



Shimer Celebrates 2009 Commencement

On Saturday, May 9th Shimer College celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2009. Dr. Herman Sinaiko delivered the keynote address after speeches of welcome from President Thomas Lindsay and Board of Trustees Chairman Chris Nelson. Dr. Sinaiko is a Humanities professor at the University of Chicago and has received both the Quantrell Award and Amoco Prize for excellence in undergraduate teaching. Dr. Sinaiko also continues to author books. His latest book, *Reclaiming the Canon*, emphasizes the enduring value of a Great Books education, and the keynote address delivered to Shimer College bore a similar focus. Dr. Sinaiko traced the roots of the modern Great Books curriculum, beginning with Aristotle's first synthesis of the Theoretical Sciences, the Universal Rhetorical and Dialectical Arts, and the Practical Disciplines of Ethics and Politics. Shimer College still retains the essence of this original curriculum, Sinaiko argued, and such a "non-specialized, non-vocational education has actually better prepared [students] than [their] less fortunate friends graduating from other more conventional schools."



Student speakers Stephen Hoppe and Heather Lakemacher echoed this sentiment, expressing gratitude for the singular academic and social experiences Shimer College provides. Stephen spoke first, choosing to share what came to mind rather than any prepared words as he stood at the podium. "Every draft I wrote didn't seem adequate" he explained. After reminiscing on his journey that began with a dissatisfying experience at a traditional

college, Stephen concluded, "I have such a sense of intense gratitude for Shimer; even now I don't think I can put it into words. I've gained so much." Weekend student Heather Lakemacher admitted having a more reserved personality when she began, but found that Shimer College inspires students to open up in a profound way: "When you spend so much time together in class talking about the important questions of life...you can't help developing the kind of friendships that will hopefully last for the rest of your lives." Heather also expressed confidence in the curriculum that she had completed. "The world needs people who can comfortably cross disciplines and compose a coherent, broad perspective," said Heather. "That's the kind of thinking Shimer uniquely suits us for."



David Shiner, Dean of the College, briefly spoke of the magic of Shimer College and its faculty (in response to an [entry on the Shimer blog](#) by student Simon Creek), and how students take this magic with them. Afterward, David and President Lindsay gave degrees to seventeen graduates.

More pictures can be found online at <http://shimercollege.myphotoalbum.com>.

News

[Introducing Groups: A New Way to Continue the Conversation](#)

There's a new way to continue the conversation with your Shimer College friends. Groups have arrived on the Shimer Online Alumni Community: alumni.shimer.edu! You can connect with alumni who attended the same campus, participated in the same programs, live in the same region, or share the same interests. Join an existing group or start your own!

To help get you started, we have created a few groups:

- I went to Shimer in Chicago
- I went to Shimer in Waukegan
- I went to Shimer in Mt. Carroll
- Weekend College
- Early Entrant
- Shimer in Oxford
- Shimer in Paris

Groups make it quick and easy to:

- Share photos, links, comments, and event invitations
- Receive updates on everyone in your group
- Chat instantly with other group members
- Post your thoughts instantly using the White Board feature

To get started, login to alumni.shimer.edu and you'll see tabs for "**My Groups**" and "**Suggested Groups**" on the front page. You will also now find a "Groups" tab on your personal profile.

Not yet a part of the community? [Login for the first time today!](#)

[2009 Shimer Poetry Contest Winners](#)

Congratulations to the 2009 Shimer College Poetry Contest winners! First prize was shared by Simon Creek ('12) for his poem "[Eros/Thanatos](#)" and Eli Nelson ('12) for his poem "[Medusa](#)". An honorable mention went to Kate Wilhelmi ('10) for her poem, "[Tuesday Morning Sestina](#)".

The Shimer College Poetry Contest is sponsored by the Academy of American Poets. Prizes have been funded for over 30 years by an endowment by Shimer alum Peter Cooley ('62). Peter is a poet and a Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing at Tulane University. Earlier this year, Peter's eighth book of poetry, "[Divine Margins](#)", was published.

Events

[Chicago Area Reading Discussion Group](#)

6/26/2009 5:45 PM

Shimer College, Infinity Classroom

David Shiner, Dean of the College, will lead a discussion of Plato's dialogue, *Euthyphro* ([pdf version](#)). Join David and other alumni and friends of Shimer around an octagonal table. Coffee and snacks will be provided!

[Great Books Trivia Night](#)

6/10/2009 7:00 PM

Heartland Cafe (East Room)

Come and battle alums, students, and other fans of the Great Books on Wednesday, June 10th at the [Heartland Cafe](#) from 7:00pm to 8:45pm. The Trivia Tsar (Stuart Patterson) will be leading the questions. The event will be in the east room (with the stage).

Alumni Spotlight

[Noah Tesch \('03\) Begins Masters Program in Middle Eastern Studies](#)

Noah Tesch ('03) began a Masters program in fall 2008 at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. After graduating from Shimer, Noah explored his interest in foreign language, studying French for 8

months in France, and during this time he became interested in the Middle East and Arabic. When Noah came back to the states, he decided to pursue this interest and studied Arabic at Middlebury College in Vermont. Following this he returned overseas to study at the Arabic Language Institute at the American University in Cairo, Egypt for a year and a half. Armed with his knowledge of Arabic, Noah worked as a translator in Washington, DC. until this past summer, when he decided to pursue graduate studies.

Noah is now back in Chicago studying at the Center for Middle Eastern Students at the University of Chicago. He says that Shimer has prepared him well for the academic and professional journey he is on. "Shimer teaches you how to blaze a trail for yourself," he says. "I can look at a variety of sources that very few people have ever studied and come to my own conclusions." Noah is enjoying his work in the Masters program and anticipates further study.

