

HONG KIERKEGAARD LIBRARY

Student Newsletter

Calendar of Events

What is Your "Why?"
Speaker Antonio Jennings
www.antoniojennings.biz

Pizza Thursday
Thursday, October 25th
11:30am
Hong Kierkegaard Library

Casual Kierkegaard
Conversations
(students only)

"At a Graveside:"
Søren Kierkegaard on Death
Thursday, November 1st
11:30am-12:30pm
Kierkegaard Library Lounge

Thursday, December 6th
11:30am-12:30pm
Kierkegaard Library Lounge

Julia Watkin
Memorial Lecture
Thursday, November 8th
7:00pm
Viking Theater

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A Message from the Curator

Gordon Marino

Welcome back to the Hill! I am Dr. Gordon Marino, a philosophy professor and director of the Hong Kierkegaard Library.

I hope that you will come for a visit to our world famous collection on one of the immortals of the intellectual world, Søren Kierkegaard. As you might glean from reading my recently published memoir/intro "The Existentialist's Survival Guide," Kierkegaard is a very helpful companion in dealing with the inner and outer challenges of life. In the spring, I teach philosophy 233 Kierkegaard and Existentialism.

In that class, you could certainly become acquainted with "SK" (as we affectionately call him), as well as Camus, Sartre, and other philosophers, all of whom write like angels!

I also coach boxing and football at St. Olaf, so you can look for me on the field on Saturdays. If you would like to get acquainted, I am usually around in the afternoon, and I hold night office hours throughout the year so come in and say hello.

May the Muse be with you this semester! Hope to see you soon.

Summer Reflections

Amy Imdieke

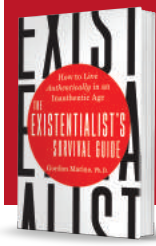
When the Hong Kierkegaard Library hired me as a summer employee, I held what I thought to be a healthy skepticism of philosophy. The only philosophers I knew of were the ones immortalized in ancient Greek statues and Renaissance paintings of old men with flowing beards and deeply-contemplative expressions. Thankfully, the English professors, pastors, doctors, theologians and, yes, philosophers that I encountered during my time at the Kierkegaard Library gave me a new perspective on this living, breathing field of study.

This past summer the Kierkegaard Library hosted The Eighth International Kierkegaard Conference and became an international home for more than two hundred existentialist scholars. These scholars flew in from five continents and more than twenty countries, including Israel, Slovakia, Japan, Nigeria, and Brazil to name a few. It comes as no surprise then that the over eighty research paper presentations covered a wide breadth of topics ranging from everything between a "Kierkegaardian Reflection on Suicide" to the "Desirability of Immortality".

The Spanish and Portuguese sessions provided a wonderful conclusion to the conference and featured bilingual scholars from Italy, Mexico, Argentina, Portugal, and the United States.

As the summer came to a close, I found myself enjoying my time with the scholars more than I ever imagined. My favorite part of those early mornings was listening to the scholars explain their research on Kierkegaard. For some, the great Danish philosopher helped them personally pursue a life of authenticity; for others, he gave new meaning to terms such as forgiveness, faith, and doubt that we use in our everyday lives. The mornings, it seemed, were never too early for deep philosophical musings.

Although I only worked at the Kierkegaard for a few short months, my time spent working alongside such a diverse group of people planted within me a newfound interest in philosophy and a deep respect for the great Danish philosopher whose words still resonate with our hearts today.



THE EXISTENTIALIST'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

Gordon Marino, Ph.D.

AVAILABLE FOR ORDER AT

ExistentialistsSurvivalGuide.com

A Student's Perspective

Mattias Kostov

I consider myself blessed to have been given such great opportunities during the summer of 2018. While being able to participate in the Young Scholars program that was hosted by the Hong Kierkegaard Library, I was also able to work there full time. I found myself positioned in two unique and diverse settings, both of which had something different and special to offer.

As a Young Scholar, I interacted with Kierkegaard enthusiasts from a variety of backgrounds. Despite the fact that we all had at least one thing in common, the desire to dissect the works of Kierkegaard, everyone had a different story. Many were new to Kierkegaard, some were married, others knew multiple languages. It was exciting to be able to relate and communicate with intelligent and inspired people who were nothing like me.

Although working at the Hong Kierkegaard Library might seem to someone as a mere extension of the Kierkegaardian world we live in, being a student worker at the Kierkegaard Library is both an academically and professionally rewarding experience.

Despite being younger than the majority of the established scholars, I laid down the foundations of newly-born, long-lasting friendships. Unlike what most people expect, I found these high-minded philosophers to be entirely down-to-earth, funny, courteous, and caring in the utmost regard. One of my fondest experiences was interacting with the international scholars. As an international student myself, I felt right at home with them for they understood the feeling of being abroad for the sake of education and cultural enrichment.

"Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced."
Søren Kierkegaard

A Note from an Alum

Linden Smith

One of the greatest regrets about my time at St. Olaf was that I did not discover the Kierkegaard Library sooner. I did not set foot there until the latter half of my junior year. But in the relatively short time I spent there, the Kierkegaard Library became one of the most important parts of my St. Olaf education.

What struck me first was the space itself. Nestled in a remote corner of Rolvaag, the Kierkegaard library is free of the bustle of most of campus. There are several tables and armchairs, subdued lighting, and a few art pieces. The space calls for reflection and study.

The library is, of course, flooded with books. I was floored by its extensive collection. Sifting through the stacks, one can find any book remotely relevant to Kierkegaard scholarship. As a lover of books and libraries, I was excited to encounter a collection so specific yet so large.

There is something humbling about standing in a room that houses the life's work of numerous scholars all striving to explicate and interpret a single thinker. The stacks whisper stories of the labors of a dedicated community of scholars.

The scholars appear in the library not just in ink, but in the flesh. The library attracts scholars from all over the world. During my time as a student worker, I had the privilege of getting to know one such academic quite well.

He was always willing to talk me through a particularly hard passage of a book, or to answer my endless questions about graduate school. He told me all about his research and shared stories with me about life in his home country.

I've found that his generosity and kindness is not unusual among Kierkegaard scholars. The study of Kierkegaard seems to be warmer than most academic niches. Through the library, I've made close friends and found mentors. The library attracts incredible people.

I was fortunate to do both CURI research and student work in the Kierkegaard library. In the space of a year, I got to be both a researcher and an assistant to researchers. I am thankful for the skills I picked up in both roles. Working there gave me editing experience I sorely needed. My time there helped me to discern what I wanted to do after college more so than any other involvement I had at St. Olaf.

I will miss the Kierkegaard library. I'll miss the coffee and treats outside. I'll miss the scholars, the lectures, the great conversations. I'll miss crisp fall afternoons shelving books and sipping tea. I'll miss every wonderful person I got to know there. But I will carry with me the skills, wisdom, and memories I gained at the library.

The Kierkegaard library shaped me more than any other part of St. Olaf. I am so thankful for everything I have taken from my time there. And I know that I will be back.