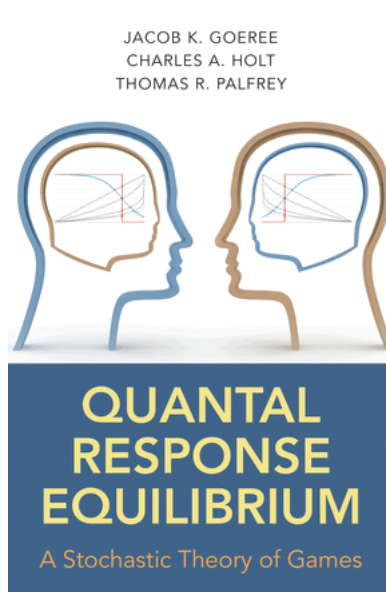
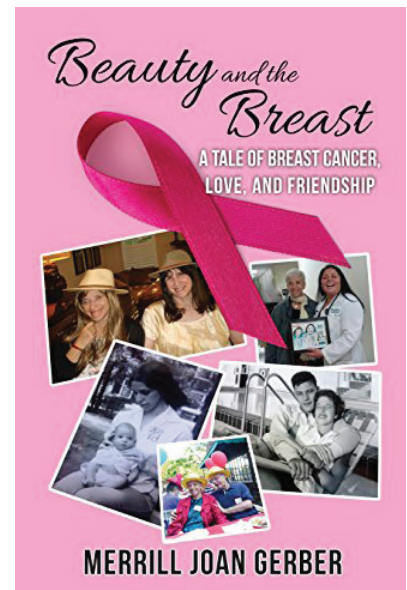
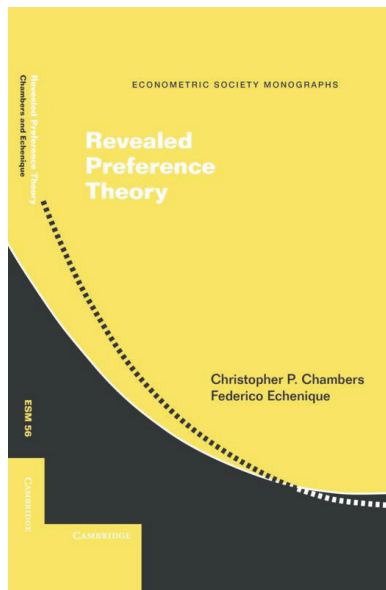
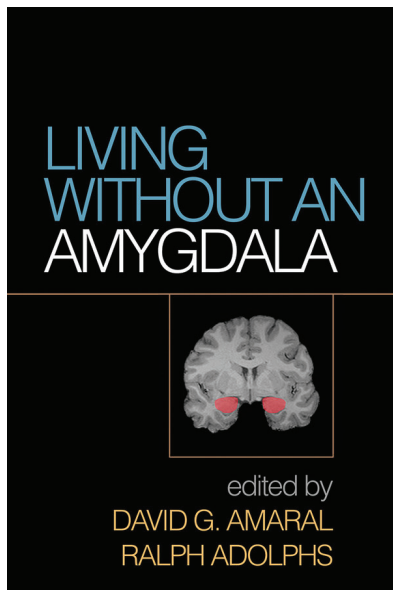
CBS Los Angeles interviewed **Omer Tamuz**, assistant professor of economics and mathematics, for his insights on the probability of winning when the Powerball jackpot exceeded \$500 million last January.

Caltech’s team finished in the top five of the Chicago Quantitative Alliance’s annual Student Portfolio Contest, in which teams of university students manage virtual hedge funds for several months. 2016 was the second year that Caltech participated in the CQA challenge, with **Kenneth J. Winston**, lecturer in economics, as the team’s mentor.



FACULTY BOOKS

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2016
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2017 PREVIEW

**DIVISION OF
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SOCIAL SCIENCES**

2017 EVENT PREVIEW

JANUARY 24

James Michelin Distinguished Visitors Program: Danielle Dutton Reading

FEBRUARY 1

Exploration: The Globe and Beyond: Walter Alvarez, Professor of the Graduate School, Earth and Planetary Science Department, UC Berkeley "The Iberian Voyages of Discovery, and the Origin of Modern Science: A Geological Perspective"

APRIL 3

Literary Dimensions Seminar: Sharon Marcus, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Dean of Humanities, Columbia University, "The Drama of Celebrity"

MAY 9

James Michelin Distinguished Visitors Program: Louisa Thomas Reading

MAY 10

Earnest C. Watson Lecture Series: Nicolas Wey-Gomez, Professor of History, Caltech, "What Columbus Discovered"

MAY 11-12

Visual Ecologies Workshop with Lynda Nead, Pevsner Professor of History of Art, Birkbeck College, University of London, and Moore Distinguished Scholar at Caltech

MAY 18

Harris Lecture, which will include a screening of their film *Containment*: Peter Galison, Joseph Pellegrino University Professor, Harvard University, and Robb Moss, Chair, Department of Visual and Environmental Studies, Harvard University

OCTOBER 16

James Michelin Distinguished Visitors Program: Andrea Wulf Reading

Event details are subject to change. Please check the calendar on the HSS website (under News and Events) for the latest information about these and other HSS events.



For questions about this newsletter and HSS in general, please email hsschair@caltech.edu.

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