

AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

American Studies: In With the New

American Studies has enjoyed a blast of new energy and talent this Fall. A cohort of students with backgrounds as varied as any in recent years has already stepped forward to take leadership in crucial areas of our program: the formation of the new American Studies Working Group, dedicated this term



Students Christopher Warren, Annagul Yaryeva and Carlos Macias Prieto at the ASA in DC.

to the study of “Post-Raciality;” serving on the American Studies Recruitment and Symposium Committees, and assisting with planning for the Purdue American Studies Reception at the American Studies Association meeting in Washington D.C. November 6th. The reception symbolized an auspicious presence at ASA for Purdue: more than 20 students from the program attended, many for the first time. Ph.D candidates Mark Bousquet and Karen Salt, and History/AMST Professor Susan Curtis delivered papers in Washington.

American Studies is also celebrating with anticipation the launch of its new undergraduate major and minor in 2010. Last year, Professor Chris Lukasik, English, oversaw the development of an undergraduate curriculum, which was approved by the College of Liberal Arts in the Spring. The undergraduate degree will complement and counterpoint our strong graduate program, while providing new teaching opportunities for faculty and graduate students alike. The program will begin recruiting undergraduates to the major this year with the help of the student Recruitment Committee. We also celebrated the launch of the new degree programs at ASA in Washington.

The program is also in transition: a search committee comprised of the following AMST affiliated faculty and students received applications to serve as the next Director of the program beginning Fall 2010: Professor Kristina Bross, English; Professor Nancy Gabin, History; Professor Nathalia Jaramillo, Educational Studies; Professor Venetria Patton, African American Studies Research Center/English. Elected student representatives to the Committee were Erik Wade, Ph.D. candidate; Heather Moore, M.A. candidate, and Kendra Unruh, Ph.D. candidate, representing the American Studies Graduate Student Organization. The Search Committee hopes to complete its work and selection of a new Director by January 2010. The American Studies program is profoundly grateful to this group for its important service to the program.

Finally, American Studies will continue in Maymester 2010 its collaborative exchange with the American Studies program at East China Normal University in Shanghai, China. We anticipate up to a dozen students traveling to Shanghai to take part in “Transnational American Studies Abroad.” The course will be team-taught by faculty from ECNU and Professor Bill Mullen and Purdue American Studies Ph.D. candidate Erik Wade, a veteran of the first Purdue-ECNU seminar in 2007. The Maymester course will push forward efforts by Purdue’s American Studies program to continue to understand and analyze the role of the U.S. in a constantly globalizing world, and to work towards equal intellectual and political exchange between students and scholars across national boundaries.



Dr. Chris Lukasik

Inside this issue:

Distinguished Alumni Award	2
WALLA Course Series	2
2009 Symposium	3
2009 ASA Meeting	4
Meet the New Students	5
Eisinger Awards	5
Student News	6
East China Normal Experience	7
Meet the New Faculty	8

Stauffer Receives CLA Distinguished Alumni Award

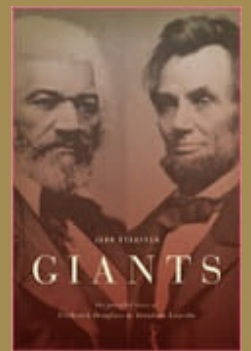


Professor John Stauffer and John Contreni, former Justin S. Morrill Dean of Liberal Arts

John W. Stauffer, Professor of English and African American Studies, and Chair of the History of American Civilization program at Harvard University, received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Purdue’s College of Liberal Arts on April 17, 2009. Professor Stauffer completed the M.A. in American Studies in 1993 at Purdue and the Ph.D. from Yale. Since 1986, the CLA Distinguished Alumni Award has recognized individuals for their professional achievements, dedication to their communities, and involvement with Purdue. While on campus, Dr. Stauffer was a keynote speaker for the annual American Studies Symposium. Purdue University History Professor Susan Curtis nominated Professor Stauffer: “John’s many accomplishments as a scholar, teacher, public intellectual, and administrator at Harvard University more than fulfill the promise we all saw when he was an M.A. student here at Purdue University in the early 1990s. As a student, John’s curiosity, diligence, and writing ability were unbounded. It was a privilege to have had him as a student and to be able to honor him as a Distinguished Alumni.”

Professor Stauffer is one of the world’s leading scholars of antislavery, protest movements, and interracial relations. He has written and lectured widely on slavery and abolition, social protest, the dilemmas of self-making, and photography. Stauffer’s *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race* (2002) won four major awards.

Professor Stauffer’s 2008 book, *Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln*, made the *Boston Globe*’s best seller list. It is prominently displayed on President Barack Obama’s bookshelf, according to *Time* journalist David Von Drehle.



Faculty and Students Participate in WALLA Courses

This semester a unique opportunity was given to students and faculty in the American Studies program. The Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association (WALLA) offers intellectual, cultural, and social opportunities for individuals 50 years and older.

“Contemporary African American Experience” was the theme for the Fall 2009 courses, which were coordinated by Caroline McKenzie, American Studies Ph.D. student. The courses included “Introduction to African American History” by Professor Susan Curtis, “Contemporary African American Music” by Ph.D. student Erik Wade and Arthur Banton, “Jazz and Social Change” by American Studies Director Bill Mullen, and “Barack Obama’s Presidency” by Caroline McKenzie, as well as a roundtable discussion and resources for exploration.

This opportunity was a terrific way for students and faculty alike to give back to the community. We look forward to a continued collaboration with WALLA in upcoming years.



Reflections on Interrogating—isms: Issues of Power from the Streets to Academia—2009 American Studies Spring Symposium

– By Philathia Bolton

Huddled over cups of coffee at Vienna Café, Ruxie Radulescu, Philathia Bolton, and Michelle Carreon met to discuss the American Studies Program’s Annual Symposium. Among the various ideas proposed, the one that attracted the most attention was the idea of activism and the academy. America was at the brink of electing its first president of African descent, and as grassroots efforts, debates, and speeches sparked political fire storms across the country, the question of academia’s role became keenly apparent. Can professors and graduate students wear buttons?...attend rallies...have bumper stickers? Such questions generated larger discussions about the manifestation of power and authority within academia and how communities, from within and without the ivory walls of higher education, join to effect change, however “change” is defined. Is the “us” (people within academia) and “them” (people of the larger community) a false binary? Who “matters,” as it pertains to knowledge construction and confronting the various *-isms* that plague our society? After attending panels on the activist dimension of scholarship during the 2008 American Studies Association Annual Meeting, and being part of a campus-wide demonstration in response to alleged hate crimes on campus and in West Lafayette, the Symposium Committee felt it had found its answer. We sought, in part, to invite discussions in response to these events and their larger implications and set the year’s theme as “Interrogating *-isms*: Issues of Power from the Streets to Academia.”

Invited to participate in the Symposium was not only our esteemed Keynote and Plenary Address speakers Dr. John Stauffer and Dr. Sean X. Goudie respectively, but also professors and students from various departments and programs at Purdue. Drs. Harry Targ and Berenice Carroll, along with graduate student Kevin Brooks and undergraduate student Sameerah Ahmad, formed our Roundtable on activism and academia. Graduate students Carla Glosson, Erik Wade, Chris Warren, and Joshua Prenosil, joined their colleagues that Saturday morning for breakfast and led in discussions about the challenges of negotiating student and activist identities. The Symposium also featured student-

scholars at Purdue and outside institutions who gathered to present work that engaged our theme during regularly scheduled panels.

Dr. Stauffer presented a thought-provoking talk on what considering Fredrick Douglass’ and Abraham Lincoln’s lives collectively reveal about negotiations of power and constructions of identity, on the first day of the Symposium. He juxtaposed their experiences to those within our current cultural moment, drawing parallels between the oratory prowess of Douglass and Barack Obama and between Lincoln’s and Obama’s rise to presidency in spite of less-than-favorable social positions due to class and race. Dr. Goudie’s address, sponsored by E.A.R.G. (Early American Reading Group), also looked at social positioning and the politics of identity formation and recognition through the lens of Caribbean American regionalism. He engaged the question of how power, implicit in the drawing of cultural bounds, legitimates some while excluding others.

From insightful talks offered by our guests to the powerful, personal stories given by Roundtable participants; from critical works offered by graduate students to impassioned words about adhering to one’s convictions while advancing in academe from breakfast participants, this past year’s Symposium offered a crucial space for reflection. As with most meetings like these, one often feels that more questions are generated than answers. However a promise realized within this conference is that chasms because of *-isms*, whether they be real or imagined, can often be overcome when people gather with a genuine interest to hear and locate themselves in each others’ narratives...in each others’ realities.

(A special thanks to Delayne Graham, Melissa Peck, and Karen Salt for assisting the 2009 Symposium Committee in finalizing plans. The current Symposium Committee—comprised of Michael Anderson, Stephanie Allen, and Ping Qiu—welcomes abstracts for individual papers, panels, and creative works. For more information, please consult the CFP, which can be accessed by going to the following web address: http://www.cla.purdue.edu/american-studies/documents/Purdue_Grad_Symposium_2010-CFP.pdf)



Students enjoying the dinner Friday night.



Keynote speaker, Professor John Stauffer.



Student Award recipients.

ASA in Washington D.C.—November 2009

- By Mark Bousquet

The American Studies Association held their annual national conference in Washington, DC this past year, and the Purdue University American Studies Program sent a force of over 20 graduate students and professors to attend the conference. From November 5-8, 2009, members of our program participated in and attended a wide range of academic and professional opportunities, and spurred by Program Director Bill Mullen, Purdue hosted its first Program Reception, welcoming scholars from across the interdisciplinary landscape to visit with and engage all members of our multifaceted community.

The organizing theme of this year's conference was "Progress: Practices of Citizenship, Sustainability, and Belonging," and three members of the program presented papers that actively engaged these concepts. Professor Susan Curtis focused on Citizenship, delivering a paper entitled "The Scholar as Citizen: Research and Pedagogy in the Post-Bush Era" that discussed the changing role of academics under a new Presidential Administration. Karen Salt artfully blended Citizenship and Sustainability in her paper, "Haitian Soil for the Citizen's Soul," which examined nineteenth-century Haitian president Jean-Pierre Boyer's citizenship expansion policy that offered freed African-Americans Haitian citizenship in exchange for them working the soil, and thus fueling Haiti's economic growth. Mark Bousquet tackled the concept of Belonging in his paper, "Wilderness Porn: The Selling of the Natural World's Debasement of the Human Body," which examined the Discovery Channel's "man vs. nature" reality-based programming.

Purdue made an impact at the conference beyond academic presentations, as members of our community filled important professional roles across the conference. Bill Mullen provided the official comment to members of a panel that examined activist Grace Lee Boggs, while Erik Wade chaired a session sponsored by the Students' Committee (of which he also serves as Chair) on Ethno-Racial Representations in Popular Culture scholarship.

Over twenty students attended the conference thanks, in part, to the program's continued commitment to provide graduate students with the opportunity to engage the national American Studies community. Students at all levels of the program are encouraged to attend as ASA provides students, according to Susan Curtis, with "an opportunity to hear scholarly conversations of which you seek to be a part. My advice: Go if you have the chance and find the people whose interests and concerns you share!"



Students Erik Wade, Ping Oiu, Michelle Carreon, and Rachel Smederovac enjoying a break from the conference at a local eatery.



Purdue students Michael Anderson and Stephanie Allen at ASA in DC.



Philathia Bolton and Bill Mullen



New students, Carlos Macias Prieto, Annagul Yaryeva, and Chelsea Stripe enjoyed the camaraderie and learning about ASA.

Meet the New American Studies Students



Stephanie Allen entered our Ph.D. program having earned her Master's from Auburn University in English. She completed her baccalaureate from Columbus State University in English. Stephanie is the recipient of a Purdue Doctoral Fellowship concentrates in English. Her interests include African American literature, gender and sexuality studies.

Michelle Carreon is a Ph.D. student beginning this fall semester. Michelle recently completed her Master's in American Studies here at Purdue. She continues as the Film/Video Studies program assistant.

Arslan Jumaniyazov also continued to the Ph.D. after completing the American Studies Master's program here at Purdue. Arslan is a teaching assistant in the Department of Sociology.

Brent Kado is a Ph.D. student concentrating in New Media Studies. He took his baccalaureate from Ball State University in Political Science and his Master's from Depaul University in Cultural Studies. Brent is the recipient of a Lynn Fellowship.

Jessica Kaiser comes to our Ph.D. program after earning both her Master's in English Writing from the Indiana University/South Bend and her baccalaureate in Women's Studies, Religious Studies and Philosophy. Jessica is the recipient of a Purdue Doctoral Fellowship. Her interests include media studies, on-line networking, race and gender.



Kera Lovell took her bachelor's degree from Agnes Scott College where she majored in History. She enters our Master's program. Kera is the recipient of a Lynn Fellowship. Her interests include popular culture, gender studies and civil rights history.

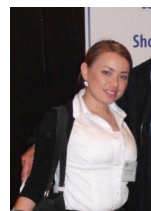
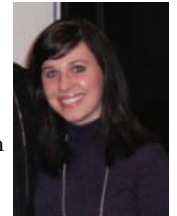
Carlos Macias Prieto comes to our M.A. program from the University of California at Berkeley. While at Berkeley, Carlos earned his bachelor's degree in Chicano Studies. Carlos is the recipient of a David M. Knox fellowship. His interests include Latin American social movements, the Chicano *movimiento* and social movement theory.



Lilly Marsh enters our Ph.D. program and will concentrate in English. She received both her Master's degree and her bachelor's degree from Purdue University, both in English. Lilly is the recipient of a Lynn Fellowship. Her interests include archival theory, art history and material culture.

April Phillips joins us as a Ph.D. student after having earned her Master's from Utah State University in Human Dimensions of Ecosystems Science & Management. April earned her bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in Conservation Biology. She is a teaching assistant in the Department of English and will also concentrate in English. Her interests include ecocriticism, folk literature and religious studies.

Chelsea Stripe is a Ph.D. student concentrating in English. She comes to us from Ohio University where she earned her Master's in English. Chelsea took her bachelor's in English from the University of Dayton. She is a teaching assistant in the Department of English. Her interests include African American literature.



Annagul Yaryeva entered our Master's program after earning her baccalaureate in American Studies from the American University in Central Asia. She is concentrating in Anthropology and will be a teaching assistant in the Department of Sociology. Her interests include U.S. media and popular culture.

2009 Chester E. Eisinger Awards

The 2009 Chester E. Eisinger Awards were presented at the annual spring symposium on April 17, 2009. The Chester E. Eisinger Prize is for the best unpublished essay in American Studies went to Jamie Hickner.

The winners of the Chester E. Eisinger Research Awards were Mark Bousquet, Jamie Hickner and Aubrey Thamann. The Eisinger Research Awards are meant to encourage graduate student research in archival and library collections.



*Jamie Hickner accepts her award.
From Dr. Bill Mullen.*

Current Student & Alumni News

Stephanie Allen (Current Ph.D. student) will present her paper “Repetition With a Signal Difference: I Ain’t Yo’ Uncle: The New Jack Revisionist Uncle Tom’s Cabin” at the LSU Mardi Gras Conference in February 2010.

Lee Bebout’s (Ph.D. 2007) book, tentatively titled *Mythohistorical Interventions: Community, Citizenship, and the Chicana/o Imaginary*, has been selected for publication in the Critical American Studies series by the University of Minnesota Press.

Heidi Freeman (Current Ph.D. student) has had a busy year with several awards and presentations. She was the keynote speaker at the 1st annual Women’s Studies Program awards dinner, where she spoke about the Tarajia Project. She also presented at the National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA), National Council of Black Studies (NCBS), and Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) annual conferences.

Jay Hopler (Current Ph.D. student) received the Whiting Writers’ Award for 2009. The Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation selects ten awardees annually to receive \$50,000. Since 1985, the awards have been presented to writers of exceptional talent and promise in early career. The recipients were announced at a ceremony at the Morgan Library & Museum in New York on October 28, 2009.

Kera Lovell (Current M.A. student) will present her paper entitled “Reading Between the Lines: The Women’s Liberation Movement and the ‘Hidden Injuries of Sex’ in Rolling Stone, 1975” at the Gender and Media Division of the Popular Culture Association conference to be held March 31-April 3, 2010 in St. Louis.

Megan MacDonald (Ph.D. 2009) has published a portion of her dissertation as a chapter in the anthology *Sexuality & the Twin Cities* coming out at the beginning of 2010 with the University of Minnesota Press. “Two-Spirits Organizing: Indigenous Gender Identity in the Twin Cities” gathers a history of Two-Spirit organizing in the Twin Cities while examining the activism as fundamentally transna-

tional, both in that it includes Canada and Mexico as well as the U.S., and also in that all native nations participate in this organizing—the English term Two-Spirit is thus a pan-national identity concept adopted by many indigenous nations.

Caroline McKenzie (Current Ph.D. student) had an article published in the German feminist magazine, *en.schleße Das Feministische Magazin*, titled “Holy Custody Battle, Batman: A Feminist (Re) Framing of Fathers’ Rights Rhetoric.”

Karen Salt (Current Ph.D. student) gave a paper at the ASA meeting in D.C. titled “Haitian Soil for the Citizen’s Soul.” The longer essay that this paper comes from has been invited for inclusion in a proposed anthology on race, nature, and nation currently under publisher review. Karen has two other projects coming in 2010. She participated in a roundtable on Marcus Rediker’s *The Slave Ship* at the Bermuda ‘09 meeting of the Society of Early Americanists. This roundtable will now be published as coordinated essays in early 2010 in the *Journal Atlantic of Studies*. And finally, Karen recently agreed to write a book review of Stephen Hall’s *A Faithful Account of Race* for the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*.

Rachel Smederovac (Current M.A. student) was selected for a Byron Fellowship for 2009. The Byron Fellowship is an interdisciplinary course in sustainable communities that uniquely engages participants through place-based learning. The program took place from May 17-22, 2009 at Turkey Run State Park. During the one week program, participants learned from a collection of academic teachers and active practitioners. The Byron Fellowship is named after the 19th century community located near Turkey Run State Park—which no longer exists except on road maps.

Courtney Thompson-Enaye (Current Ph.D. student) wrote a review of *Black Women in Texas History*, edited by Bruce A. Glasrud and Merline Pitre, that will be published in *Southern Historian* in April, 2010

Ph.D. Degrees Awarded

Andrew Koch, December 2008

Rage Against the Machine: The University-Military-Industrial Complex and Contemporary American Democratic Culture

Megan MacDonald, December 2009

Indigenous American Two Spirit Women and Urban Citizenship in the Late Twentieth Century

M.A. Degrees Awarded

May 2009

Shawn E. Bennion

Sherrema A. Bower

Michelle E. Carreon

Arslan Jumaniyazov

Jennifer M. Lindquist

Jae Truesdell

Brett M. Werenki

East China Normal University Experience—By Sherrema Bower

Ni hao, American Studies Faculty, Staff, and Students! Greetings from East China Normal University (ECNU), Shanghai.

I arrived at ECNU on August 18, 2009, warmly welcomed by Professor Jin Hengshan, Director of the Center for American Studies at ECNU, and other staff and students. I teach six classes with a student count of nearly 200, including Spoken English for freshmen, and Great American Books and History of United States Women classes for seniors. All of my students are English majors and I do not have a teaching assistant.

I had my doubts about teaching freshmen since I speak very little Chinese and I was concerned that my students would feel apprehensive. Nevertheless, they proved to be very engaged, and some even said they were excited to be taught by a native-English speaker. But it only took till the second week to find out just what challenges were ahead. At one class's conclusion, two students approached. One, interpreting for the other, expressed frustration for his classmate, explaining that he came from a province which did not emphasize spoken English in its English Language curriculum and I was his first native-English speaking teacher. The student interpreting told me he himself had come from a province which did emphasize spoken as well as written English, however, so he was able to keep up in the class. My heart sank as I realized that these two students were representative of most of my freshmen. Their levels of understanding spoken English was as varied as the provinces from which they came. Clearly, my work was cut out for me.

My Great American Books class, however, was a different story. Filled with seniors who were preparing for graduate school or the start of their careers and the next phase of their

lives, they were busy but excited to take the class, and the language barrier has been far less pronounced. While teaching such works as *The Scarlet Letter* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, it's excellent to see how they are right there with me, taking notes and making comments, connecting with the subject matter.

My students, both those at the beginning of their educational careers and those nearing the end, are hard-working and engaged. What they are most interested in, however, is America. The Center for American Studies, ECNU, recently hosted "Retrospect and Prospect: The Contemporary World and the Sino-U.S. Relations Forum," in honor of the 30th anniversary of Sino-U.S. Diplomatic Relations. The United States Consulate General of Shanghai, a United States Ambassador, and the American Studies scholar Dr. Paul Levine, were the featured speakers to halls that were packed with students. The events brought home for me just what our presence means in a country which, in my lifetime, once did not allow Americans or other foreigners in. I am privileged to teach students who are coming of age in a world far different from that of their parents and grandparents. Engaged as they are, they continually teach me even as I am teaching them.

Sherrema A. Bower, M.A., is a Professor of American Studies and Foreign Languages at East China Normal University (ECNU), Shanghai, for the academic year of 2009-2010. Sherrema can be reached at sherremabower@gmail.com.



Sherrema Bower on the campus of East China Normal University.

Purdue-gift

Online giving to Purdue

It is now even easier to donate to the American Studies Program using Purdue-gift. Purdue-gift makes it simple to make a gift by credit card to Purdue. Go to the following web address:

http://www.purdue.edu/UDO/pages/how_to/egift.html

Click on "Make a Gift", choose "Other" from a dropdown menu, then type "American Studies Program" in the text box, enter some information about yourself, submit your payment information, and the transaction is completed through Purdue's secure server. Make your gift now in three easy steps. It takes just a few minutes.

2010 American Studies Symposium

Save the date—The American Studies Spring Symposium will again take place April 22-23, 2010. More information will follow in the upcoming months. The American Studies web page (www.cla.purdue.edu/american-studies) will also have updated information.

We hope to see you there!

Meet Our New Affiliated Faculty

Jennifer Freeman Marshall



Jennifer accepted a joint appointment between English Department and Women's Studies Program at Purdue. Jennifer comes to Purdue from Emory University's Department of Women's Studies where she is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor. She received her PhD in Women's Studies from Emory University with specializations in feminist

theories (black feminist literary theory, and feminist anthropology and ethnography) and African American literary and cultural productions from 1891-1960. She received her M.A. in Anthropology from Georgia State University and her B.A. in English from Spelman College. She has received several fellowships for her research and teaching including the Emory University Southern Studies Dissertation Fellowship and the Andrew W. Mellon Teaching Fellowship. Her research interests include black feminist thought; 20th century African American literary and cultural productions; and feminist methods.

Derek Pacheco



Derek received his B.A. in American Literature and Culture from UCLA, an M.A. in English from the University of Washington, Seattle, and his Ph.D. (2006) in English from (once again) UCLA. He spent two years as an Assistant Professor at California State University, Fullerton, before joining the faculty at Purdue. His research and teaching interests include: gender and American Transcendentalism; gender and print culture; history of the

book studies; popular culture; race, class, and gender in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American literature; American women's writing; and the early American novel. A recent article, "Disorders of the Circulating Medium': Hawthorne's Early Children's Literature," is forthcoming in the next issue of the Emerson Society Quarterly. His current book project, "'One Great Moral Enterprise': Literature, Education, and the New England Marketplace, 1830-1845," examines the literary media and pedagogical strategies adopted by a "transcendental" circle of collaborators, including Horace Mann, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Elizabeth Peabody, Mary Peabody Mann, and Margaret Fuller, as they attempted to carve a niche in the protean realm of the antebellum marketplace.

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