

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Catherine Kenyon

This has been a year of watching programs in their second season mature and develop into new Oriental Institute mainstays with their own audience and following. We had special programs for temporary exhibits as well as new programs with interesting new partners. The majority of our efforts this year, however, have been focused on perfecting program models that could be replicated with new content. A few of these programs include homeschool offerings, summer family programs, Epic Wednesday, Lunchtime Traveler, and the development of new online continuing education courses based on successful onsite ones. Our department was able to sustain the program and attendance growth gained during the 2013–14 fiscal year with our total program attendance at 6,881 people attending 139 programs — this is in comparison to Fiscal Year 2013–14 with 6,420 attendees at 140 programs.

MASTER Attendance Spreadsheet FY 14-15
All Programs

	Totals		Family Youth		Adult		Teacher Students		Volunteer Program		Outreach	
	No. of Programs	Attendance	No. of Programs	Attendance	No. of Programs	Attendance	No. of Programs	Attendance	No. of Programs	Attendance		
July	15	212	8	82	3	55	3	53	1		22	
August	10	124	5	49	3	54	2	21	0		0	
September	7	157	2	0	5	157	0	0	0		0	
October	18	2053	5	444	11	1533	1	26	1		50	
November	11	475	4	148	3	70	3	182	1		75	
December	8	192	4	77	3	99	1	16	0		0	
January	8	170	2	27	5	131	0	0	1		12	
February	8	524	3	141	4	356	0	0	1		27	
March	14	352	3	117	7	168	2	30	2		37	
April	12	347	2	41	7	233	2	35	1		38	
May	14	609	3	103	8	356	1	100	2		50	
June	14	616	2	160	6	232	1	70	5		154	
TOTALS	139	6881	43	1389	65	3444	16	533	15		465	1050

Figure 1. Master attendance for public programs by audience type, Fiscal Year 2014-15

Adult Programs

Adult programs have always been a strong focus for the Oriental Institute and this year was no exception. We have continued to partner with faculty and staff and have involved graduate student content specialists in the development and implementation of these programs. Our content specialists this year include PhD candidates Megaera Lorenz, Sam Harris, and Joey Cross. We have collaborated more this year with the Office of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations to “get the word out” about what the Education Office does, and to communicate with students on how to become involved in our department and the benefits they will gain from participation — valuable teaching experience and using their expertise with non-academic audiences and museum program development.

Continuing Education

This year we offered a total of eight adult continuing education courses with three online courses — one offered for the first time (* indicates new course).

Onsite Courses

- Before the Alphabet: Writing Systems in the Ancient World, taught by Massimo Maiocchi, PhD
- Egyptian Hieroglyphs for Museum Goers, taught by Foy Scalf, PhD
- *Mesopotamian Mythologies, taught by Sam Harris, PhD candidate
- Nubia in the Ancient World, taught by Deborah Heard, PhD candidate
- *Temples and Palaces of Ancient Near Eastern Empires, taught by Kiersten Neumann, PhD

Online Courses

- Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt, taught by Megaera Lorenz, PhD candidate
- *Before the Alphabet: Writing Systems in the Ancient World, taught by Massimo Maiocchi, PhD
- Egyptian Hieroglyphs for Beginners, taught by Foy Scalf, PhD

Performances and Off-site Excursions

In the fall and winter we filled the OI with the performing arts. In the fall we hosted Chicago-based Ron De Jesús Dance Company, who brought us three vignettes from their story ballet *Osiris and Isis*. The performance included recorded translations from the Egyptian Book of the Dead compiled and translated from thirty-one different sources by Professor Robert Ritner. The translated material was also used to create introductions to each vignettes that were read by PhD students Joseph Cross and Ariel Singer. In January we welcomed the east coast musical group Alba Consort, who gave a workshop celebrating the Oud, Voice, and Vielle. The workshop combined music and a discussion of early modes of Arabic music. The audience was



Figure 2. Alba Consort and audience members discuss medieval instruments

invited to handle the instruments and there was a Q&A session at the end. The concert was scheduled for two hours and the audience stayed well past the program's end asking questions.

This year the OI visited Rosehill Cemetery for a popular tour with Michael Berger as our guide. Following the success of our walking tours we offered a bus tour to view Islamic-inspired architecture in the Chicago area. Both tours are led by PhD candidate Michael Bechtel and are in association with the special exhibit *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo*.



Figure 3. Islamic architecture bus tour in Chicago

Special and Recurring Programming

Our after-hours Epic Wednesday program is going strong after two academic years, and last year we made some adjustments to ensure we are reaching the student audience. We have removed the program's 21 and over age restriction and are developing communication outlets that reach undergraduate students. Additionally, to increase our engagement with students, we formed a Graduate Student Committee (GSC) with the intent to help us develop thematic tours and identify campus outreach for the program. The GSC is comprised of six students from the Departments of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and Anthropology: Rozenn Bailleul-LeSuer, Debora Heard, Megaera Lorenz, Sam Harris, Kate Cescon, and Joey Cross. The group meets once a month to discuss activity ideas and promotion strategies for the program.



Figure 4. What do you enjoy most during Epic Wednesday?

"I enjoyed the harp from the 15th century the most. I liked how she gave us multiple examples of the sound from that particular time period. There are no parts of the program that I least enjoyed."

"Everything — the music, the beverages, the history."

We offered another full year — eleven programs in total of first Thursday’s Lunchtime Traveler series. In total 318 people attended this year; up from 293 last year. Topics and speakers included:

- Megiddo: Crossroads of Culture, by Jack Green, PhD
- Terra Firma: A Closer Look at Pottery, by Catherine Kenyon
- Recreating Zincirli: The Ancient City of Katumuwa, by Travis Saul
- Gilgamesh, by Monica Phillips, PhD candidate
- Prehistory at the OI, by Yorke Rowan, PhD
- Discovering the Katumuwa Stela, by David Schloen, PhD
- The Wide-eye Worshipers of Ancient Mesopotamia, by Kiersten Neumann, PhD
- Models of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt, by Emily Teeter, PhD
- Cylinder Seals: Miniature Masterpieces of Mesopotamia, by Kiersten Neumann, PhD
- From the Arabian Nights to Taxes: Texts from the Old Cairo Exhibit, by Tasha Vorderstrasse, PhD
- The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, by Foy Scalf, PhD

In October we hosted two very popular lectures. The first, entitled “Dining with the Dead in the Ancient World,” was offered in association with the special exhibit In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East and included Margaret Mitchell, Dean of the Divinity School; Jonathan M. Hall, Professor of History and Classics; David Harper, Centennial Professor of Chinese Studies; and Emily Teeter, Oriental Institute Special Exhibits Coordinator. Our second public talk, entitled “A Game of Thrones and Coffins: The Death and Resurrection of Osiris,” by Robert Ritner, was in association with University of Chicago Humanities Day and preceded the dance performance *Osiris and Isis*, by Ron De Jesús Dance.



Figure 5. Tasha Vorderstrasse (at far right) gives her Lunchtime Traveler program, *From the Arabian Nights to Taxes: Texts from the Old Cairo Exhibit*

Our final public lecture of the academic year was in association with the special exhibit *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo* and was part of a full-day program entitled *Celebrate the History and Culture of Old Cairo*. The program started with the lecture “Street Stories: Sights, Spaces, and Imaginaries in Medieval Cairo,” by Heather Badamo of the Department of Art History at the University of Chicago (fig. 6), and was followed by ancient board game activities, poetry readings (fig. 7), a gallery talk, Lego creations of famous Islamic architecture, and a performance by the Middle East Music Ensemble (fig.8).



Clockwise from upper left: Figure 6. Heather Badamo giving her lecture “Street Stories: Sights, Spaces, and Imaginaries in Medieval Cairo.” Figure 7. Liran Yadgar reading poems of Judah Halevi in translation. Figure 8. The Middle East Music Ensemble performing in Breasted Hall, April 2015

Family and Youth Programs. Moriah Grooms-Garcia

The family and youth program has seen tremendous growth, with this past year presenting nearly 1,400 attendees and having over forty programs offered, a 32 percent increase in attendance over last year. In the 2014–2015 year we have been particularly focused on bringing out the aspects that are unique about the Oriental Institute through its family and youth programs and workshops in a sustainable, replicable manner so that those programs can be offered more frequently (fig. 9).



Figure 9. The family program Little Scribe is now offered five times a year, which is possible because it has been made easily replicable



Figure 10. Girl Scouts and other youth groups can now earn patches at a selection of our regularly offered family programs

Now that we are able to offer certain programs on a regular basis, we have been able to create fun patches that can be earned by Girl Scouts and other youth groups that participate in our programs. So far over fifty Girl Scouts have earned their Junior Archaeologist patches. This year we will be creating Little Scribe and Mummy patches (fig. 10).

This year we also grew our quarterly featured family programs, including our annual Halloween event Mummies Night, which brought over 400 costumed people to the Museum (fig. 11). Ancient Game Day was offered twice this year, indoors in the winter and outdoors in spring on the new 58th Street pedestrian streetscape (fig. 12).



Figures 11 & 12. Mummies Night and two Ancient Game Days were our biggest family events of the year, between them bringing in nearly 700 people to the Oriental Institute



Figure 13. The homeschool workshop All Bones About It had families analyzing a real human skeleton for evidence of nutrition and activity



Figure 14. Ancient Earth Day is one of our new quarterly programs that has grown each year, and which we plan to make even bigger next year. In 2015 the theme was Mesopotamia and kids made earth-deity temples out of recycled materials

Homeschool Workshops Series

Few museums in the greater Chicago area are yet offering opportunities specifically for the homeschool audience. What further sets the Oriental Institute's homeschool programs apart is that families work with a real expert in the field — an Egyptologist, Assyriologist, museum curator — while learning twenty-first century skills through ancient history. Participant evaluations have shown that this expertise, as well as the diversity of content and working with real objects, are what the homeschool audience appreciates most about these workshops. This past year we used mummies to teach science, an ancient building to teach geometry, and bioarchaeology to teach nutrition and healthy choices. Next year we will be learn about critical thinking at the workshop How to Make an Exhibit, about simple machines through the building of the pyramids, and more!

On the Horizon

Some of our homeschool workshops were such a hit that people have been asking for us to run them again — and we plan to oblige. Next year we will be offering Mummy Science, All Bones About It, Not Pi, and Introduction to Hieroglyphs on weekends so that other family audiences can also participate.

The development of the Gallery Discovery Cart has come a long way this past year. This year we will be specifically recruiting volunteers to run this cart and its engaging pottery analysis activity to bring this lively interactive into the galleries.

“Please keep the programs coming! They are wonderful!”

— participant evaluation

Teacher Programs. *Carol Ng-He*

K-12 Teacher Programs

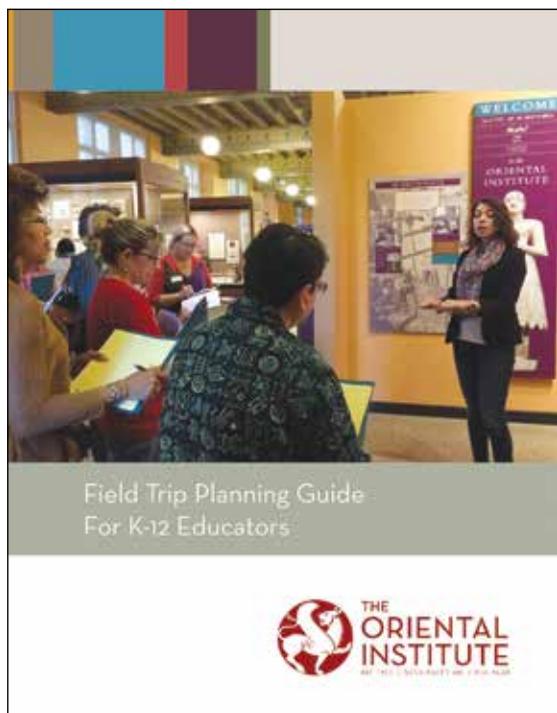
Our teacher professional development programs have reached educators across disciplines and grade levels with the focus on the alignment with the Common Core State Standards and the new Next Generation Science Standards that the state of Illinois will begin using in 2016. We have focused this year on growing our teacher outreach and deepening collaborative efforts in support of teachers. In an effort to achieve this goal we created four new initiatives:

Helping Educators Plan for a Visit

The new Oriental Institute Field Trip Planning Guide was created to provide instructional resources to teachers in planning their field trips to the Oriental Institute (fig. 15). The guide includes an overview of the Oriental Institute Museum galleries, ready-made student worksheets, pre-and post-visit activity suggestion, and is available for free to download from our website. We know that the guide is having an impact on teachers across the Chicago area and beyond.

Teacher Professional Development

This May we held our second Teacher Appreciation Night, which will be an annual event at the Oriental Institute. The event thanks and salutes teachers for their commitment to education, and their dedication to teaching about the ancient world. The Oriental Institute partners with multiple organizations and centers on campus to host the event, which helps to connect teachers with a broad range of resources they can use in their classrooms. This year the program highlighted a curator talk by Tanya Treptow, PhD, co-curator of the



"I really like the guide! I think the map is great and like the activities as well as the vocabulary. I think this makes a quality visit to the museum extremely easy for teachers — especially the worksheets that are included. Many schools require assignments to be submitted with a field trip request. I may use a few of yours even though I have my own developed!"

— Janet Roller-Schmidt,
Art Department,
Hinsdale South High School

Figure 15. Cover of the Oriental Institute Field Trip Planning Guide

special exhibit *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo*. We doubled our attendance this year with 100 teachers.

This year we continued to strengthen our cross-campus K-12 outreach partnerships with another collaboration with the Center for International Studies and other area studies centers for the annual University of Chicago International Education Conference and a Summer Teacher Institute. The Conference topic was



Figure 16. Teachers at the annual Teacher Appreciation Night, in May 2015

Problem-Solving: Classroom, Community, and the World, where teachers and Oriental Institute staff engaged educators in discussion on how to use archaeology in the classroom to solve problems and engage critical-thinking skills. The Institute was a three-day event entitled *Inequality: Conditions, Consequences, Solutions*, where Sam Harris, PhD candidate in Mesopotamian archaeology, presented on the origins of inequality in the ancient Near East (fig. 17), and Debora Heard, PhD candidate in anthropology, presented on inequality in ancient Nubia.



Figure 17. Sam Harris presenting at the annual University of Chicago International Education Conference and a Summer Teacher Institute

Teacher Resources

Investigating Nutrition: The Advent of Agriculture in Mesopotamia, a new teacher curriculum for grade 6, was developed by Project Archaeology staff Courtney Agenten, Cali Letts, and Jeanne Moe, EdD, and was edited and published by the Oriental Institute for release this spring. The curriculum explores the shift from hunting and gathering to the development of agriculture in the ancient world (fig. 18). Teacher professional development programs based on the curriculum will be offered on-site in the summer 2015 and online in the fall 2015.

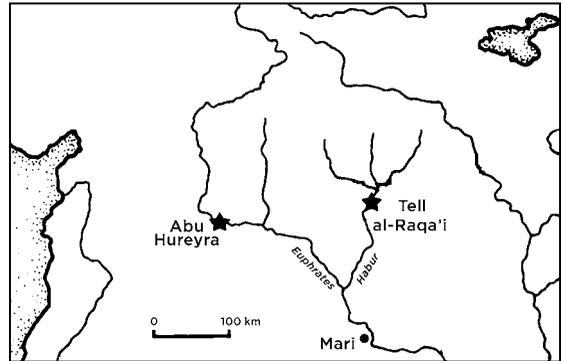


Figure 18. The Project Archaeology curriculum focuses on two Mesopotamian sites: Abu Hureyra and Tell al-Raqa'i

New Projects on the Horizon

The Educator Pass

Next year the Oriental Institute will offer a new teacher membership. The Educator Pass will only cost teachers \$25 per year, and provides them with benefits at the family membership rate. We hope this new pass will encourage teachers to spread the word about the incredible resources the Oriental Institute holds for them and their students.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM)

A New STEAM-focused Teacher Cohort Program begins next school year with six teachers. The teachers will participate in professional development sessions led by scholars at the Oriental Institute, and they will conceptualize as a group ways to develop object-based field trips and gallery programs to the Oriental Institute. The project is entitled Art+Engineering and it will feature a student-team design challenge focused on the tools and resources found in the ancient Middle East to design, build, and beautify. Students will use science, technology, engineering, art, and math skills to complete their in-gallery challenges.