

GLCA-Library of Congress Digital Humanities Student-Faculty Collaborative Research Project

July 28 – August 8, 2013

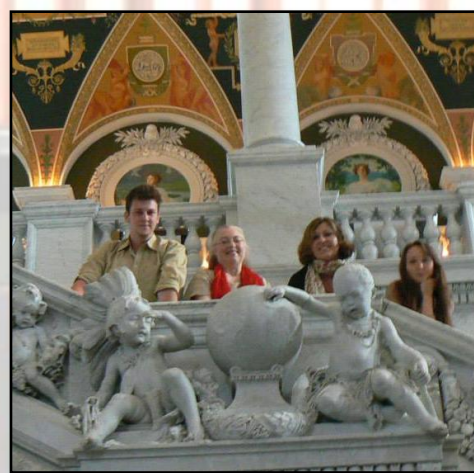
Research Report



This summer, BISLA has taken the opportunity to take part in collaborative student-faculty research project at the Library of Congress, organized and sponsored by the Great Lakes Colleges Association and its branch, the Global Liberal Arts Alliance, of which BISLA is a member.

Aims:

- To develop research skills
- To familiarize students and faculty with library research tools
- To foster collaboration among faculty and students
- To engage in research collaboration with teams from different colleges
- To bring the gained insights, skills, and materials to the rest of the students and faculty at BISLA
- To publish a research paper



BISLA team with the Library of Congress research specialist Jurretta Heckscher

Summary:

In late July and early August, a BISLA team, consisting of the faculty Dagmar Kusá and students Veronika Klempová and Arnold Kiss, traveled to take part in the international collaborative faculty-student research at the Library of Congress.

The BISLA team was selected to research the submitted research proposal *Politics of Memory in the Slovak-Hungarian Relations*, which was devised to study the presence of sensitive historical events or eras in the current political discourse. The team took advantage of the vast current collections on memory and trauma literature, as well as literature on political language. Team members also discovered unexpected finds from the Slovak and Hungarian context, often materials that are impossible to obtain (find student reports on their research in the Library below).

The BISLA team was joined by two teams from the Hope College, which came to research the history of homelessness in the U.S. and portrayal of adolescence in literature.

The research program was structured into three components: shared seminars; workshops and lectures related to the available resources and research tools; research in the premises of the Library of Congress, primarily in the European Reading Room; and collaboration with the other teams on shared themes of interest and on planning the next research phases.

In the short time spent outside the Library of Congress, BISLA team visited several museums in Washington DC, mainly the Smithsonian museums of American Indian, the Holocaust Museum, the Air and Space Museum, the Museum of Natural History, and several historical sites and memorials.

Outputs:

Collection of materials: Upon the return, students have printed and organized all of the collected materials and they were made available to the rest of the students within the BISLA reading room.

Research guide: BISLA team has prepared a *Digital Research Tools* guide that compiles the tools available for BISLA students to conduct academic research online, relying on the materials freely accessible on the Library of Congress website as well as several other digital research resources. The material was compiled on the basis of the workshops offered to the team at LoC and expanded to suit the needs of BISLA students. This research guide was presented to the student body during the orientation sessions beginning the Fall semester 2013.

Online collaboration: The three participating teams remain in contact through an online group, sharing research insights and tips, reporting on the progress of each team, sharing the results to date.

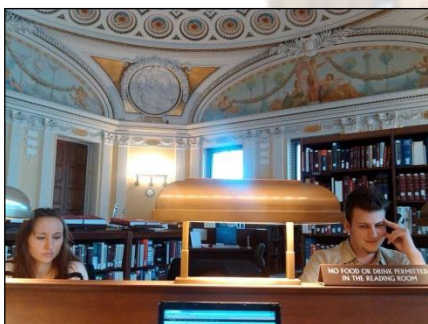
Faculty-student academic publication: In December 2013, the BISLA team is planning to have a research paper ready for publication and will be looking to place it in an academic journal.

STUDENT REPORTS

Veronika Klemová, 3rd year student

The GLCA Library of Congress Research Program was a great experience for me. I would never think that it would be possible to find more than 100 highly relevant sources for one research project in less than eight days. My role in the project was oriented towards the sphere of collective memory, emotions, and cultural trauma on a theoretical level. Among the main sought sources were books and dissertation theses, but I have also found many articles and papers dealing with this topics in the online databases accessible on site at LoC.

This research project is not only about looking for sources, though. It also taught me a lot about preparing for research as such. Even though I have already written my Bachelor thesis, which also required a good amount of research and preparation, this experience taught me a system through which research can be done properly and effectively. Selection of important sources and data leads to a more credible, higher quality research. This program gave me a



lot for my academic future, for my future theses, research papers and dissertation, which I greatly appreciate.

GLCA, together with the LoC staff, organized the whole program very well. On the one hand, we had meetings and presentations, which helped us to get to know the Library of Congress (not an easy task, because of the unbelievable quantity of materials stored there), and at the same time, we were not pressed to do something that would not be directly relevant for our project. In other words, we were completely free in the management of our time and process of doing the research in the Library. Besides the presentations on the Library of Congress catalogue system and workshops on utilization of various research tools and materials, we also enjoyed a very valuable time with the other two teams during our common dinner and in the last session, where we were presenting our projects, found materials, and our impressions from the project. Both other teams were working on very interesting topics - homelessness and education in USA. It was very interesting to see how, for example, comics can be used for research. The Library of Congress provides so many interesting and rare materials that even ten years would not be enough for us to explore it sufficiently.



LoC research specialist **Jurretta J. Heckscher, PhD** was a great help to our team. She was also our on-site advisor. We could ask her for help anytime we needed to. Besides her, GLCA and LoC also managed to arrange meetings for us with the LoC European division specialists **Helen Fedor** and **Kenneth E. Nyirady**. All of them were very interested in our research topic and gave us many suggestions which improved our library research.

Thanks to this program I have learned a lot about doing a good research, and I have also met many interesting people. I hope I will visit Washington D.C. and the Library of Congress soon again, knowing the amazing possibilities for academic research. Being a part of this project was truly an unforgettable experience.

Arnold Kiss, 2nd year student

Doing research in the Library of Congress for the first time was one of the firsts I will never forget. After our initial orientation days, during which we got to know the essentials of doing research in the Library, we organized our goals into more concrete terms and divided our roles within our team.

As for being the only Hungarian speaking person in our team, my role was to look for sources covering the perhaps most controversial event in the Slovak – Hungarian relations - the implementation of the Trianon Treaty, and to try to find verbal cues that would fit into our conceptual scheme, which covers cultural trauma, historical narratives, and the effect of

political language on current Slovak-Hungarian relations. The latter was also the second topic of my research role. I was responsible for finding literature mentioning language as a political tool for influencing group narratives. After the first five days of doing research in the European Reading Room, I moved to the Madison Building, where I was looking up information in historical periodicals (which proved to be quite an exciting search).



National Museum of the American Indian

During our free time - which mostly occurred only after the Library closed, we mostly went sightseeing around DC. Here's just a list of what we saw: the Capitol, the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, the 2nd World War Memorial, the Smithsonian museums of Natural History and Air and Space; the Botanical Garden and the Holocaust Museum. All of these trips added an extra educational and awe-inspiring value to our

trip.

The DC experience was definitely one of the most inspiring experiences in my life and I still can't believe it's already gone. Starting my studies, I couldn't even have imagined BISLA would provide me with such an opportunity.

