A MAJOR'S PERSPECTIVE

By Michael Pollak, ‘04

On September 1, 2001, I left my home in New York City to live and teach English in Solu-Khumbu, Nepal. Months earlier, I had stumbled upon a small non-profit organization, the Himalayan Explorers Club, seeking volunteer teachers for the Mt. Everest region of Nepal. I was looking for an opportunity to do something abroad, and the chance to live in a predominantly Sherpa community in the Himalayas, while teaching elementary and high school English, seemed ideal. At the time, I knew of the Sherpas as the great mountaineers who had fearlessly led foreigners to the summit of Mt. Everest since Sir Edmund Hillary’s famous ascent fifty years ago. I would later learn that the Sherpas are an ethnic group, some 30,000 strong, who began migrating from Tibet over the Himalayas into Nepal over 500 years ago.

Upon my arrival in Kathmandu, capital city of Nepal, I was floored by the alternative realities of my new surroundings. For days I just walked around trying to soak up as much sensory information as possible. One thing that struck me was the preeminence of religion. Religion pervades all aspects of society in Nepal, and the lines between what is religious, Hindu, Buddhist, spiritual, or secular are not neatly delineated. While Kathmandu is utterly fascinating, all of the teachers were pleasantly to travel into the mountains and begin our teaching and home-stay experience. Several days into our teacher training, we received word of the attacks on the East-Coast of America. In a hotel 7,000 feet above sea level, decorated as a Tibet-Monastery, where we were receiving cultural information about the only Hindu Kingdom in the world, we found ourselves trying to process the global ramifications of a terrorist attack by Islamic fundamentalists and the forthcoming response by a born-again Evangelical Christian in the White House. It may have been at this point that this Jewish boy from the Bronx decided to major in Comparative Religion.

Quickly our attention turned to internal Nepalese political issues, when the CPN Maoists began taking over schools in some of the villages where teachers were to be placed. Since the Maoists had not penetrated into the higher elevated villages of Solu-Khumbu, many of the teachers were moved. I

Continued on page 4

It’s All Happening in Comparative Religion . . .

By Peggy Hutauff

Susan Hayward, ‘02, CR major, has been accepted for fall admission to the Master of Divinity program at Harvard Divinity School. This spring, she is serving as an intern in Washington for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). Susie is assisting in two divisions: the Public Information division, where she responds to requests from the public, and provides free education resources on tolerance, human rights, and refugees to teachers; and External Relations, where she attends congressional hearings and briefings at the local think tanks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and reports back to UNHCR on relevant issues. She has also been monitoring the potential refugee crisis in Iraq, and compiling related news articles, UN and UNHCR releases, and NGO reports. In

Continued on Page 3
The Study of Religion and the Liberal Arts

By Joseph Walser

I am often asked what one does with a major in Comparative Religion. My response is usually that it is the wrong question. Let me explain.

In the first decade of the Nineteenth century the professors of Oxford University made a review of their curriculum in an effort to update the Classical curriculum for which Oxford was famous. The traditional curriculum consisted of the seven liberal arts that had come down from the Middle ages. The seven consisted of the Quadrivium: the higher division of the seven liberal arts, comprising the mathematical sciences (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music), and the Trivium: the lower division comprising grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Shortly after the review, the curriculum came under fire by a number of Professors at the University of Edinburgh. The utilitarian philosophy of John Locke was currently in vogue at the university of Edinburgh, and the professors felt that the University should reflect a different model of education for more modern times.

The critics of the Oxford system felt that it focused too much on subjects with no apparent application in modern life. As John Locke himself pointed out: "Can there be anything more ridiculous than that a father should waste his own money, and his son's time in setting him to learn the Roman language, when at the same time he designs him for a trade, wherein he, having no use of Latin, fails not to forget that little which he brought from school, and which 'tis ten to one he abhors for the ill-usage it procured him?" (Newman, The Idea of a University, 179)

In its place, they advocated specialized training of each student in one field. The proponents of education reform at Edinburgh held that in the pursuit of knowledge, just as in the pursuit of industry, there should be a division of labor. If each student devoted all of their energies to one pursuit, then society as a whole would reap the benefits on a scale previously unimagined.

The Utilitarian critique of the Liberal education has had a profound impact on the very idea of the University as witnessed by the subsequent shift in meaning of "trivium" (meaning the study of grammar, rhetoric and logic) to "trivia" meaning "impertinent." And in many ways Tufts University is a product of this very debate.

Indeed, the need for relevance is addressed in the modern University. Early Utilitarians were particularly concerned that Political Economy was not being taught. Happily, every university today has both economics and political science departments. Still, the continued existence of Liberal Arts institutions is an indication that the Utilitarian model of education did not completely win the day.

The debate between advocates of Liberal education and advocates of Technical education is not a debate about the proper content of University education. At Tufts, for example, the Liberal Arts include (in fact require) the study of the sciences. Rather, the debate concerns the goal of education. A technical education trains the student to fit into the existing division of labor. A liberal education doesn't train students for one task, but teaches them multiple ways to interrogate the world. This results in new ways of seeing the world so that the (now multiple) paths of the Liberal Arts open onto a universe in which seemingly disparate elements and moments can be seen in the complexities of their interactions and implications. While this approach may also benefit the collective, its primary aim is the benefit of the individual.

Perhaps the strongest critique of the Utilitarian proposal for education reform came in the mid Nineteenth century. In a lecture given in 1852, Cardinal John Henry Newman pointed out an important flaw in their argument: "Utility may be made the end of education in two respects: either as regards the individual educated, or the community at large. In which light do these writers regard it?" (Newman, 177) In other words, society as a whole may benefit from specialization and compartmentalization/departmenalization of education, but such specialization is not necessarily the most beneficial for the individual student. Newman refers the reader to an earlier critique made by Dr. Copeston Protestant Bishop of Llandaff, who refines the point.

"It is an undisputed maxim in Political Economy, that the separation of professions and the division of labour tend to the perfection of every art, to the wealth of nations, to the general comfort and well-being of the community. This principle of division is in some instances pursued so far as

Continued on page 3
her spare time, she attends panel discussions and briefings on religion and peacemaking issues, and works on a side project for the International Center for Diplomacy. Susie writes that she has “learned a lot about politics and the system of checks and balances and dialogue and information sharing that goes on in this town, which has been illuminating. But I have also come head-to-head with bureaucracy and policy issues that seem so far removed from the individuals I am working to assist . . . Sometimes I miss working WITH refugees.”

Lynn Cooper, ’02, double major in English and CR, will also be enrolling next fall in Harvard Divinity School’s M.Div. program. Other Tufts CR graduates pursuing degrees at HDS include David Schwartz (‘01), and Kathleen Lonergan, ’02, double major in History and CR, and Timothy Bouley, ’02, CR minor.

In recognition of her outstanding academic accomplishment, Melody Wilson, ’03, double major in English and CR, has been elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Next fall, she will begin studies in preparation for the Episcopal priesthood at either Yale, where she has been accepted for the Divinity School’s M.Div. program, or at Virginia Episcopal Seminary. Melody has received support and vocational encouragement through her recent participation in the Young Priests Initiative, sponsored by the Diocese of Richmond. Her Senior Honors Thesis in

CR is a study of the use of biblical texts in the arguments for and against the ordination of women in the Methodist, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches.

Tom Crawford, ’03, CR major, is working on his Senior Honors Thesis examining issues of church and state. His project involves a study of symbolism and a discussion of “civil religion” from a study-of-religion perspective. Tom is reviewing recent Supreme Court cases to reflect on the tension between the U.S. Constitution’s non-establishment clause and its guarantee of freedom of religion. His thesis is touching on topics such as the “under God” clause in the Pledge of Allegiance, and the use of public space for holiday displays with religious themes.

Ted Olson, ’02, CR major, and his wife, Nicole, have a new baby son. Thomas James was born on January 2.

Megan Liotta, ’03, double major in English and CR, will begin serving next fall as a New York City Teaching Fellow. She will teach either English or Special Education in a public school in the city, and will be working toward her master’s at City University of New York.

Mark Goldberg, ’03, double major in Peace and Justice Studies and CR, has been named as one of two recipients of a Dutko Fellowship. The award of $20,000 will allow him to participate in a ten-month internship in Washington, beginning next fall, probably with the New America Foundation, a progressive ‘think tank.’ Mark is particularly interested in issues related to human rights, public policy, and international affairs. The fellowship was established by Deborah Jospin, Tufts graduate, trustee, and board member of the University College of Citizenship and Public Service, in memory of her husband, Dan Dutko. Ms. Jospin is actively involved with each year’s Dutko Fellows, drawing on her own experience in public service and consulting to provide them with a high degree of personal support and mentoring. She describes the annual process of choosing the Dutko Fellows as a search for “interesting people who will add value to the world” (Daily, 3/13/03). Mark has also received an acceptance from the London School of Economics and Political Science to pursue a master’s degree in Public Policy; he may pursue that avenue at a later date.

Craig Wenner, ’03, CR major, contributed this semester to the writing and performance of the first ever male contribution to Tufts’ annual production of the Vagina Monologues. Craig described the task of composing a new “monologue” as “both a privilege and a responsibility.” The Monologues are staged on Valentine’s weekend to increase awareness of issues related to women’s dignity.
Major Perspective
Continued from page 1
ended up living in Ghat village with a 75 year old Buddhist Lama, and his family. The Sherpas have a tradition of married Lamas who conduct the local religious ceremonies, funerals, and weddings, amongst other things. Living with Lama Dorje’s family was spectacular. Their entire property was an expression of Sherpa-Tibetan Buddhist devotion with an ornate monastery, thousands of prayer flags, and two stupas.

I taught English at an internationally funded, non-government elementary school with 25 students, ages 3-12. Teaching was the single greatest element of my time in Nepal. The highlight of my teaching experience was a 3-day field trip that the older students and the teachers took to Tengboche Monastery, the most important temple for Sherpas. We hiked 6-8 hours a day and gained 5,000 feet in altitude from the village to the monastery. The kids just sang songs, joked around, and had fun, rarely complaining about the difficulty of the journey.

One of the poorer girls did the bulk of the trip in a pair of flip-flops! I was humbled by their toughness and heartened by their carefree attitude. The trip was for the eco-club, and we stopped several times along the way, met with other school eco-clubs and saw World Wildlife Fund projects.

About one-month later, during the Hindu holiday of Dasain, I went trekking with the principal of my school and other volunteer teachers. We reached the summit of a 20,000 foot peak, where I experienced the pain and disorientation of altitude sickness firsthand. We also reached the base camp of Mt. Everest. By far, the most intriguing part of the trek was witnessing the monks of Tengboche Monastery perform dances in stunning costumes and masks for the Mani Rimdu Festival.

Unfortunately, my time in Solu-Khumbu came to an abrupt conclusion when the CPN Maoists launched a coordinated string of major attacks against government entities throughout Nepal. The King declared a state of emergency, and the following day our volunteer program director came to each of our villages to take us out of the region and back to Kathmandu. Nobody was ready to leave, but under the circumstances we didn’t have much choice. Several days later I was in Bangkok, Thailand, where I met my father. After traveling with him to Kuala Lumpur, Angkor Wat, and Hanoi, I returned to New York City. Since returning to Tufts in January 2002, I declared a major in Comparative Religion. Next fall I will begin a senior honors thesis on Himalayan religion.

All Happening...
Continued from Page 3

La Toya Hankins, ’04, CR minor, is spending a junior semester abroad in Hong Kong. She describes her time there as “an amazing experience,” including trips to Beijing, Xian, Shanghai, and Macau. La Toya has particularly enjoyed seeing the Great Wall of China, visiting temples, and viewing exhibits of Chinese historical artifacts. Most of all, she appreciates the beauty of Hong Kong, and the friendly spirit of its people.

Sarah Affel, ’05, CR major, has received a Lilly Foundation Discernment Internship for the coming summer. She will participate in a seminar held at the University of the South in Tennessee, where interns, guided by professional mentors, will reflect together and explore the possibility of pursuing ordained ministry. To give participants the opportunity to test their vocations in real-life settings, the Foundation will also fund field placements. Sarah will work in her home Episcopal parish in Princeton, NJ. There she will receive experience of all aspects of parish life, including community service and outreach, parish governance and administration, and education. Sarah is planning to teach a course for adults in the parish on the impact of feminism on Christian theology.

Alexis Gerber, ’05, double major in Clinical Psychology and CR, will be spending this summer in the Fegs Collegiate Leadership Internship Program of the Hilltops of New York. She will receive a placement in an area of human services in the city, and her internship will include one day a week of Jewish learning.

Emma Rosenblum, ’03, CR minor, has been interning this semester for Boston Magazine. Two articles of hers were published in the March issue.

Edwin Johnson, ’04, double major in Anthropology and CR, is abroad this semester, studying in Ecuador with the School for International
Study Religion
Continued from page 2
to excite the wonder of people to whose notice it is for the first out...the more the powers of each individual are concentrated in one employment, the greater skill and quickness will he naturally display in performing it. But, while he thus contributes more effectively to the accumulation of national wealth, he becomes himself more and more degraded as a rational being. In proportion as his sphere of action is narrowed his mental powers and habits become contracted: and he resembles a subordinate part of some powerful machinery, useful in its place, but insignificant and worthless out of it. If it be necessary, as it is beyond all question necessary, that society should be split into divisions and subdivisions, in order that its several duties may well be performed, yet we must be careful not to yield up ourselves wholly and exclusively to the guidance of this system; we must observe what its evils are, and we should modify and restrain it, by bringing into action other principles, which may serve as a check and counterpoise to the main force." (Newman, 183)

I teach Asian Religions in the Department of Comparative Religion. As you can imagine, our faculty spend much of our time teaching the role of religion in the rather urgent and complicated state of affairs today. Every now and then, however, especially in upper level seminars, we have the luxury of studying the apparently trivial. I will give you one example of how the liberal arts' study of apparently trivial can open up whole new worlds, and begin to integrate disciplines in the manner Copleston was interested in.

The other day I had assigned a text on the practice of Yoga to one of my upper level seminars. The text dated from fourteenth

Continued on page 8

All Happening...
Training (SIT). In addition to perfecting his Spanish, Edwin has had the opportunity to explore some of the country's extraordinary natural beauty. He visited the Cloud Forest, a region whose high elevation traps clouds, producing an atmosphere of ever-present mist. "The biodiversity of the place was out of this world," he reports. "Medicinal plants, carnivorous plants, fungi, thousands of species of birds, monkeys, bears, and snakes. I got to hike through thick jungle." Ed stayed in a cabin, lighted at night only by candle light, and bathed every morning in a waterfall. On another excursion, to an area known as the Orient, a region of Ecuador lying in the jungles of the Amazon, he swam in volcanic pools, played soccer with indigenous residents, and consumed local delicacies, such as ants, locusts, and guinea pig.

Katie Mason, '04, CR major, returned this semester from studying last spring and fall in Chile. Katie was enrolled at a Catholic university, where she found the courses in Religion more theological in nature than the Comparative Religion courses she has taken here at Tufts. One of the highlights of her time there was the opportunity to attend an annual conference on religion, attended by students and faculty from all over the country.

Conference topics included the current state of theology in Chile, how theology is taught in universities, what direction it should take in the future, and how the work of contemporary theologians is received and put into practice in personal life. Katie describes this experience as "definitely one of the highlights of my year abroad."

Katie and CR major, Michael Pollak, '04, will be co-teaching an Explorations course next fall with the Ex College. Their topic will be "Changes in the Land," a study of how religions, worldviews, and ideologies have affected the physical landscape of America.

Dena Wigder, '03, Sociology major, is writing a Senior Honors Thesis analyzing the decision-making processes of young, secular-Jewish women who consider 'converting' to ultra-Orthodox Judaism. Peggy Hutfall, CR faculty, is serving as one of her thesis advisers. Dena recently presented a report on her work as part of "Beyond the Classroom," a student forum sponsored by the Department of Women's Studies. There, she joined other Tufts students from across the disciplines who shared their research, critical essays, and creative projects on topics concerning women and gender. Dena was recently elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and was also awarded the Sara and Joseph Stone Judaic Studies Prize. Next year, she will serve as an Iyyun Fellow at Hillel's International Center in Washington, DC. ("Iyyun" is a term which means "to delve deeply into Jewish ideas.") The Fellows work to bring Jewish learning to life on college campuses around the world. Combining cutting-edge technology with Judaism's rich traditions of learning and celebration, they provide educational and programming resources and assistance to Jewish college students and Hillel professionals worldwide.
Good Luck

to all of our

Graduating

Majors and Minors!

PAUL BERRY
ELLEN BUCKMAN
THOMAS J. CRAWFORD
MEREDITH A. GILBERT
MARK L. GOLDBERG
LISA A. JACOBS
MEGAN C. LIOTTA
AMANDA B. MILLER
ERIC MITTON
JULIO MOTA
MICHAEL PLUNKETT
EMMA ROSENBLUM
JUDITH SOULE
CRAIG WENNER
MELODY C. WILSON

Wishing you

continued success!

SUMMER Course Offerings

CR 0195B
Mystics and Mysticism in World Religions
Instructor: O'Leary

An exploration of the mystics and mysticism as experience, as spiritual knowledge, and as a way of life. Reading, discussion, and reflection based on the mystics of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism
Second Session DAYS: MTWTH TIMES: 10:45 am-12:05 pm / Olin 101

Elizabeth Birdsall has just declared her Comparative Religion minor.

Some interested students stop by during our Open House held in March for Major's Week.
## FALL 2003 Course Listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE #</th>
<th>COURSE TITLE</th>
<th>INSTRUCTOR</th>
<th>BLOCK</th>
<th>CO-LIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CR 01</td>
<td>Introduction to Religion</td>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>J+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 04</td>
<td>Art, Ritual, and Culture</td>
<td>HOFFMAN</td>
<td>E MW</td>
<td>FAH 001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 10 PW2</td>
<td>Religion and Animals** NEW COURSE</td>
<td>WALDAU</td>
<td>G+ MW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 11</td>
<td>Buddhist Art</td>
<td>KAMINSKI</td>
<td>J+ TR</td>
<td>FAH 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 15/105</td>
<td>Japanese Architecture</td>
<td>KAMINSKI</td>
<td>K+ MW</td>
<td>FAH 15/105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 21</td>
<td>Introduction to the Hebrew Bible</td>
<td>HUTAFF</td>
<td>F+ TR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 23</td>
<td>Early Islamic Art</td>
<td>HOFFMAN</td>
<td>G+ MW</td>
<td>FAH 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 25</td>
<td>Art and Politics of the Middle Ages</td>
<td>DER MANUELLIAN</td>
<td>F+ TR</td>
<td>FAH 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 41</td>
<td>Contemporary Religion in America</td>
<td>LEMONS</td>
<td>D+ TR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 44</td>
<td>Introduction to Hinduism</td>
<td>WALSER</td>
<td>11 T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 48</td>
<td>Qu'ran and Islamic Traditions</td>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>K+ WF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 96</td>
<td>Introduction to the Talmud</td>
<td>SUMMIT</td>
<td>H+TR</td>
<td>JS 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 106</td>
<td>Contemporary Religious Thought</td>
<td>LEMONS</td>
<td>F+ TR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 120</td>
<td>Armenian Art, Architecture &amp; Politics</td>
<td>DER MANUELLIAN</td>
<td>K+ MW</td>
<td>FAH 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 125B</td>
<td>Medieval Architecture</td>
<td>SHORTELL</td>
<td>H+ TR</td>
<td>FAH 125B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 132</td>
<td>Book of Genesis &amp; Interpreters</td>
<td>ROSENBERG</td>
<td>ARR W</td>
<td>JS 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 141</td>
<td>Indian Philosophies</td>
<td>WALSER</td>
<td>2 W</td>
<td>PHIL 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 143</td>
<td>Sociology of Religion</td>
<td>AYMER</td>
<td>J+ TR</td>
<td>SOC 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 157</td>
<td>Theories of Spiritual Development</td>
<td>SCARLETT</td>
<td>7 W</td>
<td>CD 157-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 191</td>
<td>Religion in International Relations</td>
<td>O'LEARY</td>
<td>E+ MW</td>
<td>PJS 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 192B</td>
<td>Gender and Medieval Narrative</td>
<td>CAVINESS</td>
<td>11 T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CORE COURSES / CROSS LISTED COURSES**
Study Religion
Continued from page 5
century India and was written in Sanskrit. After discussing a few problems related to grammar and vocabulary, we came upon two peculiar verses.

"By nature, Mercury and breathing, when made steady, destroy diseases and the dead themselves come to life. By their control, moving in the air is attained."

And a few verses later: "The mind gets the properties of calcinated Mercury. When deprived of its unsteadiness it is calcinated, combined with the sulfur of the transcendent sound, and it moves in space or Brahma." (Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 4.27 & 4.95)

This is an obscure, dare I say "trivial" verse to say the least, and yet there, through the course of a semester, students learn to see an entire world in it. On the one hand there is the explicitly religious context: Indian religions had long thought that stilling the mind brought it closer to God -- here represented by the "transcendent sound" (a sound that is seen by the yogi rather than heard).

The verse also makes a parallel between the practice of meditation and alchemy (seen here as the mixing of mercury with sulfur). The tradition that wrote this text had a history of alchemists who performed numerous chemical procedures using mercury and sulfur, both to be used as a medical therapy for various diseases as well as a way to gain immortality. This tradition stretches back to the seventh century in India. The procedures were thus both scientific and religious since they considered mercury to be the material essence of the God Siva and sulfur to be the material essence of the Goddess Sakti.

But the story does not end there. India at that time did not have abundant natural deposits of mercury or cinna-bar (one of the ores of mercury). The main source of mercury from at least the fourth century was Vietnam and it began to arrive in India either by ship or by the Silk Route (see D. White, The Alchemical Body, 64-5). Indeed, the maritime trade relations between China and the East coast of India may have led to a regional concentration of this kind of meditation in the areas effected by that trade. It is not surprising then, that there are parts of this form of meditation that bear remarkable similarities to Chinese Daoist meditations of the same time period.

One final implication that I will mention is that the connection of this tradition to alchemy allowed for the tradition to thrive even during times of persecution. In 1661, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, who was otherwise hostile to Hinduism, sent a letter along with mercury and money to a Yogà in the Punjab asking for a new batch of an elixir of immortality (White, 1).

What I have given here is one example of the reading practices of the Liberal Arts. Specialized classes, instead of narrowing the focus to the trivial, investigate and interrogate the details until whole new worlds are revealed. Here, from one verse of an obscure text, the students are called on to employ the disciplines of languages, Chemistry, Geology, Medicine, History, Economics, and Political science. Furthermore, when students see how all of these disciplines relate in the past, they get a much better idea of how, for instance Oil Geology, Politics, Economics, History and Religion might interact today.

What the students do after college is not determined by the degree they receive. I was a Geology major, I teach Comparative Religions. While we have students who enter the ministry or academia, we also have students who go on to become doctors or politicians. Recently, I ran into a former student of mine who had become a stock trader on Wall Street. I asked him if he wished that he had majored in something else. He said that it was easy for him to learn what he needed for his job. He was grateful to Tufts for educating him for his life. Needless to say I felt that we had succeeded.