

American Culture

Program in American Culture
at the University of Michigan

Spring 2005

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Photo top left: artist-in-residence Josefina Báez, photo taken by Lu Sanchez. Photos top right and bottom: A rumba demonstration, American Culture 699, *The Social History of Latin Music: Sacred, Creole and Pop*, Winter 2005, photos taken by Anne Shore.



Dear Friends, Graduates, Colleagues, and Students,

Greetings from beautiful Ann Arbor! As I write, spring is busting out everywhere. The herons came back about four weeks ago, three pairs of them circling my house one chilly morning. And the spring peeper frogs have been screaming in the various wetlands around town. The University of Michigan has survived another winter! It always seems that we should hunker down for those seven long winter weeks between the early January return to classes and the well-deserved break at the end of February, focusing on the cozy winter work of reading, writing, and thinking—preferably in front of a nice warm fire.

Instead, program faculty and students were out and about—in their classes, attending talks, meeting for dinner, welcoming guests, going bowling, exchanging work. Back in December, a temperature in the mid-20s

seemed chilly. In January, it was the teens that made us groan. By February we balked only a little at single digit temps. In experiencing this winter adjustment, I've come to realize the secret of a place with seasons: one never fails to meet the climatic challenges of the present, while lingering on the pleasures of the past season, and contemplating those of the future. And why not? The autumn was utterly gorgeous this year, and I recall it with intense delight. The winter was joyfully sunny and brisk. And the riverbirds out on the Huron and the buds on the trees are back for spring, with the warmth of summer just ahead.

Life in the Program in American Culture follows a similar cycle, as we scurry to meet the challenges of the everyday—hiring, curriculum changes, reworkings of the graduate program, among others—while paying homage to the past—our graduates, the allies and friends inside and outside the University that have so strongly supported our program's development, the faculty leaders that have led us to the present. Even while doing these things, we have been busy laying the groundwork for the future. For our undergraduate students, that has meant the formal adoption of new concentration requirements and the development of new gateways into the American Culture major. A year in the making, the new requirements streamline the concentration, replacing the sometimes-cumbersome track system with a simple five-course core, and a flexible set of breadth requirements that will allow students to pursue concentrations of interest within the major. We're planning new courses as well, in American Folklore, Citizenship in America, Pacific Culture, Popular Music, and the Culture of the Cold War. Our Latina/o Studies introductory course was a huge success this year, and provides a model for future course building. For our graduate students, laying the groundwork for the future has meant a similar effort to strengthen and clarify our course requirements, and to assist students in moving appropriately through their programs of study. You'll be hearing more about that in the future. For our faculty, it has meant a year packed with manuscript workshops aimed at bringing the collective intellectual force of our faculty together in order to assist writers in reworking dissertations into world-class manuscripts. Last year, we conducted four of these full-day events; this year, the number has climbed to six!

And we've been busy in other ways. We put up three photography shows this fall, mounted a mural installation in our seminar room, and started a noontime performance series with the School of Music in our downstairs space. Performance artist Josephina Baez has joined us for the period between March and May, and her workshops, mini-courses, and general presence have been a wonderful addition for students and faculty alike. There's more news than I can convey in a brief greeting—check out the newsletter for the rest!

Warmly,
Phil Deloria

American Culture News

Director: Philip Deloria

Ethnic Studies Directors:

Greg Dowd, Native American Studies

Maria Montoya, Latina/o Studies

Amy Stillman, Asian/Pacific
Islander American Studies

Graphic Design and Layout:

Anne Shore

Editor: Judith Gray

Please submit any changes, corrections, letters, updates and/or suggestions to Linda Weiss at lweiss@umich.edu.

The Program in American Culture promotes publicly engaged and socially committed scholarship and teaching aimed at understanding the struggles and creativity that have produced the societies and cultures of America.

In particular, we seek to illuminate the significance, the lived experience, and the relation among race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and class, both within and beyond national borders.

The Program brings the history and interpretive strategies of Ethnic Studies into conversation with critical approaches to Literature, History, Cultural Studies, and Social Sciences, as well as with knowledge produced outside the boundaries of the university.

Regents of the University of Michigan:

David A. Brandon
Laurence B. Deitch
Olivia P. Maynard
Rebecca McGowan
Andrea Fischer Newman
Andrew C. Richner
S. Martin Taylor
Katherine E. White
Mary Sue Coleman *ex officio*

Student Profile: Peter Gluck



Please join us in offering congratulations to Peter Gluck, who became a Candidate this past fall. Peter is working on an Individual Interdisciplinary Doctoral Degree that brings together the Program in American Culture and the School of Social Work in a first of its kind doctoral degree. “The underlying intellectual values of the two programs are amazingly similar,” he said.

“Both are concerned with American culture, which includes applying the idea of multiculturalism and the principle of social justice. As well, both problematize the rule of a majority culture in the United States that asks minorities to implicitly give up their unique identities as sub-groups.” Peter cites from his work the diminishing numbers of Jews in the United States as an example. “Jews now comprise a little more than 2% of the population, and nearly half have intermarried in the past twenty or so years. Still, data shows that 25% of intermarried couples raise their children with the minority, that is, Jewish identity.” He adds, “My work focuses on the narratives of this group who have chosen to raise their children with a “minority identity.” It is interesting that their stories run counter to both minority and majority master narratives. How this culture work is accomplished has implications for all minority and ethnic groups in America hoping to sustain their identities.”

New Concentration Requirements Approved!

After an intense year of study and work by Hannah Rosen and her undergraduate studies committee, our proposal for new concentration requirements spent the fall semester working its way through various College committees. It's now officially up and running! The new concentration requires students take 31 hours of course work, broken down into a logical and streamlined sequence:

3 credit prerequisite: Any 200-level AC gateway course

16 credit core requirements:

- AC 335: Arts and Culture
- AC 345: Politics and Society
- AC 399: Race, Racisms, and Ethnicity
- AC 350: Methodology
- AC 396/398: Senior Seminar

12 credits of electives, governed by a distribution/breadth requirement: To fulfill the breadth requirement, students will take courses at the 200 level or above dealing with each of the following areas (a single course may satisfy multiple areas).

- Pre-Twentieth Century United States
- Women, Gender and/or Sexuality
- Ethnic and/or Indigenous Studies
- Transnationalism, Diaspora and/or Empire

Two of these elective courses must be at the 300 level or above; of those courses, one course must be at the 400 level.

The new concentration will offer students a strong foundation in American and Ethnic Studies methods and issues, while allowing them to continue to develop their own specific areas of interest in electives and upper division courses. The Program aims to train students to be wide-ranging and sophisticated critics and creators of culture, well prepared for the realities of a global and multicultural world. We look forward to our first batch of students taking up the new AC major next fall!

Congratulations, Maria Cotera

Maria E. Cotera was awarded a Michigan Campus Compact Faculty/Staff Community Service-Learning Award. Cotera first became interested in the pedagogical potential of community-service learning when Jeffrey Howard of the Ginsberg Center for Community Service Learning made a presentation at an American Culture faculty meeting during her first year of teaching at Michigan. Howard encouraged AC faculty to think of creative ways to incorporate experiential learning into their classes. After meeting with Ginsberg Center advisors, Cotera developed a women's history course that paired UM students with young women in a juvenile detention facility in Dearborn, Michigan, with the ultimate objective of creating a series of moveable “murals” depicting important moments in post 1960s feminist history. Since that first experience, Cotera has tried to incorporate some form of experiential learning into all of her courses. According to Cotera, “community service learning offers both challenges and unique opportunities to teachers and students. For teachers, incorporating a community service component into an existing course means seriously thinking through course goals and objectives; striking an integrated balance between what is taught in the classroom and what students learn through service; and learning when and how to abandon a course plan when the unexpected happens. For students, it means committing emotionally and intellectually to an enterprise that takes them out of their comfort zone and pushes them to think more deeply about the social forces that impact our lives.”

Faculty Profile: Inter

Tiya Miles came to the Program in American Culture in Fall 2002, after teaching for one year at the University of California, Berkeley. Her Ph.D. is in American Studies from the University of Minnesota; she also holds an M.A. in Women's Studies from Emory University and a B.A. in African American Studies from Harvard. We spoke with her recently about her new book, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (California, 2005).

Question: It's a fantastic book, with both a large sense of time and topic, and a personal and specific quality as well. In reading it, I found that I was completely pulled into the story, which in turn led me quite seamlessly to contemplate the larger issues. I'm wondering if you can give us a quick sketch of the book.

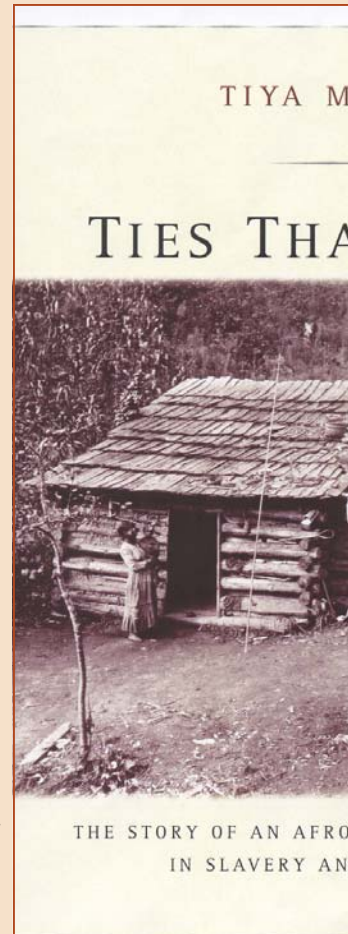
Tiya Miles: The book covers the sweep of nineteenth-century Cherokee history, but from an Afro-Cherokee perspective. At the center of the story is slavery in the Cherokee Nation: how and why it developed, who decided to participate in it, and the motivations behind those choices. All these questions come together around the experience of the Shoe Boots family. The father, Shoe Boots, was a well known Cherokee war hero; the mother, Doll, was a slave from South Carolina acquired by Shoe Boots in the 1790s. They lived together for 25 years and had 5 children, and there is no evidence that he ever freed her. There is, however, evidence that he cared for and felt kinship with his children. The story of this family connects to larger issues: colonialism, slavery, ways in which racial categories are formed and used. These issues played out at the level of the state or nation, of course, but also at the level of the community—and in the most intimate space of all, the family.

The book's trajectory really comes from the evidence available about that family. Earliest documents pointed me toward the acquisition of Doll. The later evidence took me to the end of the nineteenth century, when the grandchildren of Shoe Boots and Doll applied for citizenship in the Cherokee nation. They failed in this effort, and their failure helps illuminate the ways in which racialization basically won out over kinship. Even though people in the Cherokee Nation knew that Shoe Boots was Cherokee, a number of factors compromised the possibility of affiliation through kinship: the activities of white Christian missionaries, the U.S. government, and the Cherokee Nation government in particular. In the end, the people with the power to grant citizenship decided to deny

it to the Shoe Boots descendants on the basis of laws and official regulations, as opposed to on the basis of the family ties that they knew existed.

Question: These kinds of things—membership and sovereignty—are pretty vexing issues for Native people across the country, perhaps now more than ever.

Tiya Miles: In the book, I try to understand that there was a sort of bargain made by the Cherokee elite: an attempt to preserve Cherokee sovereignty, but at the expense of redefining some really important Cherokee values. I hate to say that “colonization won out,” because I don't believe that. But the fact is that things changed dramatically, and people suffered for it. All the actors were caught up in systems of Euroamerican colonization and chattel slavery, and people were forced to make choices within awful, narrow parameters. And yes, the story continues to have meaning today. Think of the recent court cases within the Cherokee Nation and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma that have to do with figuring out the contemporary place of freedman and women in Indian nations. Stories like the Shoeboots's show that there *are* people who are legitimately Afro-Cherokee, or Afro-Creek, or Afro-Seminole, etc. If these native communities had been able to continue defining themselves as they had in the past -- with a good deal of respect for the meaning of kinship even across racial lines -- descendants of freedpeople would not have to turn to the U.S. government to help establish their status. But so often in the contemporary moment, people want to read one another phenotypically: if you look black, then you can't be anything else. This is just one case among many. And of course it's a completely flawed way of thinking . . . it's nonsensical. It's frustrating as well to realize that even as many native nations are trying to revitalize tradition, they often overlook the tradition of accepting non-Indian individuals into com-



Interview with Tiya Miles

munities and families.

Question: One of the reasons this book is so powerful, for me at least, is your portrayal of Shoe Boots. On the one hand, you clearly have sympathy for him as a Cherokee caught up in the midst of Removal and the various negotiations and politics of the Cherokee Nation. And yet, he's a slaveowner... and after all those years with Doll, never found it in himself to free her. For me, he really stands as evidence of the difficulties of doing history, of the conceit of thinking that we really can get inside the head of someone far removed from us in time, space, and culture.

Tiya Miles: I spent a lot of time on this question. Was he a moral man? It mattered to me, and it was *so* confusing. I found only two cases of Cherokee men going public with the existence of their black children and being willing to face the repercussions so as to have those children freed. That was better than what most white men were doing, but at the same time, he would not free Doll. What does one make of that? I've struggled to figure out whether I could respect him, whether there was anything worthy about the relationship. In the end, I came to two conclusions. One is that in the only testimony I found in which Doll represented her own life, she said that she was Shoe Boots's wife, that they were married in a Cherokee manner, and that she was entitled to land he would have received as a veteran. I want to believe that he wasn't a monster, since she was claiming him in this way. He had to have

had some ethical code that he was living by. That code, I think, was Cherokee kinship: even though he didn't free Doll, he seems in a manner to have respected her as a person. At the same time, he did in fact involve himself in the business of slavery. Even if he started slowly, he got pretty good at it. He went to court. He was involved in selling and trading, and attempts to purchase, and there's no getting around that. At one point, he gave Doll, his first child, and two other slaves away! He possessed the power to do this, and he did do it. So I have a bifurcated view. On the

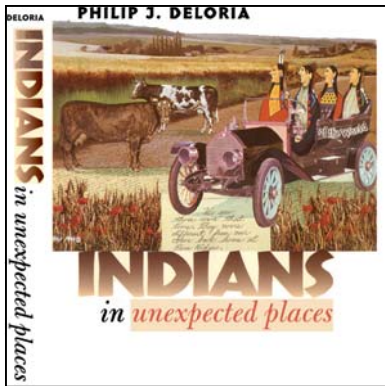
one hand, Doll's view—at least as it appears in the historical record; on the other hand, that of a scholar looking back at the evidence that says he was a slaveowning man. He traded people and gave them away like he would objects. And I have simply to rest with those two visions of him.

Question: The result is a book that I found an incredibly moving and powerful piece of history... but also something that goes beyond that. I can hardly wait for it to be out in paper, because I'll be assigning it in class. You're also working on an anthology. Can you give us a short description of that project?

Tiya Miles: Sure. Like a lot of people, I found that I couldn't include everything I wanted to discuss in the first book. One of the ideas I had to limit was the suggestion that African Diaspora Studies as a field has often overlooked the presence of African descended people (and therefore, African-influenced cultures) in Native American nations. When we talk about the Atlantic world, we forget that the American Atlantic, from north to south, was the terrain of indigenous American people prior to European colonization. I'm co-editing the next book with Sharon Holland, a scholar of Afro-Native literature, and it's an interdisciplinary collection of essays by scholars and artists that tries to map out the presence and meaning of the African diaspora in Native American communities. This book will be called "Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country," and we are thrilled to have received permission from Lakota artist, Francis Yellow, to reproduce his beautiful antique-map drawing on the cover (image below).

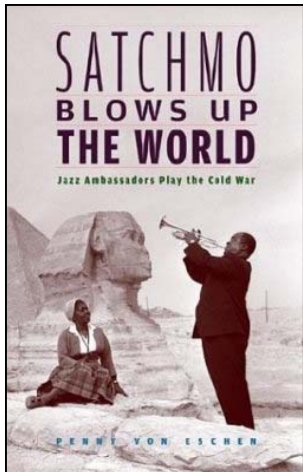


Scholarship in American Culture

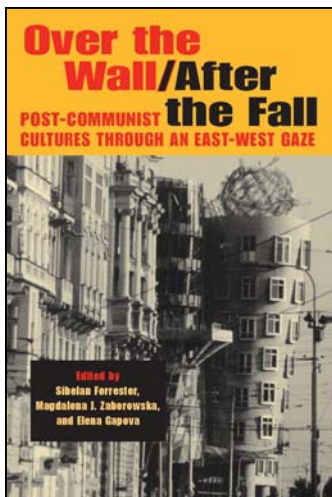


Indians in Unexpected Places by **Philip Deloria** explores cultural discordance to show how stereotypes and Indian experiences have competed for ascendancy in the wake of the military conquest of Native America and the nation's subsequent embrace of Native "authenticity." Rewriting the story of the national encounter with modernity, Deloria provides revealing accounts of Indians doing unexpected things—singing opera, driving cars, acting in Hollywood—in ways that suggest new directions for the American Indian history.

Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide by **Andrea Smith** reveals the connections between different forms of violence perpetrated by the state and by society at large, documenting their impact on Native women. Smith also outlines radical and innovative strategies for eliminating gendered violence.



At a time when the cultural contributions of black Americans were being derided, the U.S. State Department found it useful to send luminaries of jazz music into the world as ambassadors, preceding covert actions in Europe and Africa. In this exploration of the significance of jazz as a propaganda tool during the cold war era, **Penny Von Eschen** looks at how this phenomenon was reflected in the domestic civil rights movement in her book *Satchmo Blows Up the World*.



Over the Wall/After the Fall by **Magdalena Zaborowska** maps a new discourse on the evolution of cultural life in Eastern Europe following the end of communism. Departing from traditional binary views of East/West, the contributors to this volume consider the countries and the peoples of the region on their own terms. Drawing on insights from cultural studies, gender theory, and postcolonial studies, this lively collection addresses gender issues and sexual politics, consumerism, high and popular culture, architecture, media, art, and theater.

Congratulations!

Please join us in congratulating American Culture faculty and students on their fine achievements:

Tracie Rubeck, the winner of a Rackham Outstanding GSI Award and the recipient of the CEW's Mary Malcolmson Raphael Fellowship
Sally Howell, the recipient of the Rackham Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship.
Greg Dowd, the recipient of the Humanities Institute Fellowship
Maria Montoya, the recipient of the Michigan Humanities Fellowship
Philip Deloria, who has been elected to the National Council of the American Studies Association.
Nhi Lieu, who received honorable mention for her dissertation from Horace G. Rackham Graduate School Dissertation Awards.
Tiya Miles, recipient of an "Outstanding Teaching Award" from the Greek Community
Susan Najita, the recipient of a GELS Fellowship
Cynthia Wu, the winner of the Michael Erik Myatt Distinguished Dissertation Award in Disability Studies
Matt Wittman, the recipient of a Fulbright grant to Australia/New Zealand

Job Placement News from Recent Graduates:

Colin Johnson, Assistant Professor of Gender Studies, Indiana University.
Nhi Lieu, Assistant Professor at the University of Texas-Austin.
Teresa Pool, Instructor of Sociology at Cabrillo Community College in Santa Cruz, California.
Merida Rua, Assistant Professor of American Studies at Williams College.
Grace Wang, US President's Postdoctoral Fellowship in Asian American Studies for 1 year followed by an Assistant Professor of American Studies position at the University of California-Davis.
Shawan Wade Worsley, Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts, University of San Francisco.
Cynthia Wu, Visiting Assistant Professor of American Studies at Macalester College.

Great Classes for Fall 2005!

Just a sampling of the many wonderful courses offered by the Program in American Culture:

AC 204: American Popular Music
 AC 205: Space, Story, Self
 AC 207: Survey of American Folklore
 AC 213: Introduction to Latina/o Studies
 AC 214: Introduction to Asian/Pacific Islander Studies
 AC 216: Introduction to Native American Studies
 AC 231: Love and Sex on the Beach: American Film in/of the Pacific
 AC 301: Spies and Looney Tunes: The Culture of the Cold War

Alumni Profile: Reverend Whit Soards



Reverend Whit Soards with her son Lloyd

The Reverend Whit Soards (Whit Stodghill; Big Ten Champion 1979, Tennis, #3 singles, #2 doubles) graduated from the Program in American Culture in 1981, where her work in the AC major taught her “how to read and write and understand the world in which I live and work.” From American Culture, she went straight to the Yale Divinity School, and was ordained an Episcopal priest in 1985. Only the second woman ordained in the state of Kentucky, Reverend Soards remembers, during the first fifteen years of her work, being one of the youngest priests in the crowd and one of the very few women breaking new ground in the Church.

Despite the lack of mentors and guides along the way, she persevered, eventually moving in 1996 to a local parish in her hometown of Louisville.

With the birth of her first son, Lloyd, Reverend Soards shifted her emphasis to hospital work in order to find a more regular schedule. What she found was new challenges and excitement, working among “all kinds of people in all sorts of situations, most of which are, for them, stressful.” Reverend Soards continues: “In this context I have to respect and appreciate all sorts of different ways people of different backgrounds have of handling illness, death and grief. At first, these many and varied ways of handling grief tended to shock me, and sometimes even bewilder me. But as I began to have more experience I find that I am most often graced by unexpected gifts from patients and families whose styles differ from mine. Just today I shared a lovely conversation with an African American woman, who told me all about her entire clan of children, grands, great-grands, and even her beloved great-great-great-grandson “JW,” who just adores donuts! We prayed together, hands clasped and hearts united in our common faith, I an Ivy League educated priest, she a Pentecostal lay woman of significant faith, praising God and asking God for strength for the journey. My background in American Studies is part of what has equipped me for this delightful and challenging work.”

With Special Thanks

The Program in American Culture is indebted to all of the many supporters—alumni, friends, faculty, and current students—who have contributed to our fellowship and strategic funds. Your support helps us to continue to build the best American and Ethnic Studies program in the country!

The Program would like to extend special thanks to our leading supporters:

Janet and William Cassebaum, who fund the American Culture workshop—which meets Wednesday noon four to six times per semester—and the annual Cassebaum lecture. This year’s lecture with W.T. (Rip) Lhamon was a rousing success, and this year’s workshops have enabled graduate students and faculty alike to benefit from the insights of the American Culture community.

Joel Siegel, who funds the Siegel fellowship for American Culture undergraduates, and who this year made a significant contribution to the Program. This year’s Siegel scholarship recipient, Alex Martinez, graduated in December and is bound home to Chicago, with law school in his future plans. Selection of next year’s recipient of the Siegel scholarship is currently underway.

And we also thank our most recent contributors: James William Kenney, Jeffrey A. Kosiorek, Scott T. Kurashige, Kathy Lynn Lundquist, and Charles Leroy Moore.

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I am pleased to support the Program in American Culture Strategic Fund.

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Ethnic Studies News

by Maria Montoya, Greg Dowd, and Amy Stillman

Latina/o Studies had a very exciting year with the launching of our new gateway course and the arrival of interesting visitors. This fall, Professor Maria Cotera launched the new Introduction to Latina/o Studies, which serves as an introduction to the field for students across the college. Through lectures and discussion, Professor Cotera introduced the students to a wide array of inter-disciplinary fields and faculty across the campus. She also invited Susan Oboler from the University of Illinois - Chicago and Maria Beltran from the University of Wisconsin to participate in the class.

We also hosted Jacqueline Jiménez Polanco who gave a talk on *The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer Movement in the Dominican Republic: A Sociopolitical and Cultural Approach* and Juan Javier Pescador who shared his photo collection *Immigrants or Pilgrims? Religious Rituals in the Great Lakes Mexican Chicano/Barrios*. Finally, our program recognized the important work of Gloria Anzaldúa by hosting a remembrance in her honor. We were graced by the visit of Emma Pérez from the University of Colorado who highlighted a panel discussion that also included Larry LaFountain-Stokes, Maria Cotera, and Ruth Behar. Professor Cotera's graduate class also created a fabulous altar in her honor which was displayed on the first floor of Haven Hall. Artist-in-residence Josefina Báez joined us this past March. She performed *Dominicanish* and also gave a talk on *A Dominican-York-The Ride-Route 15*.

Native American Studies saw an outpouring of books: Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (University Press of Kansas, 2004); Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (U.C. Berkeley, 2005), and Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (South End Press, 2005). Our new colleague Michael Witgen completed his dissertation, "An Infinity of Nations: Indians, Immigrants, and the Making of National Space and Racial Identities in America's Northern Borderlands," at the University of Washington. There is simply not space to list the articles or professional papers our colleagues produced this year. NAS will, this May, host a small symposium: *Encounters Within: Native Americans in Today's Academy*. The discussion will take place among a dozen junior faculty members from a wide range of

institutions; senior speakers include Jean M. O'Brien (Ojibwa/Minnesota) and Matthew Snipp (Cherokee/Stanford). We have two other major sources of satisfaction: First, we were happy this year to host the Whitefish River First Nation of Ojibwa (Ontario, Canada) during its successful visit to negotiate the repatriation of ancestral remains and funerary possessions in the University Museum of Natural History. We are proud that the Board of Regents voted in March unanimously in favor of the repatriation. Second, we welcomed to the university a strong group of five graduate students working across disciplines in Native American studies. Indeed, this year saw the revival of the Native Caucus, the University's Native American graduate student organization.

With three of the core faculty on leave (including the director), **Asian Pacific Islander American Studies (APIA)** continues nevertheless to blaze new paths. In late fall 2004, the Pacific Islands Studies initiative was formally accepted as a Rackham interdisciplinary workshop. This is a key step to strengthening Michigan's unrivalled preeminence in Pacific Islander American studies, by bridging with the field of Pacific Islands Studies. Kudos to the effort spearheaded by Susan Najita, Damon Salesa, and faculty associate Stuart Kirsch!

In Winter 2005, APIA Studies has taken our collaboration with the Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs to a new dimension. One track of American Culture 305, *Asian Pacific Islander American Community Service and Learning* is focused on programming events in observance of APA Heritage Month on campus. Co-taught by Emily Lawsin and MESA coordinator Stephen Moon, this is a welcome development in bridging the resources of academic faculty and co-curricular service providers. Emily Lawsin continues her collaborative work with Joe Galura of the Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning.

At this writing, four graduating seniors are confirmed as completing the Academic Minor in Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies. Congratulations and best wishes go to Melanie Carbine, Stephanie Chang, John Lim, and Jaclyn Wing!!