

## Elizabeth (Libby) Hannon Wentworth Fellowship Profile

“Studying Kafka isn’t exactly breaking new ground, graduate student Elizabeth (Libby) Hannon said, “but ... I am interested in the short works of fiction by Franz Kafka, and how his relationship with his home city of Prague influenced the themes of apathy, mortality, and human suffering.”

Hannon first became acquainted with Kafka in middle school, and says that she was most struck by the “depiction of the apathy people can exhibit towards intense human (or inhuman) suffering.”

“Kafka’s stories don’t stick with you because they’re creepy or graphic or strange, but because you feel like a part of your ability to be optimistic about life has been chipped away,” she said.

Hannon visited Prague during the first week of March—UNCW’s 2014 spring break, and fit quite a bit of research into her time there. “I visited the Kafka Museum, which was very eye-opening (if not a little bizarre),” she said. Hannon also visited Kafka’s childhood home, and his adult home on the Golden Lane by St. Vitus’ Cathedral. She visited several sites in the Jewish quarter, as well as Prague castle, numerous cathedrals and churches in Old town, and the village of Kutna Hora—most famous for being home to the “bone church.”

“There are so many competing elements,” she explained, “religious, political, and cultural—that were influential in Kafka’s life and writings that can only be experienced by visiting the city itself.”

When she isn’t touring Eastern Europe, Hannon enjoys kayaking, photography, painting, and sketching. She also admits to being “really skilled” at making friendship bracelets, and jokes that it’s her “#1 useless talent.”

When reading for fun, Hannon loves medical thrillers and mystery novels, and has a passion for Gothic literature.

She heard about the Wentworth during her first semester as a graduate student, and was happy to come full-circle by completing her trip during her last.