



Hong Kierkegaard Library

Student Newsletter

Fall 2021

A student's perspective on the move to Steensland by Abigail Peterson

This winter, the Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library will have a new location: Steensland Hall. Steensland, the small building that sits between Old Main and Holland Hall, was built in 1902 as St. Olaf College's first library. This makes it the perfect space for the Hong-Kierkegaard Library, both as a special collection and as a center for research and publication. Søren Kierkegaard, widely considered the father of existentialism, was a Danish philosopher in the early to mid 1800s. He wrote extensively on Christian philosophy and is considered a contemporary to theologians and philosophers from Aquinas to Hegel. Kierkegaard's writings discuss faith, anxiety, love, depression, and other still-relevant issues. The Hong Kierkegaard Library collection is the largest collection of works by and about Kierkegaard outside of Denmark, at around 20,000 volumes.

This move suits both Steensland Hall -- as it has been sitting empty for a decade and hasn't functioned as a library since Rolvaag Memorial Library was built in 1942 -- as well as the Hong Kierkegaard Library -- as this new location gives the collection the respect it deserves, as well as increasing visibility on campus and provides necessary space for classes, events, and visiting scholars.

For students, this move means several things: first, students will get to see the inside of the "forbidden library" for the first time since 2011. Also, students who were unaware of the Hong-Kierkegaard Library's extensive collections and resources and are interested in Kierkegaard or exploring discussions of faith, mental health, and existentialist philosophy, will be able to access the collection and have interesting conversations with other students, scholars, and faculty. Last but not least, a new study space will be available to all! With the library's huge windows and intellectual atmosphere, it will be a perfect place to get work done.

As a student worker at the Hong Kierkegaard Library, I am especially excited about how this move will give the collection increased visibility on campus, and thus more visitors. When the collection was in the basement of Rolvaag Library, it was a hidden treasure; this move gives the library a new beginning and a chance to flourish. As more students step into the library and explore its contents, more will also learn about the lively programs available through the library. Such programs for students are the Young Scholars program, CURT projects, Prof. Gordon Marino's interim course on Kierkegaard and mental health, and of course, endless opportunities to read Kierkegaard. The Hong-Kierkegaard Library is on the cusp of becoming a new center for intellectual student life, which is a fantastic prospect.

Finally, as a history major, I am particularly excited about Steensland Hall's return to its original function for the first time in eighty years. The building's renovations are intended to replicate what Steensland originally looked like in 1902. As the campus' first library, Steensland Hall was a focal point of so much of St. Olaf's early history, and it is fulfilling to see it have a new role in the school's history going forward.

Besides being able to do my student work in a beautifully renovated historic space and the Hong Kierkegaard Library's new beginning, I am particularly excited to be able to study underneath the stained glass skylight, looking through the large windows over the Hill, in an intellectual environment that the library certainly will provide. Hopefully, the broader student body will agree that the "forbidden library" is going to be the perfect place to spend an afternoon.

Learn more about our student workers at the HKL



Hi, I'm Elsa, first year student from Duluth, MN and I'm interested in exploring a major in Political Science and/or Sociology/Anthropology. I first encountered the Hong-Kierkegaard library as I toured the St. Olaf campus, and once accepted on campus, I knew that I wanted to explore the library and the community within the library more. When I'm not in class, I'm often exploring a new hiking trail, reading in a hammock, or doing work with political organizations.



Hi, I'm Abdou and I help the library with research-related tasks like writing articles, finding book titles, helping scholars locate things, or whatever Eileen Shimota throws my way. I joined the Hong Kierkegaard Library in my sophomore year after completing "PHIL 233: Existentialism" and a summer seminar on Kierkegaard with Professor Gordon Marino. Currently a junior, I major in Computer Science (though a humanities-wannabe) and I find joy with nature, family, good conversations and a fresh cup of tea or coffee (yes they can peacefully coexist). I hope to see you in our new building in the Steensland Library and maybe chat a little bit about the good life...



Hi. I'm Baloch Maryam '23 from Pakistan. My majors are psychology and management studies. I'm deeply interested in philosophy and even though I'm not a philosophy major, I have participated and taken classes in philosophy. This summer I was also a part of the Young Scholars Program offered by the Hong-Kierkegaard Library. I started working for HKL last year and have since been in charge of managing and designing the student section of our online website.



My name is Ivy Lanz. I am a sophomore from South Kingstown, Rhode Island. Although I am undecided on my major, I am deeply interested in History and Library Science. With this school year opening back up, I hope to join an intramural sport and new clubs. This is my first year working at the Hong Kierkegaard Library and I am excited to get to know the library, it's staff, and the work surrounding the job. I, and another student, will be working on grant related tasks for the Rare Book Collection.



Hi, I'm Abigail Peterson '24 from Forest Lake, Minnesota. I'm double majoring in History and Social Studies Education. In addition to my typical librarian duties, I will help conservator Bailey Kinsky with restoring rare books. I love working at the Hong Kierkegaard Library because of its unique function as a special collections library and center for research and publication, the interesting collections, and the outstanding opportunities tailored to my interests and talents. The community of visitors and staff are friendly and charming. I love spending time in the library, and I am especially excited for its new location.



Hong Kierkegaard Library Announcements

LECTURE SERIES

Please join in for the Fall Julia Watkin - Virtual -
Lecture:

Thursday, November 11th at 7 pm

"Dare to Rejoice" by Professor Carson S. Webb
who holds the Harry R. Butman Chair of
Religion and Philosophy at Piedmont University.
He publishes and speaks on philosophy and
theology

Description: "Kierkegaard's "dare to rejoice"
offers us an alternative to the solipsism of
modernity's mirror of happiness and gives to
affect, including joy, its real significance.

CAMPUS WIDE OPEN HOUSE

A campus wide open house
will be held in HKL soon!
Follow us on Facebook :
The Hong Kierkegaard
Library and Instagram
@hklstolaf for more details
and updates.

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

It's official - the Hong Kierkegaard
Library has received a grant! The staff of
HKL are celebrating, and here's why you
should too. The grant will specifically go
towards the planning for conservation of
100 books in the Rare Book Collection.
Watch for more details and updates on
Hong Kierkegaard Library Facebook page
and Instagram.

YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Hong Kierkegaard Library offers a summer
internship every year for juniors and seniors
interested in learning about Kierkegaard.
Participants meet with Dr. Gordon Marino on a
daily basis and attend scholar seminars. They
have access and are encouraged to use the
resources of the Hong Kierkegaard Library for
study and research.