Reacting (Again) to the Past: Creating Innovative Curriculum at UW and in the Larger Community

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During the 2015-2016 academic year, Dr. Robin Stacey introduced an inventive course, Reacting to the Past: Religion and Politics in Medieval Europe, which is based on a program originally developed at Barnard College. As part of this curriculum, students transform themselves into historical characters and, utilizing role play and strategy, immerse themselves in historical events which may or may not turn out the way that history claims they did. Dr. Stacey's course has created such a dynamic environment that last year's students have returned with enthusiasm to tell this year's students about their experiences, including how the course created a friendship within the group that has expanded beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Former participant Josie Rollins, a recent graduate from UW's History Department, continues to express her enthusiasm for Dr. Stacey's course by trying to create a Reacting to the Past group at Cambridge, where she is currently pursuing a PhD. Speaking of the RTTP course, Rollins said "it was one of the most unconventional yet educationally rewarding classes I've ever taken because it required me to think so differently about history than I had up until that point." Dr. Stacey, along with Dr. Mira Green, recently spoke at a conference for Washington Secondary educators about their experiences teaching innovative curriculum. Dr. Mira Green, a lecturer in Greek and Roman history, has created courses that turn the students into filmmakers to reenact key events in ancient history. For more on Reacting to the Past, see the article from last year's course: Reacting to the Past.