

AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

American Studies Graduates 2010-2011

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The 2010-2011 school year proved to be a successful year for the American Studies doctoral graduates. Besides the feat of finishing their dissertations, these graduates also won fellowships or found jobs for the following year. The American Studies program congratulates them on their achievements and wishes them well in the future.



Jay Hopler

For Jay Hopler, the fall of 2010 was a whirlwind. In August, he completed his dissertation, and in September, he headed off to Italy to begin his term as a Rome Fellow in Literature. Jay claims he was shocked to win the prestigious prize that the American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded to only two writers this year. The fellowship is awarded to both established and emerging writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. While in Rome, Jay will be working on his second book of poems, *The Rooster King*. His first book of poems, *The Green Gale*, won the Yale Prize, and he won the Whiting Writers' Award in 2009. Jay's dissertation explored the variety of hit men narratives that have been penned in the years since the U.S. Civil War.

In May 2011, Courtney Thompson and Karen Salt graduated with their Ph.D.'s. Courtney has accepted a one-year appointment in Africana Studies at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She will teach courses on African American Literature, Black women's activism, and the African Diaspora. Her dissertation was entitled "Capturing Democracy: Black women Activists and the Struggle for Equal Rights, 1920's-1970's," and her current writing project focuses on the work of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Karen Salt defended her dissertation "The Haitian Question" in the early spring and has begun a job as a Professor of History at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.



Courtney Thompson on the right.



Heidi Lewis with committee members Professors Ryan Schneider, Venetria Patton, and Bill Mullen.

This summer, Heidi Lewis and Erik Wade defended their dissertations and will graduate in August. Heidi will continue her stay at Colorado College as Visiting Assistant Professor of Feminist and Gender Studies. In addition to introductory courses, she will teach several courses cross-listed with the Race and Ethnic Studies Program, including African American Feminist Thought, Critical Race Theory, and Transnational Feminism. She will also be revising her dissertation, "She Still Missed Her Daddy Sometimes": Black Women's Post-Civil Rights Father-Daughter Narratives," and she is working on research about bi-racial women's father-daughter narratives and Korean pop music. Erik Wade has accepted a position teaching at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, where he'll be teaching U.S. History, Greeks and Roman History, and Colonial America. He will also have residential responsibilities and will either assist in coaching a sport or will sit on a couple of committees. His dissertation is entitled "Constituting Whiteness: The National Horse Thief Detective Association and Racial Mores in Indiana, 1850-1930."



Erik Wade

Empowering the Community Through Action

-By Annagul Yaryeva, Ph.D. Student and Carlos Macias Prieto, M.A. Student

From March to April 2011, American Studies students, Annagul Yaryeva and Carlos Macias Prieto, and Bridget Jonson (a senior student at Purdue University), and Esmeralda Cruz (an alumna of Purdue University) implemented “The Empowering the Community through Action (ECTA)” program at the Purdue Extension Learning Network, Clinton County, in Frankfort, Indiana. These students received full funding for the program from Purdue University’s Vice Provost for Engagement Student Grant Program. The participants of the program were seven Latino high school students from Frankfort. The program was developed and implemented with the objective of providing Latino students in the community with a space where they could explore their experiences as young Latinos living in the United States. The program provided a space for the young men and women participating in the program to voice their concerns, raise questions relevant to their well-being, and think critically about their personal identities and community.



Even though Frankfort is often times referred to as “Little Mexico” by other counties in the state, if one looks into its public offices, boards, councils, etc., one can clearly see that this sector of the population is not represented within these arenas, which are the ones making decisions for the present and future of this community. This is part of the reason why ECTA was greatly needed in this community as the program provided a space for students to explore issues facing their community and for these students to realize that they could become significant actors in the present and future of their community by becoming involved.



The program gave students the opportunity to think about ideas in new ways and provided them with tools to express their thoughts. ECTA challenged students to think critically and reflect upon things that many young adults do not want to consider. Moreover, ECTA provided a space for students to find ways to get involved in their community.

ECTA also gave these students a space to heal. As young Latinos, these students realized that there is nothing “natural,” or “normal,” about being discriminated against or excluded. Our discussions encouraged these students think about their personal, family, and community struggles in terms of structural problems by exploring how issues such as racism, sexism, and xenophobia are socially constructed and have developed and shifted over time. Our group discussions helped students understand social issues from a critical perspective while at the same time providing a space for these students to heal. After their particular stories or particular instances were discussed, the students were challenged to view things from a critical perspective. They were given an opportunity to feel empowered instead of feeling disempowered given the challenges they personally faced along with their families and the greater Latino community at Frankfort. Moreover, these students were encouraged to think about their roles as active members of Frankfort community. As a result of ECTA, students participating in the program decided to establish a Latino Cultural Club in their high school, what they see as one of the great tools that will enable them to involve more Latino students and invite them to become more active in the Frankfort community.

The program organizers truly hope that Purdue University American Studies graduate students will continue developing and implementing similar projects, allowing us to contribute our knowledge and vision of social justice to benefit local communities.



Carlos Macias Prieto working with the students in Frankfort.

Shattering the Silence: A Brief Overview of the 2011 AMST Symposium

– By Heather C. Moore, Ph.D. Student



Symposium Committee: Pamela Sari, Annagul Yaryeva, and Heather Moore

For the 2011 AMST Symposium, I was nominated to the committee along with my colleagues Pamela Sari (Ph.D. student) and Annagul Yaryeva (incoming Ph.D. student). I was honored to serve on the committee responsible for orchestrating this graduate student conference. It gave me the opportunity to interact with a variety of students across the country who are conducting research in accordance with this past

year's theme, "Interrogating Silence(s): A Critical Examination of Memories, Voices, and Identities in American Studies." The title of the symposium was a response to some of the current trends in our interdisciplinary field; questions of identity and historical remembering are interwoven into the fabric of contemporary scholarship in American Studies.

With the help of Dr. Curtis and Delayne Graham, the symposium committee was thrilled to have two keynote speakers for this year's event. Each keynote speaker was an active participant in the symposi-



Dr. Joanna Brooks giving her keynote address.

um—they attended student panel presentations all-day Friday! Dr. David Roediger (Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Campaign) gave a lecture entitled, "Learning to Listen to Memories of Slavery: George Rawick and Sterling Stuckey," in which he analyzed distinctive and individualized narratives of African American slavery. The second keynote speaker, Dr. Joanna Brooks (Department of English, San Diego State University) presented her paper titled, "Brave Men Run: Interrogating Silences and Memories in Early American Studies," which analyzed the untold stories of white immigrants and their lives prior to immigrating to the United States. Both of the lectures were well attended by faculty and students across the Midwest.



Dr. Davide Roediger giving his keynote address.

The graduate student committee received an overwhelmingly positive response from scholars who took part in this event. This was one of the largest and most diverse AMST symposiums in our program to date. Close to half of the participants were from outside our university and were from various undergraduate and graduate programs throughout the country. Several students who participated in this year's festivities expressed their appreciation of our communal and welcoming environment. After the two-day event, some students were even considering applying to the American Studies program! The symposium this year was a huge success due to the unwavering support from faculty, students, and staff in our program!

Kenya Davis-Hayes, Winner of an "Emerging Voice Award"

The American Studies Program congratulates Kenya Davis Hayes for being one of the 2010 recipients of the "Emerging Voice Award" presented by the College of Liberal Arts.

The "Emerging Voice Award" is made by the College of Liberal Arts to graduates who have made distinguished contributions to public life before reaching the age of forty. It honors graduates from the college who have used their education at Purdue to make a difference in the world outside of the academy.

Kenya earned the Ph.D. in American Studies at Purdue in 2005 and now teaches History at California Baptist University. She has taken groups of students on Study Abroad trips to Rwanda to take part in HIV-Awareness programs in collaboration with the National University of Rwanda. In 2007 she was named by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to the California Council for the Humanities. Kenya currently is pursuing a Master's degree in Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School.



ASA in San Antonio—November 2010

- By Kendra Unruh, Ph.D. Student

Last November, more than 10 Purdue American Studies students and faculty traveled all the way to the Alamo for the annual American Studies Association conference. The conference was held November 17th-21st in San Antonio, Texas with the theme “Crisis, Chains, and Change: American Studies for the Twenty-First Century.” Conference attendees enjoyed a variety of panel and paper presentations, professionalization workshops, an amazing president’s address by Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and the opportunity to meet and socialize with other American Studies scholars.

During the four day program, three Purdue American Studies students gave paper presentations, and one student participated in a workshop. New Ph.D. student Pamela Sari presented her paper “The Freecycle Network: Coping with Crisis and Enacting Change Through Online Communities.” Annagul Yaryeva examined the influence of American popular culture on beauty standards in Turkmenistan in “Challenging ‘White Beauty’ in Turkmenistan.” ASA veteran Karen Salt drew on her research about Haiti in “Between the Devil and Modernity: Haiti, Pat Robertson, and the ‘Problem’ of Haiti’s Revolutionary Past.” Finally, Philathia Bolton participated in the ASA Students’ Committee’s Mock Job Interview Workshop, which was designed to help prepare graduate students for the job market.

Purdue faculty were also a strong presence at the annual meeting. Professors Susan Curtis and Kristina Bross participated in a panel entitled “Remembering the Past: Toni Morrison’s Seventeenth Century in Today’s Classroom.” In addition, Professor Bill Mullen chaired and provided commentary for the panel “One More S in the USA? Americans in the USSR and Practices of Internationalism between the Wars.” Likewise, Professor Anne Knupfer was the chair and commentator for “Chaining Delinquent, Defective, and Diseased Bodies in California.”

All in all, Purdue students and faculty enjoyed their time in San Antonio. Besides the extensive program, the attendees had the opportunity to visit the Alamo and other local attractions. The beautiful, mild weather—a nice contrast from the cold Indiana November—made the Riverwalk a great place for everyone to gather and eat together. After such an engaging conference in Texas, everyone is looking forward to the next one in Baltimore.



Students Annagul Yaryeva, Kendra Unruh, Pamela Sari, Ping Qiu, Hana Lee, & Lisa Beringer.



Clockwise from Left: Kendra Unruh, Lisa Beringer, Prof. Susan Curtis, Annagul Yaryeva, Hana Lee, Lee Bebout (Alum), Prof. Charles Cutter, Scott Hoffman (Alum), Philathia Bolton, & Pamela Sari.

Meet the 2010–2011 New American Studies Students

Jolivette Anderson-Douning began the M.A. program after entering the American Studies program as a non-degree student in 2007. Jolivette earned her Master's degree from Grambling State University in the Humanities and her bachelor's degree in Speech and Theatre from Louisiana Tech University.

Lisa Beringer entered our Ph.D. program having earned her Master's from Pennsylvania State University in American Studies. She completed her baccalaureate from St. Norbert College in Sociology. Her interests include mixed race families in American literature.

Emma Bertolaet is a Ph.D. student beginning with the fall semester. Emma recently completed her Master's in American Studies at the University of Alabama and her bachelor's from Florida State University in American and Florida Studies. She is the recipient of a Purdue Doctoral Fellowship and has interests in southern history/culture, popular culture, music history and issues of race, class and gender.

Elizabeth Canela began the M.A. program after completing her bachelor's from Duke University in History. Elizabeth is a teaching assistant in the African American Studies Program. Her interests are centered around the Dominican Diaspora with particular focus on Dominican women.

Suzanne Clemenz reentered the Ph.D. program. She took both her baccalaureate and master's from North Carolina State University in English. Suzanne plans to focus on public education and social justice.

Juanita Crider started in American Studies as a non-degree student. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Ball State University in History. Juanita currently works at the Black Cultural Center her on campus.

Mayra Ibarra comes to our M.A. program after earning her baccalaureate in Interdisciplinary Studies in Culture from Scripps College. Mayra is a teaching assistant in the Department of History.

Darren Jones will enter the American Studies program as a non-degree student. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia in American Studies & Sociology and his master's from George Washington University in Higher Education Administration. Darren is currently employed at Purdue.

Hana Lee comes to our M.A. program from Scripps College. While at Scripps, Hanna earned her bachelor's degree in English.

Lauren Miller entered our M.A. program and concentrate in English. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota in Psychology. Lauren is a teaching assistant in the Department of English.

Heather Moore is a Ph.D. student beginning with the fall semester. Heather recently completed her Master's in American Studies here at Purdue. She is the recipient of a Lynn Fellowship. Heather is interested in African American youth culture, education, and social justice.

Walter Moore enters our Ph.D. program concentrating in English. He comes to us from Texas State University San Marcos where he earned his Master's in Creative Writing. Walter took his bachelor's in English from Depauw University.

Jehan Mullin entered our Ph.D. program after earning her Master's in Middle Eastern Studies from the American University in Beirut and her bachelor's in Political Science from Ohio University. She will concentrate in Anthropology and is the recipient of a Purdue Doctoral Fellowship. She is interested in Arab American culture and experience.

Tony Perry comes to our M.A. program from Bowdoin College. He received his bachelor's degree in English. Tony is a teaching assistant in the African American Studies program.

Pamela Sari comes to our Ph.D. program after earning her Master's in American Studies and bachelor's in Political Science, both from the University of Wyoming. She is the recipient of a Lynn Fellowship and will concentrate in Anthropology. Her interest centers around the intersections of cyber culture, volunteerism, civic engagement, and ethnography.

Scott Secrist enters the American Studies program as a non-degree student. He earned his bachelor's degree from Purdue in Biochemistry. Scott is currently employed at Purdue.

Lisa Young entered our M.A. program and will concentrate in English. She comes to us after earning her bachelor's from Claflin University in English. Lisa is the recipient of the George Washington Carver fellowship. Her interests include societal perceptions influence female, African American identity by integrating the disciplines involving gender and sexuality, feminist theory, rhetoric, popular culture, race and ethnicity.

2010 & 2011 Chester E. Eisinger Awards

The 2010 Chester E. Eisinger Awards were presented at the annual spring symposium on April 23, 2010, and the 2011 awards were presented at the American Studies Awards Ceremony on April 28, 2011. The Chester E. Eisinger Prize for the best unpublished essay in American Studies went to Courtney Thompson in 2010 and Lisa Beringer in 2011. A second prize was also awarded in 2011 to Suzanne Clemenz.

The winners of the Chester E. Eisinger Research Awards in 2010 were Stephanie Allen, Shivohn Garcia, Arslan Jumaniyazov, Kendra Unruh, Erik Wade and David Weir. The 2011 recipients were Shivohn Garcia and Lilly Marsh. The Eisinger Research Awards are meant to encourage graduate student research in archival and library collections.

My ECNU Experience: Purdue Students Visit Shanghai for 2010 Maymester -by Arthur Banton, Ph.D. Student

After months of anticipation and preparation for the Transnational Studies Abroad Maymester seminar at East China Normal University (ECNU) in Shanghai, I was finally here. I survived the grueling, 15-hour, 7,000-mile direct flight from O'Hare to Pudong International Airport across the Pacific Ocean.

My heightened level adrenaline completely ignored the effects of jet lag as I was ready to take on the city whose population is at least twice the size of my hometown of New York – Bring it on! I arrived a few days early to absorb the energy of the host city and must say I was impressed. How would one describe Shanghai? A combination of New



Arthur Banton with Shanghai skyline in the background

York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Las Vegas all rolled into one. Shanghai combines the sprawl of Los Angeles, the cultural & pedestrian-fused energy of New York, the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas, and the hospitality of Chicago. Not to mention Shanghai probably has as many sky-

scrapers as all the cities combined.

The theme for our seminar was entitled Obama: Race and Ethnicity in American Society, which featured a variety topics and guest lecturers from ECNU including: Jin Hengshan, Zhu Quanhong, Liao Weichun and Purdue Alumnae Sherrema Bower. Other instructors included John Resch, a Historian and Fulbright scholar from the University of Vermont; Wang Engming, from Shanghai International Studies University, Zhu Ying from the Macao Polytechnic Institute; and Erik Wade, a PhD candidate in American Studies. The array of scholars and perspectives from across the globe made the class truly feel transnational in every aspect of the word.

After a preliminary round of formal introductions on the first day, Dr. Bill Mullen initiated the first lecture with a letter written to him by a former undergraduate schoolmate affectingly named Barry, otherwise known as Barack Obama. The letter was a pleasant surprise as well as the preceding discussion largely dominated by the Purdue students – a trend that continued for a couple of days before the tide shifted toward the ECNU students before ultimately finding a balance.

Over the course of the next two weeks, each of the guest lecturers provided very insightful and thought-provoking presentations that triggered a variety of discussions. One of the most memorable revolved around the sensitive issue of reproductive rights which involved a number of personal revelations by students, whom noted this is an issue rarely discussed in private much less in public.

The discussion demonstrated the bond between the students over the past few days but also a reflection of the lecturers whom I commend, for providing a venue and climate receptive without restraint to all voices willing to express their thoughts and opinions. Needless to say this experience might be difficult to replicate at our campus back in West Lafayette.

The next weekend was spent traveling by speed rail to Nanjing and Sujo. Getting up early on Saturday morning prompted many Purdue students for a taste of caffeine and western cuisine which was dutifully quenched by the golden arches (in Nanjing we passed by four of them on the way to our hotel). After spending the day with an abbreviated tour visiting several breathtaking Gardens and shopping in Nanjing. We saddled up for our trip the following day to Sujo, the silk-producing capital of China, which included a tour of the silk museum.

After another week with more insightful class discussions, our seminar concluded with series of performances reflective of what we learned during our brief time together. What initiated with a series of four rehearsed skits (including yours truly) on topics ranging from lessons learned from Tian'anmen square to Interracial dating quickly evolved into a vaudeville show with impromptu performances from several students and faculty members! I could not think of a more exciting way to conclude our time together.

Before departing we spent the weekend at the World Expo, in which I visited the pavilions of several countries including: Argentina, Brazil, Denmark, Great Britain, Jamaica, sub-Saharan Africa and of course the United States. Each country provided exhibitions articulating their history and culture; and in some cases, outlining initiatives in becoming a more environmental-friendly future. Our visit to the USA Pavilion included the red-carpet treatment (no waiting in lines), due in part to our connection with Jose Virreal, a Purdue alumnus and the United States Ambassador to Shanghai.

During the final week of Maymester, the Purdue students reflected on our time spent at ECNU, to which we all agreed was too short but extremely rewarding. Many of us became close friends whom we still remain in contact with and



Professor Bill Mullen with graduate students Lilly Marsh, Chelsea Stripe, Abby Stephens, and Ping Qiu



Clockwise from left: Sherrema Bower (Alum), Chelsea Stripe, Lilly Marsh, Abby Stephens, Brent Kado, ECNU student, Chris Warren.

The Collaboration Continues—Purdue & East China Normal University -by Chelsea Stripe, Ph.D. Student

The American Studies graduate programs of East China Normal University (ECNU), Shanghai, and Purdue University have come together again in the 2011 Maymester. This marks the fifth year of the groups' collaboration in "Transnational American Studies," a seminar organized and launched by Bill Mullen in 2007.

This summer, in addition to the ECNU guests, the classroom also consists of American Studies graduate students Elizabeth Canela, Juanita Crider, Jessica Kaiser, Hana Lee, Heather Moore, Pamela Sari, Chelsea Stripe, Ping Qiu, and Annagul Yaryeva. The reputation and relevance of the course has attracted students from across disciplines: Mark Haugen of the Department of Education Studies and Kelly Vibber of the Department of Communications also have joined this year. Each day, even those American Studies students not enrolled in the class will drop in to engage in discussion.

Contributing to the success of the class, a number of Purdue and visiting scholars present on course themes, "The Tea Party and the Current State of American Politics," "Consumerism in a New Global Economy," "Comparative Gender Studies in China and the U.S.," "Asian American Studies in Global Perspective," and "Comparative Religion in U.S./China and Global Context." Two instructors involved in the program from its inception traveled to campus to deliver talks during the semester, Jin Hengshan—professor of American literature and Associate Dean at ECNU and Fulbright scholar at Duke University—and Zhu Ying—associate professor in the School of Languages and Translation at Macao Polytechnic Institute. Speakers also include Purdue American Studies and affiliated faculty members—Bill Mullen, Susan Curtis, Bich Nguyen, Darren Dochuk, and Fenggang Yang—as well as American Studies student Arthur Banton and Lafayette Planned Parenthood educator, Betty Memmer.

Along with the lively seminar discussion, valuable learn-

ing moments come from outside of the classroom. Accordingly, the course syllabus incorporates opportunities to enter West Lafayette and Lafayette for further investigation into course topics. In small groups, students have made visits to local places of worship, and have looked at politically active groups in the area, including the Republican and Democratic parties of Lafayette, and Pride Lafayette. In an experiment on U.S. consumerism, students found out just how far \$20 could stretch at the farmer's market, a superstore, or a chain grocery, for example.

This year's exchange also brought another element of the out-of-class experience to a number of American Studies students who volunteered to host the ECNU visitors in their homes for the month's stay. Standing side-by-side cooking dinner, cheering together at a Lafayette Brawlin' Dolls bout, or taking a road trip to Chicago help extend and broaden the dialog.

While this program requires effort and commitment from its participants, those involved recognize worth in building a transnational community of scholars. The yearly presence of this course serves as an invaluable part of an ongoing conversation and practice in Transnational American Studies, an advance toward future directions of the field, and a distinctive feature of Purdue and ECNU's American Studies graduate programs.



Purdue and ECNU student members of the 2011 "Transnational American Studies" course.

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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.

In Memory

American Studies Ph.D. student Reid Nolte passed away on Sunday, October 17, 2010, after a year-long battle with cancer. Those who knew him remember his sharp wit, ironic sense of humor, and his deep and broad knowledge about the U.S. and the world. He was a warm and generous friend who will be missed by us all.

In honor of Nolte, the American Studies program, with a gift from Professors Tithi Bhattacharya and Bill Mullen, established the Reid Nolte Prize for scholarship to be awarded annually to the best original essay written by an American Studies/Sociology student. This year's prize went to Michelle Carreon.

AMST 301: Oil and Water: The Literature and Science of Disaster

-by Kristina Bross, Professor of English and American Studies

Last summer took an unexpected turn for me and for my family. My husband, Steve Wereley, Professor of Mechanical Engineering here at Purdue became involved in helping to uncover the true scale of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He did much of his work from home, and given the scope and scale of the disaster, I couldn't help but be an avid observer over his shoulder. Our family was given a crash course in the oil industry, in media relations, in government-sponsored research, in the economy and culture of the Gulf region, and in scientific communication. I have vivid memories of several breakfasts in which our daughters, then ages 4 and 6, helped us figure out how to explain Steve's research to the uninitiated and to the non-scientist.

As a scholar of American Studies, and in line with my pedagogical and research interests in service-learning and public history, I was most fascinated by the number of emails, phone calls, faxes, and letters sent to Steve by members of the public. Beginning in May, he regularly appeared in the national media. After each of his interviews (and especially after any appearance on CNN), he would get a least a few—sometimes more than a few—letters or calls offering a solution to the ongoing spill. Some of the correspondents had science or engineering backgrounds, but many of them were simply trying to apply commonsense solutions to what they saw as a straightforward problem, many of them channeling their own medical procedures: A pipe is bleeding oil into the ocean? Clamp it like an artery during surgery; shove an angioplasty balloon in it! Many of these ideas were accompanied by sketches, and almost all were accompanied by please to get the idea to the “right” people, or barring that, to respond about whether the idea had merit. For Steve, focused as he was on making his case that the spill had been seriously underestimated by BP, these letters could not be immediate priorities. For me, they were fascinating, a reminder that as academics, we do indeed serve the people, and a reflection of a Franklinesque, can-do attitude that at the time a found both reassuring and somehow touching.

When the fall came, and the American Studies program was rolling out its new undergraduate major, I saw our inaugural offering of AMST 301 as a chance for me to explore the topic of culture and disaster that I had observed informally over the summer. As I had followed events in June and July 2010, I was struck by how often the Deepwater Horizon spill was compared to the terrible failure of government and law enforcement after Hurricane Katrina—some called the spill “Obama's Katrina,” you may recall. And even without making such a dubious political connection, the oil spill was hurting sensitive ecosystems weakened by the 2005 storm; Gulf coast culture and its tourism industry were being threatened once again. I decided to pair the two disasters and the responses to them in this class as a way to narrow and manage the huge topic of “disaster.”

And of course, I knew that I wanted to take advantage of the “behind the scenes” perspective I had gained on the Deepwater Horizon accident, as well as to engage my students in the ongoing response to the crisis. Accordingly, we tapped several faculty members from across the university to speak to the class. Steve came, and so did Professor Lance Duerfahrd (English and Film Studies) to speak on Spike Lee's monumental documentary *When the Levees Broke*. We heard talks by Professor Shannon McMullen (Visual and Performing Arts) on images of disasters, by Professor Daniel Aldrich (Political Science) on the role of social capital in recovery. Dipping into some of my research funds, I was able to invite guest lecturers from off campus: Professor Thomas Hallock from the University of Southern Florida, and noted ecocritical scholar, Professor Nicole Cooley, poet and author of a collection of poems written in response to Katrina entitled *Breach*, and Richard Harris, the award-winning NPR science journalist who first broke the story of the true scope of the oil spill. Students were assigned to host each of these visitors, and most were able to take them out to lunch after the class and continue the conversation.

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ASGSO Fall Events

September

Sept. 2, 6:00-8:00pm: ASGSO Welcome Mixer at Columbia Park

Sept. 9, 2:00-3:30pm: Brown Bag #1: “Surviving Graduate School” in BRNG 1254

Sept. 28-29, 10:00am-2:00pm: Book Sale in BRNG First Floor Lobby

October

Oct. 14, 2:00-3:30pm: Brown Bag #2: “Creating an AMST 201 Proposal” in BRNG 1254

November

Nov. 11, 2:00-3:30pm: Brown Bag #3: “Preparing for Preliminary Exams” in BRNG 1254

December

Dec. 3, 7:00-9:00pm: End of the Year Holiday Party at Abby Stephens's home.

AMST 301 (continued)

—by Kristina Bross, Professor of English and American Studies

The class was experimental in many ways, which did lead to challenges. It was an ambitious, interdisciplinary class—we read graphic novels and studied poetry. Students viewed and logged their observations of the ROV videos of the oil spill (many of which have not been viewed by anyone but the original recorder), now available on Purdue’s website www.oilspillhub.org. They critiqued emergency preparation plans from their own communities. They researched Gulf region foodways, the sports industry (go, Saints), and the rhetoric of weather forecasting; one group of students decided to plan and execute a temporary memorial to the lives lost to the Deepwater Horizon explosion and to raise awareness of the amount of oil spilled at the one-year anniversary of the explosion. They did great work—but we were all at the edges of our comfort zones, and that made us nervous at times. Moreover, the syllabus was volatile; we’d hear of a new speaker or panel on our topic and have to rearrange readings and assignments to attend, and we lost two days in February, ironically enough, because the campus shut down due to a weather emergency (it was eye-opening to realize that if we lost power and cell phone lines that few students knew the phone numbers of their closes contacts by heart, much less where to find one of the few remaining telephone land-lines on campus).

But these “problems” led to great discussions. The inconveniences were matched by the excitement of working on cutting-edge research, on discussing and debating ongoing issues. Some of their evaluation comments hit this point exactly:

I definitely think [the course] should be offered regularly as it is a unique and important area of research. We weren't just liberal arts students talking about irrelevant things, this class had strong links to issues and topics that really matter in life.

Now, I work as a colonial American scholar in my day job, so I’ll take

the phrase “irrelevant things” with a grain of salt, but I know what this student was talking about. By studying recent events in the Gulf region from an interdisciplinary, particularly American Studies perspective, we were given the gift of a new way to see the world. Sadly, the relevance of the course was constantly renewed. In March we compared the photographs documenting Katrina and its aftermath to those coming in the wake of Japan’s earthquake and Tsunami. In April, on the last day of class, for my closing remarks, I read the students a letter I received from one of my former students, now a professor at the University of Alabama describing the aftermath of the devastating Tuscaloosa tornadoes. I had shared with her some of my goals for the class, and she responded:

You said in your email that you want students to realize that they have a responsibility to pay attention to disasters and to find ways to respond when and where we can. That is by far the greatest lesson I learned from all this. I actually felt guilty this morning when I realized the extent of the damage and how lucky I was to have escaped all of it. And then I felt overwhelmed with the need to do something to help, clear away debris, join a search party for missing people, distribute supplies to the students held up at the rec center.

This has been one of the most rewarding classes I have taught, and one of the most sobering. It is not a class I would have developed for a traditional, discipline-based program, and it would not have been as meaningful or as successful without it grounding in interdisciplinary approaches to the topic. I am grateful to the American Studies program for the chance to develop and teach the course. It has certainly launched me—and I hope our undergraduate students—in some new directions.

American Studies Program Recognized by National Research Council

The National Research Council evaluated 62 different fields from 212 universities, including 46 of Purdue University’s doctoral programs. Three of Purdue’s Interdisciplinary Studies Ph.D. programs—American Studies, Comparative Literature, and Linguistics—ranked in the top 20 in the fifth-percentile of the survey-based rankings. More specifically, the American Studies program ranked 6th in the fifth-percentile of the regression-based rankings and 15th in the fifth-percentile of the survey-based rankings. In addition, the American Studies program also ranked in the top 20 in the fifth-percentile rankings for three specific categories: research activity, student support and outcomes, and diversity. Student support and outcomes is a score based on the percentage of first-year students who are funded, the time to degree, and student placement data. Research productivity is based on the number of publications per faculty member, the percentage of faculty who have grants, and the number of awards per faculty member. Diversity is scored according to the percentages of minority faculty and students, the percentages of female faculty and students, the percentage of international students.

The data for the NRC evaluation were gathered under the leadership of Bill Mullen. This latest news follows a report in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in 2009 that American Studies at Purdue ranked 9th in the country based on an alternative ranking instrument. The two evaluations together confirm the strength of the program in terms of its national reputation.

American Studies Archival Theory and Practice Course Partners with West Lafayette Public Library in Work on Community Archives -by Lilly Marsh, Ph.D. Student

Community participation is a big part of Dr. Susan Curtis and Dr. Kristina Bross's Archival Theory and Practice Class, and it was no different for the fifteen graduate students enrolled for Spring 2011. American Studies specialties in Literature, Rhetoric and Composition, History and Anthropology were represented in the student population. The course focused on uncovering the narratives which create and are sustained by formal and informal archives and on issues surrounding what narratives remain invisible within a given archive. Class exercises included extensive theoretical readings, small research projects into a variety of campus memorials, the maintenance of a research journal and a variety of final semester projects connecting the researcher to the local West Lafayette Community. The class applied for and received grant funds from Purdue's Office of Student Engagement for the purchase of archival materials and for support of final class and community presentations. Partnering with the West Lafayette Public Library, individual student researchers worked on processing and organizing the extensive archives of WBAA Purdue Public Radio and the West Lafayette City Clerk's office, and an exciting collection of West Lafayette Fire Department materials. Another project included the processing and organizing of a large collection of letters chronicling the college years of three generations of West Lafayette women through the early and mid 20th century. Important collection work was accomplished on the private papers of West Lafayette's Mayor Sonya Margerum documenting her 24 years in office at the end of the 20th century. An archive of another sort was examined by interviewing a number of older women about their mid-century knitting experiences and creations. A public celebration and presentation of student and community work was held at semester's end in a Historical Block Party between the West Lafayette Public Library and the Morton Community Center.

As part of the Archival Theory and Practice class, the students were asked to respond creatively to their work in the archives. Lilly Marsh wrote the following poem in response to the knitted dog sweater (pictured below) given to her by Ruth Nyquist. Ruth was one of the Westminster knitters Lilly interviewed for her project. The poem is completely fictional but plausible based on the information Ruth gave Lilly.

der arme kleine Hund hat kalte Füße.

--first line of German, taught to me by an ex-lover 30 years ago,

Trans. The poor little dog has cold feet.

It's so chilly these days, wet and cold. I hate
to see you shiver. The girls are putting on their jackets
before school
though their homemade mittens are so uncool.

Of course, they are growing up, I'm so glad you
remain the same, though older, a little greyer around
the muzzle, slower in your leaps and bounds.

They once needed me for life itself,
warm damp hands clinging to mine.
Now, not so much, and they leave me behind.

But I'll take those mittens back, back to balls of red
wool yarn and start again, a sweater. Every day, you'll
greet it with joy



Dog sweater knitted for Tina by owner Ruth Nyquist. Knitted in red wool and duplicate stitch in the mid 1970s.

Archival Theory & Practice: Research and Community Engagement

-by Susan Curtis, Director of American Studies and Professor of History

Professors Kristina Bross and Susan Curtis teamed up once again in 2011 to offer Archival Theory and Practice, an American Studies seminar designed to connect graduate students to the local community through archival research. As in past versions of the course, students assisted local entities with archival materials as a way of learning how archival collections come into being, what gets saved and what is lost, and how decisions made by archivists affect what researchers can learn about the past. In return, students learned from the creators or caretakers of archival collections meanings that are not readily apparent in the items themselves.

Fourteen graduate students and one undergraduate Dammon Dean's Scholar found themselves immersed in local materials as well as theoretical analyses, practical guides, case



Liz Canela shows items from the Margerum collection at her exhibit at the West Lafayette History Block Party

studies, historical fiction, and poetry derived from archival sources as they explored the complex relationship between the past and the traces of the past preserved in archives. One of the most important insights from this seminar is how key archives are to the kinds of histories that are written and why some stories are extremely difficult to tell.



"Memories Roadshow"
(Left, Beverly Shaw, Marketing, Grants, and Greenspace Administrator in West Lafayette, shows a historic plat book to former Mayor Jan Mills (center) and Susan Curtis (right).

Below, Detail from the Plat Book



On February 5, the seminar hosted a "Memories Roadshow," inviting anyone in the community to share historic materials, photographs, memories, and documents. From among the dozens who attended the Roadshow, students identified community partners with whose collections they worked for the remainder of the semester—WBAA (the local public radio station and the oldest of its kind in Indiana), the West Lafayette Fire Department, the West Lafayette Public Library, former Mayor Sonya Margerum, local civic leader Persis Newman, the Greater Lafayette Chinese Alliance Church, Westminster Village, and the West Lafayette City Hall.

On April 30, after weeks of intense labor, students showcased their findings at the West Lafayette History Block Party. The Block Party featured exhibits, posters, a reading of radio scripts not heard since they were first broadcast some forty years ago, a knitting circle, tours of West Lafayette Fire Station # 1, and musical performances, food, and games provided by members of the Greater Lafayette Chinese Alliance Church. About two hundred people turned out to celebrate West Lafayette's history and the outstanding work of students in the seminar.

Students in the course discovered archival principles that can be used anywhere on any subject, but just as importantly, they learned a great deal about the West Lafayette community from local residents and civic leaders, a collaboration that benefited both the students and the community.

2010 American Studies Awards

American Studies/Women's Studies Outstanding Achievement Award:

Kendra Unruh

American Studies Excellence in Teaching Award:

Heather Moore

American Studies Paul and Eslanda Robeson International Studies Award:

Annagul Yaryeva

American Studies Community Service/social Justice Award:

David Weir, Kera Lovell, Caroline McKenzie, Karen Salt, and Chris Warren

2011 American Studies Awards

American Studies Excellence in Teaching Award:

Chris Warren

Reid Nolte Prize:

Michelle Carreon

American Studies Community Service/Social Justice Award:

Abby Stephens

Current Student & Alumni News

Stephanie Allen (current Ph.D. student) will be presenting her paper "Don't Explain and Don't Say It Either: Black Lesbians in the Fiction of Gomez and Shockley" at the Celebrating African American Literature: Race, Sexual Identity, and African American Literature conference at Penn State this fall. She will also be presenting "Who's your Mammy? Tyler Perry and the Limits of Black Spectatorship" at the Reception Studies Society Conference this fall as well. Stephanie received a TA appointment in Women's Studies for next year.

Lee Bebout (Ph.D. 2007) has accepted a tenure-track position at Arizona State University and will begin in the fall. He will be in English, but will also be associated with the School of Transborder Studies. His book, *Mytho-historical Interventions: The Chicano Movement and Its Legacies*, was published by the University of Minnesota Press in the Critical American Studies Series. Also, he has recently had two new articles accepted for publication in the next year in Latino Studies and MELUS. For personal news, he and his wife, Sujey Vega, have just adopted a son. His name is Jayden.

Barbara Burke (M.A. 1989, Ph.D. 1995) is the coordinator for the Communication, Media & Rhetoric Discipline at the University of Minnesota, Morris, and she has been elected as Vice Chair for the Undergraduate and Small College Division of the National Communication Association. Her article "Recent Trends in American Media Scholarship" is pending publication in *Речевые технологии* (*Speech Technology*). Finally, she has received a summer Educational Development Program grant from the University of Minnesota to design a course in new media technologies.

Jack Cashill's (Ph.D. 1982) eighth book of the past decade, *Deconstructing Obama: The Life, Loves and Letters of America's First Postmodern President*, was released in February by Simon & Schuster.

Kenya Davis-Hayes (Ph.D. 2005) will be traveling this summer to the National University of Rwanda to work on establishing a Research Center which will host academics from around the globe and assist in making Rwanda an academic hub in sub-Saharan Africa. She is currently engaged to be married to Cesar Corona, Public Diplomacy Consultant to the Villarraigosa Administration, City of Los Angeles.

Eric Fault (M.A. 1989) was appointed last September as Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Public Information at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Based

in Paris, he manages the political affairs division, as well as the outreach to civil society and the public information effort of the Organization. He has served in a number of UN positions around the world (Cambodia, Haiti, Iraq and Pakistan). More recently, he was Director of the Outreach Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information in New York (2007 to 2010), and Director of Communications for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya (2002 to 2007).

Dorothy J. Leland (M.A. 1973) was recently appointed by the University of California Board of Regents as the new chancellor of UC Merced. She will be leaving her position as the president of Georgia College and State University to begin her new position at the University of California's youngest campus on July 1st.

Heather Moore (current Ph.D. student) presented a paper at the annual National Council of Black Studies (NCBS) conference entitled, "'Hope for Young Hoppers': Critiquing The Wire's Role as a Viable, and Informative Cultural Text." At the same conference, she was part of a roundtable session, "From the Streets to the Ivory Tower: Re-Imagining Black Intellectual Space, Past(s) & Present(s)." Finally, she will present a paper at the 2011 National ASA meeting in Baltimore entitled, "What You Wanna Be...A Pay Lawyer? Black Masculinities as Tangible to School Success."

Courtney L. Thompson (M.A. 2003, Ph.D. 2011) accepted an appointment as a Visiting Assistant Professor in Africana Studies at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Kendra Unruh (current Ph.D. student) presented a lecture last February entitled "From Kitchen Mechanics to 'Jubilant Spirits of Freedom': Black Working-Class Women Dancing the Lindy Hop" at Ivy Tech Community College as part of their School of Liberal Arts and Sciences Lecture Series. An article by the same title was accepted for publication in a special edition on black dance of the *Journal of Pan African Studies*. Additionally, she will be presenting her paper "The War on the Dance Floor: White Women Lindy Hopping During WWII" at the National Women's Studies Association conference in November.

Ph.D. Degrees Awarded
Jay Hopley, December 2010
Karen Salt, May 2011
Courtney Thompson, May 2011

M.A. Degrees Awarded

May 2010

Heather Moore
Rachel Smederovac
Brett Werenski

May 2011

Kera Lovell
Carlos Marcias Prieto
Annagul Yaryeva

American Studies Engaging the Wider Community

For the past four semesters, American Studies students and faculty have offered courses in African American history and culture to students enrolled in the Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association (WALLA), a non-profit educational program for adults over the age of 50 in the community. Caroline McKenzie, Karen Salt, Kendra Unruh, and Jessica Kaiser served as student coordinators of the courses, which have proven to be extremely popular with students in the community.

In various versions of the course, faculty and students in the program have presented on such subjects as Black women's activism, the history of African American cinema, the life of Frederick Douglass, and the unsung heroes of African American Christianity.

In the 2011 Spring Semester, American Studies students offered a brand new course entitled "American Culture and Identity." The lecturers and students in this course explored what being American has meant and means today, beginning with a historical context for the discussion and proceeding to the contemporary debates. The course was coordinated by Jessica Kaiser, a second-year Ph.D. student, and the lectures were presented by the following graduate students: Hana Lee, Elizabeth Canela, Pam Sari, Chelsea Stripe, Arthur Banton, Abby Stephens, Michelle Carreon, Jehan Mullen, Lauren Miller, Annagul Yareva .

In addition, graduate students Kendra Unruh and April Phillips have created new courses for WALLA. This past spring, Kendra taught a Basics of Swing Dancing class with great success, and she is currently coordinating a course for the fall which will showcase swing dance, salsa dance, and Argentinean tango. April Phillips is coordinating a class for the fall entitled Early American Texts which will be taught by members of the Early Atlantic Reading Group.

Dear American Studies Colleagues,

Thank you so much for y'all's support to the Alabama community following the April 27th tornado. The donations of water, clothing, diapers, canned goods, and everything else filled the cab and bed of my pickup truck, and were greatly appreciated.

The trip to Tuscaloosa was both heart wrenching and wonderful. So much of the city was hit by the mile and a half, F4 storm that every major thorough fare was affected. There is no way to visit town and not encounter the tornados destruction. However, despite the emotional stress this caused, it was counteracted by the constant presence of volunteers and individuals and groups helping each other. I dropped off all our donations at Temporary Emergency Services (TES), a small warehouse not far from where I lived while working on my Masters at UA, and was overwhelmed by the amount of people volunteering and the amount of donations within the facility. There were floor to ceiling piles of donations--toiletries, canned goods, clothing, toys, sunscreen, diapers, Powerade, bottled water... In fact, shortly after I arrived in Tuscaloosa TES opened another donation site in an old grocery store, across the river in Northport, as they needed more storage space.

I spent my five week visit hopping from place to place: making deliveries for the Red Cross with my truck, spending a couple of days with TES, as well as the Holt Relief Center, and finally the Donation Center affiliated with the Tuscaloosa City Schools (TCS). The TCS Donation center collects, sorts, and distributes teaching supplies and materials for displaced teachers. It was to TCS that I directed any monetary donations I was given. These donations are greatly appreciated as the tornado took out three schools in Tuscaloosa: University Place Elementary and Middle School, and the three year old Alberta Elementary School.

It was hard to leave Tuscaloosa and return to Lafayette, but so much rebuilding occurred in five weeks, and still continues today. Roads are cleared of debris, electricity restored to most areas of town, and the donations and volunteers continue to appear. Thank you, Purdue Colleges, for your immediate support to the those affected by the April 27 tornado. If you wish to offer continued support to the rebuilding process, monetary or otherwise, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Again, thank you,
Emma Bertolaet

Looking to get involved in a meaningful way this upcoming year? The Mentorship Program for Engaged Humanities Scholarship is a graduate-student led initiative dedicated to project-based engaged learning and scholarship within the humanities. This program recognizes the value in connecting our academic work with the local community – specifically through intentional mentorship relationships with local “at-risk” high school students at Lafayette's alternative school, A.I.M. Therefore, a key aspect of this program is the engagement and completion of a relevant project alongside high school mentees for the purpose of delivering a breadth of meaning to one's experience while at Purdue University.

Deadline for applications is Saturday, July 16th. For details about this exciting new program as well as applications for graduate students and for faculty/staff who are interested in being involve, please e-mail American Studies graduate student Lauren Miller at mille747@purdue.edu.

Faculty News

Professor Robert Paul Lamb's *Art Matters: Hemingway, Craft, and the Creation of the Modern Short Story* (Louisiana State University Press) sold out its hardcover run in eight months; was named an "Outstanding Academic Title for 2010" by the American Library Association's journal, *Choice*; and was featured during the press's semisecular centennial celebration as one of the seventy-five best books ever published by LSU. A second hardcover printing and new paperback edition were issued in early 2011. A chapter from *Art Matters* was reprinted in Harold Bloom's *Ernest Hemingway: New Edition*, another reprinted chapter is forthcoming in Henry Claridge's *Ernest Hemingway*, and a 3000-word review that terms the book "literary criticism at its finest" is coming out in *Twentieth-Century Literature*. He also published a book chapter titled "The Currents of Memory: Hemingway's 'Big Two-Hearted River' as Metafiction" in Mark Ott and Mark Cirino's collection, *Hemingway and the Geography of Memory*. His new authored book, *Reading the Hemingway Short Story: Studies in Craft*, will be published this winter, and he is currently completing a book on Mark Twain, race, *Huck Finn*, and antebellum slave culture. Bob also received two more Department of English Excellence in Teaching Awards for his work with undergraduate and graduate students.

Professor Lukasik's book, *Discerning Characters: The Culture of Appearance in Early America*, was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in Fall 2010 as part of the McNeil Center for Early American Studies book series. He presented papers at the inaugural C19 Americanist conference, the American Literature Association conference, and the Society of Early Americanists conference. Professor Lukasik continues to serve as the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the American Studies Program and this year he finished his term as a regional delegate in the MLA Delegate Assembly.

Professor Bill Mullen has received a Center for Humanistic Studies Fellowship for the Fall 2011 semester. He'll be using the Fellowship to research a book tentatively titled *Unamerican: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Century of World Revolution*. The book examines Du Bois's writings on the non-U.S. world: China, India, Japan, Russia, the Middle East and Africa. The book tells the

story of how Du Bois came to think of himself as a global citizen and how events outside the U.S. altered his views on race, capitalism and the role of African Americans in building international solidarity movements.

Professor Venetria Patton's essay, "*Stigmata: Embodying the Scars of Slavery*," recently appeared in Carol E. Henderson's *Imagining the Black Female Body: Studies in Literature and Culture*. She gave a paper, "Ancestral Wisdom and The Healing Arts of Othermothers," and participated in a roundtable discussion at the 2011 National Council for Black Studies Conference. She continues to serve as a member of the NCBS board and chairs the membership committee.

Professor Schneider continues to serve on the Steering Committee for American Studies and as Director of Graduate Studies for the English Department. He also recently completed a one-year term as Purdue's representative on the American Council of Learned Societies Postdoctoral Fellowship review committee. In addition to these appointments, he completed his second Center for Undergraduate Instructional Excellence Fellowship; chaired the Woodman Lecture committee; and took on the role of faculty advisor for GradSEA (the graduate student English association).

In Spring 2011, Professor Schneider presented a paper at the "Space, Place, and the Production of Knowledge" conference at the University of Hawaii. He also was invited by Purdue's Philosophy and Literature Program to give a presentation on Cognitive Literary Studies and Critical Race Theory for their annual *Illuminations* lecture series. At this year's Modern Language Association Conference, he will give a talk on race and transcendentalism for the Thoreau Society panel.

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American Studies Program
Purdue University
Beering Hall of Liberal Arts and Education, Room 1289
100 North University Street
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098