



## Expert Sources from Minnesota’s Private Colleges

### NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

The member institutions of the Minnesota Private College Council are home to 17 communities of scholars who provide insight, analysis and expertise on a wide variety of news and events. Members of the media are invited to locate leading thinkers for expert commentary on a wide variety of issues and topics from this periodic listing of faculty experts. This listing includes resources on:

- Education
- History
- Holiday Shopping
- Music
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Religious Studies
- Study Abroad

Education			
Expert	Expertise	Background	Media Relations Contact
<p><b>Susan Goetz</b>  <i>Associate Professor of Education</i>            College of St. Catherine            sjgoetz@stkate.edu            651-690-6611            www.stkate.edu/education</p>	<p>Goetz has recently had her book published: “<b>Science for Girls, Successful Classroom Strategies,</b>” by Scarecrow Publishing. While written as a textbook for elementary and middle school teachers, the book is also appropriate for parents of young women.</p>	<p>Goetz’s book looks at the history of achievement by girls in the area of science as well as the failure by girls to choose rigorous science courses later in their school careers leading of course to diminished numbers of women entering the science professions. Original St. Kate research is quoted in the book and activities that teachers and parents can use to motivate girls (and boys) to maintain interest in all things science.</p>	<p>Julie Michener            Media Relations Manager            jmichener@stkate.edu            651-690-6521            651-253-8931</p>
<p><b>Sally Baas</b>  <i>College of Education; Southeast Asian Teacher Licensure program; Director, Hmong Culture and Language program; Director, English as a Special Language; Professor, Special Education</i>            Concordia University</p>	<p>Baas’ areas of expertise include teacher education focused on <b>urban educators, school psychology and special education</b>. She collaborates with other psychologists and provides support to the communities affected by traumatic events, such as the Red Lake school shootings.</p>	<p>Some of Baas’ current projects include: how to address mental health issues and their relationship to issues of immigrants and refugees; ethnic identity issues and leadership in the Hmong community; research of the efficacy of bilingual teaching in a St. Paul elementary school; and writing a Hmong component to an instrument called Cultural Detective.</p>	<p>Jill Johnson            Director of University Marketing &amp; Communications            651-641-8755            jjohnson@csp.edu            www.csp.edu/news/</p>

History			
Expert	Expertise	Background	Media Relations Contact
<p><b>Sujay Rao</b>  <i>Assistant Professor of History,            Director of First Term Seminar            Program</i>            Gustavus Adolphus College</p>	<p>Rao spent the past 14 years studying <b>Latin America, particularly Argentina</b>, conducting extensive research on Argentine history. Rao is also active researching and teaching about the history of all of Latin America, especially from 1800 to the present.</p>	<p>Rao completed a Ph.D. in Latin American history at Harvard University in 2002 and has taught at Gustavus since 2003. Over the years, Rao has received grants and awards including a Fulbright Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend.</p>	<p>Matt Thomas            Media Relations Manager            news@gustavus.edu            507-933-7510</p>
<p><b>Chris Armstrong</b>  <i>Associate Professor of Church            History</i>            Bethel Seminary</p>	<p>Armstrong's research foci include <b>religion and emotion, Christianity and literature, and the Christ-and-culture conversation</b>. His doctoral work focused on the 19th-century holiness movement and his current research interests include the British "Inklings" authors and modern appropriations of medieval ideas and practices. He is currently finishing a book with the working title "Patron Saints for Postmoderns."</p>	<p>Armstrong came to Bethel from the managing editor's chair at Christian History &amp; Biography magazine, a publication of Christianity Today International. He continues to write for Christian History &amp; Biography, Christianity Today, Leadership Journal and www.christianhistory.net. He is a member of several professional associations related to church history and the Wesleyan and Pentecostal movements.</p>	<p>Amanda Wanke            Director of Media and Internal            Communications            651-638-6266            a-wanke@bethel.edu</p>
Holiday Shopping			
Expert	Expertise	Background	Media Relations Contact
<p><b>Dr. David Brennan</b>  <i>Professor of Marketing, Assistant            Dean of Opus College of            Business at the University of St.            Thomas, Co-director of St.            Thomas' Institute for Retailing            Excellence</i>            University of St. Thomas            (651) 962-4077            debrennan@stthomas.edu</p>	<p>Brennan is a local and national resource for stories on <b>discount retailing, holiday spending and sales, the retail industry, shopping behavior and shopping centers</b>, including the Mall of America.</p>	<p>Brennan holds his Ph.D. from Kent State University.</p> <p>He serves on the editorial boards of the International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research; the Journal of Retailing and Customer Services; and the Journal of Small Business Strategy.</p> <p><i>NOTE: He returns calls quickly and is understanding of reporters who work under tight deadlines. He is comfortable in both print and broadcast settings.</i></p>	<p>Jim Winterer,            St. Thomas News Service,            651-962-6404            jwinterer@stthomas.edu</p>

Music			
Expert	Expertise	Background	Media Relations Contact
<p><b>Dr. René Clausen</b>  <i>Associate Professor of Music</i>            Concordia College            218.299.3285, ext. 317            clausen@cord.edu</p>	<p>Clausen is a world-renowned <b>composer and conductor</b> of The Concordia Choir and artistic director of the <b>award-winning Concordia Christmas Concerts</b> for more than 20 years. He has written more than 50 commissioned compositions for famed performances. In 1998 he created the René Clausen Choral School, an intensive five-day program for choral conductors, and is the founder of the René Clausen Music Company.</p>	<p>Clausen graduated in 1974 from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., and received a Master of Music Performance and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the University of Illinois, Urbana.</p> <p>He has conducted such works as Mozart's Requiem, Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Brahms' Requiem and several of his own works including Gloria – in three movements – performed at Carnegie Hall in New York.</p>	<p>Amy Kelly            Media Relations Director            218-299-3642            akelly@cord.edu</p>
Philosophy			
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<p><b>Lisa Heldke</b>  <i>Professor of Philosophy and Sponberg Chair of Ethics</i>            Gustavus Adolphus College</p>	<p>Heldke explores questions about the <b>philosophical relevance of food</b>. Food is a fundamental source of meaning and value in human life and is an important subject for philosophers to consider. How do humans' relationships to food contribute to our senses of what it is to be a person?</p>	<p>Recently, interest in food has experienced a tremendous upswing--movements for organic food and local food, for instance, have captured the attention of many. Philosophers have meaningful contributions to make to our public conversations about food.</p> <p>Heldke earned a B.A. from Gustavus Adolphus College and an M.A. and PhD from Northwestern University.</p>	<p>Matt Thomas            Media Relations Manager            news@gustavus.edu            507-933-7510</p>

Political Science			
Expert	Expertise	Background	Media Relations Contact
<p><b>Daniel Hofrenning</b>  <i>Professor of Political Science</i>            St. Olaf College            507-786-3128 (w)            507-786-4665 (h)            dhofrenn@stolaf.edu</p>	<p>Hofrenning's areas of expertise include <b>U.S. politics, religion and politics and public policy.</b></p>	<p>Hofrenning, author of the book "In Washington But Not Of It: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists," teaches public policy and American politics. He most recently has been quoted by the New York Times and appeared on CNN's Lou Dobbs program. He also has provided commentary for MPR, KARE-11 and FOX-9. His opinion pieces have appeared in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the St. Paul Pioneer Press and at MSNBC.com.</p>	<p>David Gonnerman            Media Relations            507-786-3315            gonnermd@stolaf.edu</p>
<p><b>Adrienne Christiansen</b>  <i>Associate Professor and Chair, Political Science</i>            Macalester College</p>	<p>Christiansen studies <b>political communication</b>. Before joining the Political Science Department, she taught in the Communication and Media Studies Department at Macalester from 1990-2003. Her scholarly efforts have focused on the <b>language of war and the rhetoric of social movements</b>. Most recently, she has been drawn to visual persuasion, particularly as manifested in political editorial cartoons and in the role political monuments play in maintaining conflict in Cyprus.</p>	<p>Professor Christiansen teaches classes in American political communication: Rhetoric of Campaigns and Elections, Presidential Rhetoric, Women's Voices in Politics, Rhetoric and Social Change, Cyber Politics, Theories of Rhetoric, Freedom of Speech in a Mass Media Society, Argument and Advocacy, and The Politics of Public Space.</p>	<p>Barbara Laskin            Media Relations            (651) 696-6451            laskin@macalester.edu  <a href="http://www.macalester.edu/college/relations/">http://www.macalester.edu/college/relations/</a></p>
Religious Studies			
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<p><b>Ahmad Atif Ahmad</b>  <i>Assistant Professor, Religious Studies</i>            Macalester College</p>	<p>Ahmad grew up in Egypt where he studied Islamic Law at Al Azhar, a mosque with an ancient tradition of scholarship. He specializes in <b>Islamic legal history</b>. His first book in Arabic dealt with reviewing court decisions in Islamic law (Cairo, 1997) and a forthcoming work deals with the interrelationship of theoretical and practical legal reasoning in Islam.</p>	<p>Ahmad contributed to the writing and editing of over 200 entries on Islamic intellectual history and contemporary Muslim thought, which were published in "Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Islamiyya" ("Encyclopedia of the Islamic Sciences," Cairo, 1991-1998). Before coming to Macalester, he was a lecturer in Arabic language at Harvard University.</p>	<p>Barbara Laskin            Media Relations            (651) 696-6451            laskin@macalester.edu  <a href="http://www.macalester.edu/college/relations/">http://www.macalester.edu/college/relations/</a></p>

Study Abroad			
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<p><b>MaryAnn Baenninger</b>  <i>President</i>            College of Saint Benedict</p>	<p>According to <i>2007 Open Doors</i>, more College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University graduates take part in semester-long <b>overseas study</b> than at any other U.S. baccalaureate college. Baenninger is concerned that overseas study often forces a student to spend more than four years and thousands of dollars in additional tuition and fees to complete a bachelor's degree, and that scant quality control exists over study abroad programs, especially those offered by private vendors. She wants to make sure that study abroad students receive the best value for their money.</p>	<p>Baenninger received her Ph.D. from Temple University, where she also completed her bachelor's degree in psychology. She currently is a member of the American Council of Education's Commission on International Initiatives and serves on the board of trustees of the American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.</p>	<p>Diane Hageman            Director of Media Relations            320-363-5748            dhageman@csbsju.edu</p>

**NOTES**

- For back issues of Expert Sources, visit [www.mnprivatecolleges.org/media](http://www.mnprivatecolleges.org/media) – where you will also find other information about private colleges, as well as links to all of the colleges own home pages.
- For general media inquiries about private colleges, contact John Manning at the Minnesota Private College Council at 651-293-6805 or [jmanning@mnprivatecolleges.org](mailto:jmanning@mnprivatecolleges.org), or you can contact Kate Metzger at 651-293-6830 or [kmetzger@mnprivatecolleges.org](mailto:kmetzger@mnprivatecolleges.org).

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