



News Release

December 12, 2013

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Winners of 2013 CGS/ProQuest® Distinguished Dissertation Awards Announced

*Awards recognize outstanding research by graduates in
the Humanities and Biological and Life Sciences*

Washington, DC – The Council of Graduate Schools / ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Awards, the nation’s most prestigious honor for doctoral dissertations, were presented to Austin Mason and Valorie Salimpoor at an awards ceremony during the CGS 53rd Annual Meeting. Dr. Mason completed his PhD in history at Boston College in 2012. Dr. Salimpoor earned her PhD in psychology at McGill University in 2013.

Bestowed annually since 1982, the awards recognize recent doctoral recipients who have already made unusually significant and original contributions to their fields. ProQuest, an international leader in dissertation archiving, discovery and access, sponsors the awards and an independent committee from the Council of Graduate Schools selects the winners. Two awards are given each year, rotating among four general areas of scholarship. The winners receive a certificate, a \$2,000 honorarium, and funds for travel to the awards ceremony.

“The scholars selected to receive the 2013 awards have found new ways to combine research technologies and interdisciplinary fields, making remarkable contributions to their research areas,” said Mary Sauer-Games, ProQuest Vice President of Information Solutions. “ProQuest is honored to highlight their dissertations as exemplary works of doctoral study.”

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The 2013 Award in humanities was presented to Dr. Mason for “Listening to the Early Medieval Dead: Religious Practices in Eastern Britain, 400–900 CE.” His interdisciplinary dissertation research uses methodologies from archeology and history along with the technology of geographic information systems (GIS) to reconstruct life in first-millennium Britain. As a prime example of ‘digital humanities’ research, the project uses GIS technology to reinterpret the way graves were sited and positioned in the mortuary rituals of pagans and Christians during the period. Dr. Mason is currently a tenure-track faculty member at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Dr. Salimpoor received the 2013 Award in biological and life sciences for her dissertation, “Music, Emotion, and the Reward System: Investigations with (11C) raclopride Positron Emission Tomography (PET), functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) and Psychophysiological Methods.” Her research examines the dopamine response in the context of positive emotional responses to musical passages that elicit “chills.” The project shows the distinct brain circuitry responsible for the anticipation and the experience of the chills, which the brain perceives as pleasure. Dr. Salimpoor is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Rotman Research Institute in Toronto.

More information about the CGS / ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award is available at www.proquest.com/go/scholars or at www.cgsnet.org.

About the Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Among U.S. institutions, CGS members award 92% of the doctoral degrees and 78% of the master’s degrees.* The organization’s mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.

* Based on data from the 2012 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees

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