Academics IRL: Taking Scholarship out of the Ivory Tower

38th Annual American Studies Symposium

Purdue University, April 17-19, 2013

Keynote Speakers: Mark Anthony Neal, Kevin Willmott, and Major Heather Penney

Submissions due January 12, 2013

The American Studies Program at Purdue University announces its 38th annual symposium to be held April 17-19, 2013. This event is organized by graduate students and encourages participation from undergraduate and graduate-level scholars. In acknowledging the importance of interdisciplinary studies, the symposium committee invites papers from students of all disciplines to engage the theme "Academics IRL: Taking Scholarship out of the Ivory Tower."

Our keynote speakers, Mark Anthony Neal and Kevin Willmott, are already well versed in “taking scholarship out of the Ivory Tower.” Neal’s research bridges African American studies, gender studies, and popular culture and uses technology to address these issues with a broader audience outside of academia through his blog, the New Black Man. http://newblackman.blogspot.com/  Kevin Willmott’s work in film studies and as a writer and director has led to the notable CSA: The Confederate States of America, the 2004 mockumentary of an alternate history of the US in which the Confederacy won the Civil War. Both of these scholars are exploring new avenues for bringing academics into the wider community.

Our other speaker, Major Heather Penney, is an important alumna of our American Studies program, who went on to be one of the two fighter pilots ordered to intercept Flight 93 on September 11th attacks. Washington Post reporter Steve Hendrix wrote, “With no ordnance on board her jet, she was faced with the possibility of ramming her plane into one of the hijacked passenger jets.” As we all know, United 93 was taken down by the passengers, but Penney’s is still an extraordinary story. Upon receiving Purdue University’s 2012 Emerging Voice Award, Penney attributed her graduate work in American Studies with providing her with an enlightening and complex understanding of 21st century America.

Academics IRL reflects a commitment on behalf of Purdue University’s American Studies program to the twin pursuits of interdisciplinary scholarship and community building. In our research we bring together theories and methods from a diverse range of disciplinary traditions to produce dynamic scholarship. In our classrooms we create abundant learning communities which promote critical thinking and awareness of diverse traditions of thought and experience. In our local communities we engage in politics and
community celebrations with neighbors and friends. In our virtual communities we are able to create friendship and scholarship that spans cities and sometimes continents. We create community within the university and celebrate knowledge produced in the many types of communities to which we belong.

We invite posters, papers, panels and workshop proposals which engage the intersections of interdisciplinary scholarship and community building through classroom activism, community-based pedagogies, public intellectual work, scholarship based on activist experiences, public histories, collaborative learning, digital learning and other areas in which academics and “real” life inform each other.

Possible proposal topics from interdisciplinary perspectives include, but are not limited to:

- Community Initiatives and Activisms
- Critical Race Theory, Whiteness Studies
- Cultural Amnesia
- Cultural Studies, Popular Culture Studies
- Eco-Feminism, Environmental Studies
- Education and Pedagogy Studies
- Ethnic Studies
- Film, Television & Media Studies
- Folklore
- Gender, Queer Theory and Sexuality Studies
- Literary Studies
- National and Global Citizenship
- Online/Virtual Identities
- Pedagogy, Learning Environments, and Education
- Othered Social Groups
- Performance Studies, Performance Art
- Religious Studies
- Cross-Cultural Coalitions

The Symposium Committee invites all those interested to submit proposals no longer than one page in length for panels, individual papers, posters, workshops, and performances no later than Saturday, January 12, 2013. Please also submit a biography of no more than 250 words, a current CV with contact information (especially your email address), and a list of any audio and/or visual equipment necessary for your presentation. Submissions must be made electronically to amtsymposium@purdue.edu. By submitting a proposal you agree to abide by the Continuing Conversation Clause outlined below should your proposal by accepted to the 2013 American Studies Graduate Symposium. Updates and important information will be posted on our Facebook page or blog.

Continuing the Conversation Clause

This year’s conference theme is structured around bridging the university with the community, research and activism. We seek to make the research presented at this conference part of an ongoing dialogue about our questions and findings and their significance in the world around us. As a praxis of this theme, participants are asked to commit to “continuing the conversation” beyond the conference walls and dates in an effort to reach new audiences.

With this year’s conference theme, our committee is also recognizing the growing importance of technology in our research and the classroom. We need your help in expanding our symposium’s web presence. We believe harnessing a visually-compelling multimedia form to discuss complex problems with clarity and conciseness is integral in broadening our audience. This year a technological component will be required as part of the symposium. Each participant will be required to submit a brief proposal.
outlining their chosen multimedia form to AMSTsymposium@purdue.edu by April 1. Final tech presentations must be emailed by April 20.

Here are some ways that you can share a portion of your research through our symposium blog:

- **1-2 minute video** – Examples: Animoto, Xtramormal, iMovie, Moviemaker, or Photostory
- **infographic** – Examples: Glogster, Xtimeline, Visual.ly, or Timetoast
- **presentations** – Examples: Powerpoint, or Prezi
- **a blog post or website** – Examples: Wix, Wordpress, or Tumblr
- **a comic strip or other visual art form** – See examples at ToonDoo, Make Beliefs Comix, Panraven
- **a .pdf of your paper or excerpt**
- **photo or video of your poster presentation**
- **design your own tech tool!**

We understand that many students might have hesitations about translating their research into a technological format. To aid you in constructing this visually-compelling multimedia form, we will be posting tools and techniques to help participants hone their skills in everything from video editing to presentation skills. Follow these updates via our Facebook and blog sites. We hope that this will be an exciting opportunity to learn a new technology and expand your presentation audience. We also encourage students to use this web presence to their advantage to form panels, share ideas, and make contacts before the conference.