

Front Page News Story Archive

February 2024



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News Stories Posted Wednesday February 7, 2024



GCSU's online graduate programs rank top 100 in the Nation

[The Graduate School](#) : Wednesday February 7, 2024

Georgia College & State University's online nursing program [ranks first in the state](#) and tied for No. 28 nationally in the "[Best Online Programs](#)" rankings by U.S. News & World Report released today. Only three schools from Georgia ranked in the top 100 on U.S. News & World Report's list of best online nursing programs.

The online graduate programs offered by Georgia College in



GCSU's 2024 Graduate Program Rankings

business, criminal justice and education all rank in the top 100 overall against other programs across the nation.

“The [School of Nursing at Georgia College](#) & State University continues to attract the best and brightest students at every level, from bachelor’s to master’s to our doctor of nursing practice,” said Georgia College President Cathy Cox.

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Our online graduate degrees in nursing provide even more students access to our talented and dedicated faculty, and assure that working nurses can pursue advanced degrees with convenience. Our ranking as No. 1 in the state is well deserved. -President Cathy Cox

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Two programs from Georgia College’s J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology are also highly-ranked. The online Master’s Degree in Business (non-MBA) is second only to the University of Georgia statewide, and [No. 43 on U.S. News & World Report’s overall list](#). Georgia College and UGA are the only two schools in Georgia to rank in the top 100 on U.S. News & World Report’s list.

The Georgia College online MBA is [No. 94 nationally](#) and also second in Georgia. Again, Georgia College was one of only two schools in the state to rank in the [top 100 for online MBA programs](#).



Graduate student enrolled in the GCSU online master's of business program.

“These rankings speak to the superb quality and innovative spirit of our faculty. They consistently deliver a student-centered, highly engaging learning experience for working professionals and emerging leaders,” said Dr. Micheal Stratton, dean of the [College of Business and Technology](#).

Two other graduate programs round out Georgia College’s top 100 rankings: the [online Criminal Justice](#) program at [No. 61 nationally](#) (third in Georgia), and the online [Master’s of Education at No. 100](#) in the nation and top 10 in the state. The online [education graduate program](#) at Georgia College made significant gains in the rankings year-over-year, coming from a 2023 ranking of No. 132 and entering this year’s top 100.

“These rankings are another indicator that our accessible and affordable graduate programs are of the highest quality. These programs remain innovative and forward-looking to anticipate the needs of maturing professionals in all sectors represented by the rankings,” said Dr. Holley Roberts, associate provost for Academic Affairs and Director of [The Graduate School](#).

U.S. News & World Report designates Georgia College as a [Regional University South](#), a geographic area that includes a dozen southern states. According to U.S. News, “Regional Universities offer a full range of undergraduate programs and some master’s programs” and limited doctoral programs.

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These rankings are another indicator that our accessible and affordable graduate programs are of the highest quality. **-Dr. Holley Roberts**

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Among Georgia’s other regional south public institutions, Georgia College is No. 1 for its online Master’s of Business, online MBA and online Criminal Justice programs – in addition to being the No. 1 online graduate nursing program among all Georgia institutions, both public and private.

U.S. News & World Report is a multi-platform publisher of news and information, which includes www.usnews.com, as well as the digital-only U.S. News Weekly magazine. U.S. News publishes annual print and e-book versions of its authoritative rankings of Best Colleges, Best Graduate Schools and Best Hospitals.

News Stories Posted Thursday February 8, 2024



Staff profile: Margaret Schell—from the Packers to the Bobcats

[University Communications](#) : Thursday February 8, 2024

Story by GCSU senior Elizabeth Newlin

Margaret Brown Schell, '19, has worked as the communications coordinator for University Communications for over eight years and for University Advancement over one year. In early October, she'll reach her 10-year anniversary, marking a significant milestone in her career at Georgia College & State University.

As the communications coordinator, Schell plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective communication within the university community, ensuring that information flows smoothly and efficiently. Some of her duties include interviewing and writing Front Page articles about alumni and students. She also reviews Front Page announcements and events, as well as the Daily Digest.

Schell's decision to join Georgia College was driven by a combination of factors. She was drawn to the intimate student-faculty ratio and the vibrant campus atmosphere. Margaret saw the university as an ideal environment to continue to grow in her profession.

Before her tenure at Georgia College, Schell's journey donned the iconic green and gold uniform as a Green Bay Packers Cheerleader, or "Sideliner" in 1979. Her journey into the world of NFL cheerleading began in her formative years, fueled by her lifelong passion for dance. She started taking dance classes at the age of four until age 13.



Margaret Schell

Schell was just 16 years old when she became an NFL cheerleader for the Green Bay Packers.

"It was not that intimidating and wasn't anything like it is now," she said. "Although we had to weigh in before every practice, the guidelines were so strict that we could not perform if we were one pound over the desired weight range."

Encouraged by a friend, Schell took the opportunity to try out for the Packers' cheerleading squad. In 1979 you could be 16 or older to tryout, and most of the girls were in their late teens and early 20s. She recalls that despite the pressure and mature feel of the audition process, her dance background provided her with a sense of confidence and familiarity.



Green Bay Packers Sideliner Margaret Schell in 1979.

"We practiced twice a week and also performed at events outside of the football field," she said. "We mainly danced to piped-in disco music at Lambeau Field, and at times, we performed at the Milwaukee County Stadium to the Packer Band."

Although her time cheering for the Packers lasted only one season, Schell's passion for the team has endured throughout the years and proudly considers herself "100% a Packers fan."

[The 1979 Green Bay Packers Sideliners perform during the Packers vs. Saints game. First clip: Margaret Schell is in the back row, second from right. Second clip: Schell is the first to stand.](#)

She lived across the field from former Packer's Quarterback and Head Coach Bart

Starr and a few streets over from another football great, former Packers Head Coach Vince Lombardi. In fact, her mother's friend, who was an artist, lived directly across the street from him. Her artworks included a painting of Lombardi, which he and Starr owned.

Though her days on the sidelines may be a thing of her past, Schell remains deeply connected to the NFL cheerleading community. She's a member of the Green Bay Professional Football Cheerleaders Alumni (GBPFCA) and the National Football Cheerleaders Alumni Organization (NFAO).

This year's NFAO Charity Reunion is in Boston, where the former New England Patriots Cheerleaders will host the event. The current New England Patriots Cheerleaders will also make a special appearance.

Last year's charity reunion was at the TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, where the former Jacksonville Jaguars Cheerleaders hosted, and it also included a performance by the Jacksonville Jaguars Cheerleaders.

"The events are amazing and support charities," Schell said. "I've met former NFL cheerleaders from the Chicago Honey Bears, Dallas Cowboys, Indianapolis Colts and more."

In fact, some of Schell's Green Bay cheer sisters are in Las Vegas, where they've volunteered for events leading up to the big game like the "Taste of the NFL." Proceeds from this event help GENYOUth to end student hunger across the nation.

Through reunions and charity events, Schell continues to strengthen her bond with former teammates and current NFL organization cheerleaders, embodying the spirit and support that defines cheerleading as a sisterhood.

"Cheering for the Green Bay Packers was an incredible experience, and the friends I made along the way are even more amazing," she said.



Former Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders face off with former Green Bay Packer Cheerleaders at the 2022 reunion.

News Stories Posted Monday February 19, 2024



Newell Scholar seeks to fill gaps between Eastern and Western music

[Newell Visting Scholar Program](#) : Monday February 19, 2024

Story by GCSU senior Cale Strickland

Dr. Evren Kutlay is the spring 2024 Martha Daniel Newell Visiting Scholar. Thanks to an endowment by Georgia College & State University alumna Martha Daniel Newell, experts in the arts, humanities and social and physical sciences have been visiting campus for over a decade.

Kutlay is the embodiment of scholarship and the interdisciplinary nature of Georgia College's liberal arts mission.

Born and raised in Turkey, she developed a love for the piano early on. One of her neighbors, a professor, taught lessons from home. Transfixed by the sounds coming from her apartment, Kutlay would listen for hours through the walls of her family's home.

“I could hear her teaching the piano, and I was always there and listening, even from afar,” Kutlay said.

In fact, it was this same neighbor who encouraged her to take the next step in her musical journey: auditioning at a local conservatory. She was told she was “too old” to be a piano student. She was, however, accepted as a violin student. Still enamored with the piano, she took private lessons with her neighbor while studying violin.

Early on, it became clear she was a gifted pianist. She took three years’ worth of lessons in one year.

“I was curious,” Kutlay said. “I loved listening and just watching and listening and so on, and I had that passion in me, somehow.”

Because of her preternatural knowledge and skill, she was able to transfer out of the violin program and pursue other subjects, including mathematics.

At the University of West Georgia, on a full scholarship, starting her MBA, Kutlay didn’t realize the college had a music department until professors and faculty members learned of her interest in and love for the piano and encouraged her to apply.

“In the first semester, I was told that at the University of West Georgia, there is also a music department,” Kutlay said. “I went there and asked professors if there were pianos I could practice with — just by myself. When we talked about my musical background, they encouraged me to enter the auditions, because I was already a fit in terms of my repertoire.”

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You should pursue your passions, dreams, and you should expand your



Dr. Evren Kutlay

horizons. Explore things and ask questions about them and see that nothing is separate.

- Evren Kutlay

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The next semester, she was accepted to the college’s music department as a graduate student. Today, she has performed across Europe and the United States, written books and contributed to various Turkish music journals, the national newspaper Star and the public broadcast channel TRT.

She says her extensive resume and list of accomplishments are the result of taking opportunities as they arise.

“Nothing was planned,” Kutlay said. “So, that’s what I would say to these [Georgia College] students. You should pursue your passions, dreams, and you should expand your horizons. Explore things and ask questions about them and see that nothing is separate.”

That idea — exploring and questioning topics, seeing that nothing is separate and everything is interconnected — is the basis of Kutlay’s class this semester, “East meets West or West meets East?” It’s also connected with a public performance and lecture she’s hosting in April, and a further example of her commitment to Georgia College’s liberal arts mission.

Her course focuses on the back-and-forth relationship of the music in the Ottoman Empire and the countries that once formed the Ottoman Empire, Europe and the United States. Class opens with a discussion of the empire’s influence over Western music before shifting to the West’s impacts on Eastern music, since the French and Industrial Revolutions.



Kutlay presents in front of her class.

The intersection of music and history is not exclusive to her course. A lifelong learner with a wide range of academic interests, Kutlay became fascinated with the gaps in music literature between different genres and eras. She has dedicated her career to filling these gaps in — through a multi-disciplined approach.

“You may ask, ‘How is it related to math?’ My systematic

approach to things, which I think I inherited from my problem-solving abilities, which come from what I learned studying math. So,” Kutlay said, “those are the things that I’m combining and working on and bringing as a new output, a niche that didn’t exist in academic literature at Georgia College.”

Kutlay’s performance will be at 7:30 p.m. on April 4, in Max Noah Recital Hall. It will examine music’s effects on diplomacy. Some of the pieces are chamber ensembles, and Georgia College students will also perform.

Kutlay will give a lecture at 6 p.m. on April 12, at Allied Arts of Milledgeville, further expanding on topics covered in her course. She will discuss Western musicians who spent time in Turkey, particularly Istanbul, and their influence over the region and its music. All Georgia College faculty, students, staff and alumni are encouraged to attend.

News Stories Posted Wednesday February 21, 2024



\$100,000 allocated to GCSU's new student-managed investment fund

[Economics & Finance, Department of](#) : Wednesday February 21, 2024

The Georgia College & State University Foundation allocated \$100,000 to a new club, the GCSU Student Managed Investments Committee.

Led by five leadership board members, the new student group will complete internal analysis and pitch ideas for investing their fund to Georgia College's Foundation Board of Trustees and the Finance and Investment Committee.

"We are proud to make an investment in these students that will result in giving them workforce skills in a competitive market," said Foundation Board Chair Jeff Wansley. "We are enthusiastic about investing in the potential of our students and envisioning them as future contributors to our mission."

The Student Managed Investment Committee rose from the work of sophomore finance and economics major Jeffrey DiBenedetto of Johns Creek, Georgia. A

student initiative from the beginning, DiBenedetto enlisted the help of Dr. Brent Evans, associate professor of economics and Dr. Eric Kobbe, lecturer of management information systems.

“I’m really excited about the opportunity it creates to take down some of the barriers that come from trying to get students into investing their money,” Evans said. “This is something we should be proud of, and I suspect the benefits will become more obvious over time. I think for the students, it creates opportunities for them to take ownership of something.”



From left to right: Dubsky, Stoudenmire and DiBenedetto form part of the SMIC leadership board.

With Evans and Kobbe’s help, DiBenedetto recruited four more students to join him on the committee’s leadership board: senior finance and economics double-major Grayson Stoudenmire of Maxeys, Georgia; junior finance and economics double-major Joseph Dubsky of Dunwoody, Georgia; sophomore business management and mass communication double-major Halle Bergstrom of Cumming, Georgia; and sophomore finance major Whit Kessinger of Roswell, Georgia.

These students serve as president, vice president of sectors, vice president of finance, vice president of public relations and vice president of recruiting, respectively.

“Dean Micheal Stratton [of the College of Business and Technology] was on board with it immediately, and he loved the initiative we took,” DiBenedetto said. “To us, it’s more than a club—our goal is to make it big. \$100,000 is a great starting place, but I want to see this grow to a million dollars in 10 years, or more.”

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It's more than a club—our goal is to make it big. I want to see this grow to a million dollars in 10 years.

- Jeffrey DiBenedetto

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They will oversee a group of 10 managing directors representing the S&P 500’s sectors, with materials and utilities combined. Each director will lead a group of

three to four analysts, 35 students in total, who will perform financial analysis and valuation of their sector's companies.

Each team will present to the Student Managed Investments Committee, who will confirm or deny their pitches. The leadership board will then present successful pitches to the governance overseeing the fund.

"The Student Managed Investments Committee dovetails perfectly with the new Finance major, which has quickly become one of the largest majors within the GCSU College of Business and Technology," said Vice President for Advancement Seth Walker.

The new committee's progress will be reported on their LinkedIn page, GCSU Student Managed Investments Committee (SMIC). All proceeds from the Student Managed Investments Committee's work benefits the Georgia College Foundation.

"It's a great feeling to be entrusted with this much responsibility," Stoudenmire said. "But once we showed both the drive to get it done, and that we have some degree of competence, they really allowed us to create it."

News Stories Posted Monday February 26, 2024



GCSU alumnus presents \$100,000 check to GCSU on behalf of Aflac

Alumni : Monday February 26, 2024

Virgil R. Miller, '92, is the president of Aflac U.S. He jumped on that prestigious path as an accounting major and mathematics minor at Georgia College & State University.

Outfitted in an Aflac-blue blazer lined with both Aflac and Georgia College logos, Miller recently presented a \$100,000 Aflac CareGrant to the university's College of Health Sciences—the first of its kind in the state of Georgia. The money will support implementation of COHS' newest initiative: a mobile health clinic.

"Anytime we see an organization trying to improve healthcare outcomes for individuals, especially those in underserved communities, we want to help," Miller said. "We established this CareGrant program and have donated over \$2 million to organizations just like right here at Georgia College."

The check marks the first time a CareGrant has been awarded to a Georgia institution and is the single biggest donation made toward the mobile health clinic. To commemorate the occasion, an Aflac-blue bench emblazoned with the organization's signature duck portraits was installed outside the Parks Memorial Building on N. Wilkinson Street.



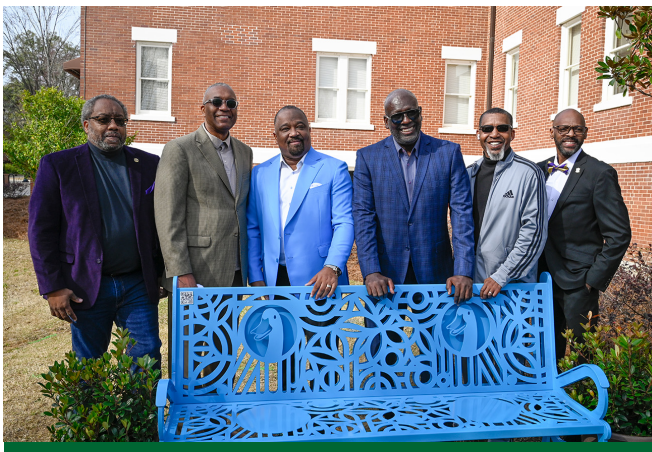
The new bench in its forever home on N. Wilkinson Street.

"The CareGrant is designed to ease the burden of medical care costs in rural and underserved communities, and Aflac thought our mobile health clinic aligned with their grant's mission," said Dr. Will Evans, dean of the College of Health Sciences. "This donation puts us a lot further down the road at establishing this clinic and extending the Health Sciences mission into our rural communities."

The mobile health clinic is an initiative borne out of the Georgia College Center for Health and Social Issues. Once established, the mobile clinic will provide screenings, as well as primary, maternal and obstetrical care to Baldwin and surrounding counties.

In addition, the College of Health Sciences will use the unit to extend their portfolio of experts into the community while providing field experiences and internship opportunities to Georgia College students.

"I believe in what we're doing, and I believe that people in this community deserve that type of help," Miller said.



Virgil, third from left, stands with his Omega Psi Phi fraternity brothers.

Miller joined the Omega Psi Phi fraternity during his time at Georgia College, and many of his fraternity brothers joined him at the check presentation. Dr. Edwin Speir, the university president when Miller was a student, inspired Miller to pursue his ambitions in the business world.

"I got a chance to listen and learn from him," Miller said. "He talked

about taking what you learn and applying it to the business world, and that's what I've been able to do."

A true lifelong learner, Miller has continued to educate himself throughout his career. He attained a master's from Wesleyan College and a doctorate from Gammon Theological Seminary.

"I had so much fun here, and I've been reminiscing about pledging right here at Georgia College," Miller said. "I believe in education. I've continued to educate myself, but it started right here. So, I'm thankful for the foundation that Georgia College gave me."

Every part of the liberal arts approach, he said, can apply to anyone's life and career. Whether in a marketing course, math class or science lab, students can learn something that will help solve a problem later down the line.

"Make sure you pay attention, you listen, learn and take those lessons forward," Miller said. "I always try to do a self-reflection. What did I learn to help me today, and how do I learn to be better? That's helped me throughout my career."

At the end of the day, he's happy to support his alma mater and make a difference in the lives of those with limited access to healthcare.

"This CareGrant will make sure that members of this community get the fiscal and emotional support they need to focus on what's most important—their health," Miller said in his remarks. "It's about creating opportunities for students to become future health leaders and working to advance health and wellness—that's why we're here."

"We want to make sure people have access to the physical, financial and emotional support they need," he said. "That's my life's passion."



Virgil had his suit custom-made for the momentous occasion.

News Stories Posted Tuesday February 27, 2024



Jain Studies students see the great and ancient temples of India

[Philosophy Religion & Liberal Studies, Department of](#): Tuesday February 27, 2024

After traveling 24 hours by plane and a motorized rickshaw ride through the twisting streets of Udaipur, India, to their 'haveli' (hotel)—a mansion several centuries old—two Georgia College & State University students were exhausted and barely able to keep their eyes open.

Although they hadn't eaten, they said they just wanted to go to bed and sleep.

Trudging to their rooms, the students looked out at the stunning city—the “Venice of India”—emerging from the serenity of a lake. All of a sudden their eyes popped wide open, the surreal beauty reigniting their adrenaline.



Udaipur, India's City of Lakes.

“I was in India already. So, I joined them in the city. They had just flown in, and the two students looked very tired,” said Dr. Sunita Manian, chair of Georgia College’s Department of [Philosophy, Religion and Liberal Studies](#) (PALS).

“Oh my goodness, they’re probably thinking this was a huge mistake,” Manian said. “But when checking into our hotel and they see the view of the lake, they perked up and were ready to go to dinner. Seeing the difference by how tired they looked and then how excited they were—it was very rewarding.”

After that, the students—Liam Landry of Athens, Georgia, and Basil Cooper of Suwanee, Georgia—couldn’t wait to soak everything in.

They went on the 15-day study trip in December with Manian and Dr. James Winchester, who incorporates Jainism into the philosophy and religion courses he teaches at Georgia College.

The trip was paid through generous donations from the Jain community and university grants.

The group didn't waste one minute on the journey, which took them on breathtaking excursions to see temples, art, caves and architecture in seven Indian cities.

It was all part of a new position at Georgia College, the "S & R Palvia Endowed Veetraag Vigyaan [Professorship in Jain Studies](#)." The endowment was established in fall 2023, funded by a \$250,000 gift from Dr. Shailendra and Rajkumari Palvia, who live in Atlanta.



Liam Landry and Basil Cooper in India.

It's the only Jain professorship in Georgia and one of about a dozen across the nation.

An endowed professorship is the highest academic award a university can bestow on a faculty member. Dr. Caley Smith, who holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University, was hired for this position. Since joining Georgia College in Fall '23, Smith has been teaching students more about this less-known Indian religion by incorporating Jain perspectives into courses.

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This adds a new dimension to our study of contemporary challenges facing humanity and the world. It will help students to further explore diverse religious cultures of the wider world and learn about similarities and differences between various religious traditions.

- Dr. Sunita Manian

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Jainism is one of the world's most ancient religions, slightly older than Buddhism.

There are about 33 million gods and goddesses in India, many of them Hindu. But there are no gods in Jainism. People go to Jain temples to learn about the great thinkers and contemplate how they lived their lives.

Jains are non-violent and believe in reincarnation. There is no process for converting to Jainism. Still, people can adopt the Jain way of life—eating vegetarian and respecting all living things, even the smallest.

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The three key principals of Jainism are of non-violence, non-dogmatism and non-possessiveness. Jains think the world would be a better place if more people took those principals seriously. That’s the goal of the professorship—to increase understanding and knowledge of Jainism in the world.

- Dr. James Winchester

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“The three key principals of Jainism are of non-violence, non-dogmatism and non-possessiveness,” Winchester said. “Jains think the world would be a better place if more people took those principals seriously. That’s the goal of the professorship—to increase understanding and knowledge of Jainism in the world.”

For Landry and Cooper, classroom lessons became first-hand realities in India.

The group visited Jain temples in Udaipur, known as “the beautiful City of Lakes.” In Verul, India, they toured the Ellora Caves—a massive complex of 34 caverns sculpted in the 7th and 11th centuries. They learned about Jain “tirthankaras” or spiritual teachers, who guide humanity on a path of non-violence and teach of a world without possessiveness where no truth is absolute.

The Ellora Caves are a testament of the blending of Indian religious traditions, Manian said. Some cave temples were Buddhist, others Hindu and four Jain.

The caves were Landry’s favorite site, the largest statues he’s ever seen. The junior is double majoring in mathematics and philosophy. He had seen pictures of places like this in books.

“But nothing compares to being able to see them in person,” he said. “The size of Ranakpur really floors you when you see it with your own eyes. The carvings at Dilwara were probably the most intricate I’ve ever seen.”

The group visited Ranakpur in the evening just before sunset. Double majoring in philosophy and liberal studies with a concentration in religion, Cooper was excited to see India’s great temples up close. The junior is also double minoring in art history and museum science, so the trip was a chance to combine all disciplines into one learning experience.

In Ranakpur, they saw a distinctive temple with 1,444 pillars, intricately carved in marble. Its 24 halls were dedicated to the first spiritual teacher, Parsvanatha, who is remembered in a single-marbled statue in the temple’s center.



The temple in Ranakpur, India.

“Ranakpur feels fairly isolated in the jungle and, at that time of day, there were so few people there that we really got to absorb the atmosphere,” Cooper said. “I’m personally of the opinion that the carvings at several of the major temple sites, such as Dilwara and Ranakpur, are the most exquisite in the world.”

On that first transformative day, Cooper got a new perspective of South Asian religion and culture. It reinforced a desire to get a Ph.D. in South Asian religious studies and continue researching Jainism.

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I was excited to be able to experience a culture and landscape so vastly different from my own. Not only this, but I’ve been interested in studying South Asian religions since high school, so the fact that the opportunity to travel came with the research obligation was something I was beyond excited for.

- Basil Cooper

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“I was excited to be able to experience a culture and landscape so vastly different from my own,” Cooper said. “Not only this, but I’ve been interested in studying South Asian religions since high school, so the fact that the opportunity to travel came with the research obligation was something I was beyond excited for.”

Being in a small class setting at Georgia College and learning from “phenomenal professors” helped motivate Cooper to explore new ways of thinking.

“Studying South Asian religions in the classroom really pales in comparison to being able to stand in these caves and temples that are over 500 years old, and in some cases over 1,000 years old,” Cooper said. “I felt I was able to truly experience the deep history and culture. The trip has really made me more passionate about my studies.”

Landry enjoyed learning about Jainism too. He plans to go to law school. The trip prepared him for this future by expanding his worldview, giving him a broader knowledge of other cultures and religions.

There were museums, lectures and a visit to the International Schools of Jain Studies in Prune, India. The group also attended a conference hosted by the Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies and Academic Exchange. Landry presented his research on the ways he thinks Buddhism, Jainism and Marxism can contribute to the end of human suffering.

Cooper presented a paper on temple art and architecture in India. Seeing the structures up close and learning about the “austere” religion devoted to non-violence was strikingly different than Western culture. It was a chance to learn “something new” at every turn.

“In the West, it feels like there’s always ongoing war and violence, plus a huge cultural dedication to materialism,” Cooper said. “I wanted to know more about Jain philosophy and how I could better understand a lifestyle away from these things. Spreading an understanding of Jain philosophy could also be incredibly beneficial for propagating a greater understanding and respect for people with different backgrounds and lifestyles.”

In addition to mouth-dropping temple sights, Landry and Cooper also got a taste of Indian cuisine.

At first, Manian said Landry would only eat pizza. But he soon started experimenting and came to love a spicy, black lentil dish call “dal makhani.” Cooper misses a sweet dessert of fried dough, called gulab jamun.

On their memorable day at the Ellora Caves, the group sat on big rocks and ate a picnic of crackers, cheese and fruit.

The students appreciated traveling with their professors, who could explain the history, ancient scrolls, rituals and culture.



Manian and Winchester.

Manian was born in Calcutta, India, and speaks the Indian languages of Hindi, Bengali and Tamil. The nation has about 300 languages altogether and 560 dialects.

This semester, Landry and Cooper are continuing their study of Jainism by learning Sanskrit, an ancient South Asian language. Most Jain texts are written in Sanskrit, so this will help with their research with Smith, the new endowed professor.

“Overall, honestly, it was amazing,” Landry said. “Everywhere we went was utterly breathtaking.”

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We can learn about these things in a classroom, but when you see it up close and feel how tirelessly people worked to create these sites, it gives you an appreciation not only for the cultures and history but for the people who lived and experienced life there.

- Liam Landry

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