Help Wanted -- Undergraduate Research Assistants

Faculty Member and email: Thomas McDow (.4)

Research topic /area: Islamic networks in the Indian Ocean

When will the URA be needed?
(Suggested time commitment: A total of 20 hours of work for each credit hour taken)

   _X_ Autumn, Second Session (Begins October 16) (1-2 credit hours)

   _X_ Spring Semester (1-3 credit hours)

   _X_ May Term (1-3 credit hours)

   ____ Summer Term (1-3 credit hours)

Job description: This is a project that falls into “digital humanities” and deals with mapping networks of people. I would like to work with a student (or students) to develop a historical database from a primary source collection. (The first set of sources deal with coastal Somalia, Italian colonization, and links to Zanzibar and the Indian Ocean world in the 1890s.) We would then use software to map networks of individuals connected through financial relations. This approach is new to me, so we will be learning together to make a pilot for a larger dataset. Work on this project could be for this fall, next spring, or May.


Educational Outcome(s) for the Student: This is a chance to work with primary sources, learn about digital methods of historical analysis, and create new knowledge. Students could turn their work on this project into a paper or thesis, and it would also lend itself to presentation at the Denman forum or other research venue. Likewise, students could use this method to analyze their own data. I would be happy to work with a motivated student to turn this into something useful for them.

What the student should submit in order to apply: please write me a letter/email explaining your interest and what you would hope to gain from this experience.

Application review by faculty member will begin around what date? October 3 (and ongoing).