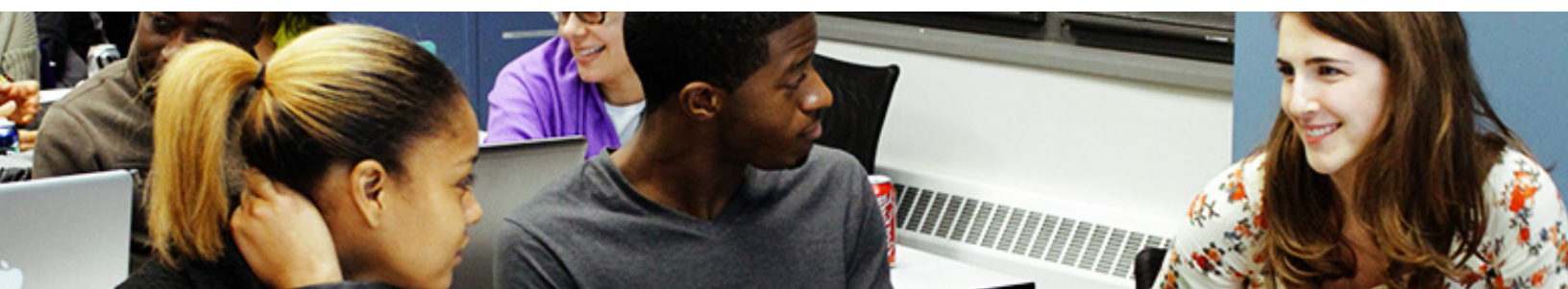




INNOVATION IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

SPRING 2014



M | **LSA** AMERICAN CULTURE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Arab and Muslim American Studies | Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies
Digital Studies | Latina/o Studies | Native American Studies

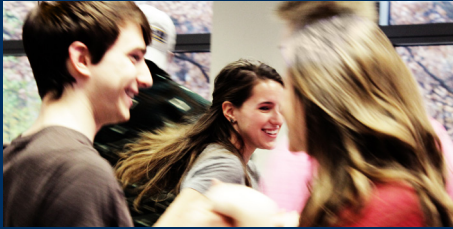


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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Alumni, Students, Faculty and Friends of the Department of American Culture,

It is a pleasure to greet you as the new Chair of the Department.

As Greg Dowd reported in last year's Newsletter, in 2012 the Regents approved our shift from Program to Department. The change is largely symbolic. For a long time we've been doing the work of a department (offering a substantial curriculum, granting BA's and PhD's, serving as a home for faculty). And we aren't going to become what academics, even outside the Midwest, call a "silo" of knowledge. Most of our faculty still hold joint appointments with other units, in disciplinary departments like History, or interdisciplinary ones like Women's Studies; we and our students are constantly connecting with projects all over campus, across the region, and beyond. But symbolism matters, as everyone in American studies knows—and this new status inspires us to keep stepping up.

I am one of the longest-serving members of the American Culture faculty. I arrived at the University of Michigan as a member of the English Department—educated at Antioch College and the University of California, San Diego, with scholarly research focusing on American literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Ann Arbor I was quickly drawn into the innovative, interdisciplinary knowledge-making projects under way in women's studies and in American and ethnic studies. Directing the American Culture Program in the 1990's was a transformative experience for me. Since then I've often directed my energy elsewhere—to my family, my scholarship, teaching and service in other places. For example, as an Associate Dean at the Graduate School I worked to enlarge interdisciplinary opportunities across the University. Last year, I taught American studies as a Fulbright Fellow in Denmark; then I spent a sabbatical term in Rome and San Francisco working on a book about literary regionalism. I want to thank Greg Dowd for his outstanding work as Chair, and for his generosity in extending his term to allow me to have those experiences and come to this job with fresh energy. I also want to thank our amazing staff, who have been working hard—and with great good cheer—to make this a smooth transition.

The more time I spend in American Culture's main office in Haven Hall, talking with colleagues and students, the more impressed I am by what the Department is achieving. This year we've launched an undergraduate minor in Digital Studies—coordinating our own courses with others in the Departments of Communications Studies, Screen Arts and Cultures, English and History—to offer students an opportunity for critical engagement in this crucial part of contemporary culture. We offer internships in partnership with organizations like the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, and the American Indian Health and Family Service Center in southwest Detroit. Faculty members have published wonderful scholarly studies, like Evelyn Alsultany's study of representations of Arabs and Muslims in hip hop, television, and other media. Scott Lyons won the Henry Russel Award—the most prestigious award the University has for early-career faculty members, reserved for those who "already have demonstrated an extraordinary record of accomplishment in scholarly research and/or creativity, as well as an excellent record of contribution ([cont.](#))

as a teacher.” Professor Lyons also won the Humanities Institute Fellowship this year, becoming the third American Culture faculty member in five years to earn this highly competitive award. Our faculty have also published works of poetry and fiction—and we take great pride in reporting that Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes received an award from a K-9 public school in Canóvanas, Puerto Rico, in appreciation of his literary work.

We were recently surprised to learn that this is probably the oldest interdisciplinary American studies program in the country. Conventional wisdom locates the origins of the field at Harvard in 1937, when Howard Mumford Jones—hired away from Michigan in that very year—launched Harvard’s American Civilization Program. But the research of our graduate student Alex Olson, now a faculty member in the Honors College at Western Kentucky University, shows that Jones had previously written a letter on behalf of a group of UM faculty proposing a curricular concentration in “the Development of American Culture” that was approved, and became available to LSA students, in 1935—a full two years before any other university program was launched. Our colleagues in that earlier era were deeply concerned—as we are today—with connecting to the public; they wanted to bring Walter Lippmann and Arthur Schlesinger to campus. They might not have been comfortable talking about race and ethnicity, and inequality, in America, as we constantly do today. (It’s not always comfortable for us either.) Yet they opened the way for what we do. Alex’s work is ongoing, and I should be able to tell you more about this distinguished history in a later Newsletter.

I hope that I’ll get a chance to talk with many of the graduates and friends of American Culture in the coming months! Please, stay in touch.

**Best wishes,
June Howard**



**SO YOU WANNA BE
A ROCK STAR?**
WITH ALEX WONG
AND VIENNA TENG
SEE A VIDEO OF THEIR
PERFORMANCE HERE!

**SO YOU WANNA BE
A HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR?**
WITH GRACE LEE BOGGS
AND GRACE LEE
SEE PHOTOS
FROM THE EVENT HERE!



**MAKAWALU
HULA CONCERT**
WITH KEKUHI
KEALIKANAKAOLEOHAILANI
AND KAUMAKAIWA KANKA'OLE
SEE A VIDEO OF THEIR
PERFORMANCE HERE!

**SO YOU WANNA
WRITE A NOVEL?**
WITH V.V. GANESHANANTHAN
AND PETER HO DAVIES
SEE PHOTOS
FROM THE EVENT HERE!



BREAKING THE MOLD.

THIS YEAR, STUDENTS AND GUESTS EXPLORED THE INTERSECTIONS OF ACTIVISM AND IDENTITY IN THE ARTS IN OUR ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM. WE WELCOMED MUSICIANS, WRITERS, AND DIRECTORS WHO EACH TALKED ABOUT INTEGRATING UNDERREPRESENTED IDENTITIES INTO ALREADY NON-TRADITIONAL CAREERS.

6 ACTIVITIES THAT DEFINE THE GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE

BY STEPHEN MOLL DREM

There are many benefits to being a doctoral student in the Department of American Culture. They range from simply being an active participant in the diverse community of scholars in the humanities and social sciences at the University of Michigan to the numerous opportunities that American Culture opens up for doing innovative, interdisciplinary research. In honor of the department's new minor in Digital Studies, here is [a listicle](#) showcasing some of the activities that define the graduate student experience in the program. "Listicles," or articles in the form of lists, have become increasingly popular with the rise of new media outlets such as [BuzzFeed](#) and platforms like [Tumblr](#). They are often playful, incorporating images, videos, animated GIFs, and other media objects. For more information on the Department's new minor in Digital Studies, [click here](#); to view profiles of the department's graduate students, including information on individual students' interests and contact information, [click here](#).

1. WORKING WITH AND SUPPORTING INCREDIBLE STAFF



From left to right, top to bottom:

Judith Gray, Mary Freiman, Marlene Moore, Tammy Zill, Tabby Rohn, and Hannah Yung

Staff members play a vital role in making sure academic departments run cohesively and smoothly. American Culture is lucky to have an incredible group of career staff and administrators, all of whom play a crucial role in ensuring graduate student success. Central to our endeavors is Marlene Moore, our Graduate Student Coordinator. Marlene helps graduate students with a wide variety of issues that range from coordinating committee correspondence to applying for travel and research grants. Additionally, graduate students also frequently work with other American Culture staff, including Department Manager Judith Gray, Executive Secretary Mary Freiman, Financial Coordinator Tabitha Rohn, Undergraduate Program Coordinator Tammy Zill, and Events Coordinator Hannah Yung. Any new graduate student quickly learns that the staff plays a vital role in the daily life of academic departments at the University of Michigan. We are truly fortunate to have such an amazing group of professionals who keep American Culture at its best. [\(cont.\)](#)

2. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADVISORS



Pictured: American Culture core faculty

Every doctoral student works with several faculty advisors throughout their time at the University of Michigan. While most students have a primary advisor who works with them throughout the process, everyone who goes through the program must assemble several faculty committees, each of which comes together at a different stage. These include a second-year review committee, a preliminary exams committee and, ultimately, a dissertation committee. Many PhD students also work with several faculty from other departments in addition to American Culture core faculty—a reflection of the Department's interdisciplinary orientation. The intellectual bonds created between faculty advisors and graduate students are incredibly important, and developing these relationships is a central feature of life at the University. To learn more about individual members of the American Culture faculty, [please click here](#).

3. TEACHING AND MENTORING UNDERGRADUATES AS CONTRACTED GRADUATE STUDENT INSTRUCTORS (GSIS)



Doctoral students in the Department of American Culture teach undergraduates as GSIs in three different contexts: as discussion section leaders for large classes taught by faculty, as a primary instructor for one of the University's required first-year writing courses, or as the primary instructor for a Spring term American Culture course. Teaching undergraduates is a rewarding experience that supports graduate students financially and also prepares them for a career as faculty at a college or university. The opportunities to lead discussions, give lectures, build syllabi, and mentor students are vital components in the intellectual development of all graduate students in the Department, and serving as a GSI is a role that every PhD student takes seriously and in which everyone invests a great deal of time and energy. [\(cont.\)](#)

Notably, all graduate students in American Culture are members of the Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO), a union established in 1975 to support graduate student labor at the University of Michigan. The GEO contract ensures that graduate students receive health care and a number of other benefits. The GEO contract also outlines the total number of hours that any GSI works in a given semester. Learn more about GEO and graduate student labor by [visiting GEO's website](#).

4. PRESENTING RESEARCH TO THE DEPARTMENT



In both the Fall and Winter semesters, groups of graduate students present their work to the Department as part of the American Culture Workshop series (which is currently being coordinated by [Assistant Professor John Cheney-Lippold](#) with support from doctoral student Mejdulene Shomali). Publically presenting work in this manner is an excellent opportunity to receive feedback from colleagues, peers, and mentors, and to hone one's presentation skills. This past Fall, the second year cohort (Stefan Aune, Rachel Miller, Joo Young Lee, Stephen Molldrem, and Ivan Chaar-Lopez) presented their recent work in the annual "I Know What You Did Last Summer" workshop, showcasing research that each of them conducted during Summer 2013. The first year cohort (Vivian Truong, Michael Pascual, Joseph Gaudet, Dominic Garzonio, Mereyem Kamil, and Peggy Lee) also gave presentations on their research for the Department's introductory graduate course, which was taught by [Associate Professor Maria Coter](#) for the second time. This Winter, graduate students who are advancing to candidacy presented their dissertation prospectuses to the Department—an event that always draws a large audience.

5. PRESENTING AT NATIONAL CONFERENCES



The Department encourages doctoral students to present their research at national conferences. This year, 14 graduate students presented their work at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association and/or at the 2013 meeting of the Critical Ethnic Studies Association. They are (in alphabetical order): Rabia Belt, Sony Bolton, Jesse Carr, Joseph Cialdella, Garrett Felber, Elizabeth Harmon, Jasmine Kramer, Jennifer Kwak, Katherine Lennard, Isabel Millan (who recently graduated from the program and received a highly competitive postdoctoral position at the University of Texas at Austin—way to go, Isabell!), Orquidea Morales, Kiritina Sailiata, and Wendy Sung. To check out presenters' paper titles, visit [the ASA](#) and/or [CESA's](#) 2013 online program booklets or the [graduate student profiles](#) on American Culture's website. [\(cont.\)](#)

6. PARTICIPATING IN FOCUSED READING GROUPS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOPS



A great deal of graduate student learning takes place outside of the classroom or the context of an individual's own research. Reading groups, informal get-togethers, collaborative workshops, presentations by invited guests, and a number of other venues for intellectual exploration are all a vital part of intellectual life at the University of Michigan. Graduate students in American Culture drive many of these initiatives. Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshops, for instance, receive financial support from the Rackham Graduate School to purchase reading materials, host speakers, and sponsor other programming. American Culture PhD students are involved in coordinating diverse groups, such as the Settler-Colonial Reading Group, the Black Humanities Collective, the Deleuze Interest Group, the Border Collective, the Visual Culture Workshop, and the American Indian Studies Interdisciplinary Group. The interdisciplinary orientation of American studies means that one is likely to find American Culture PhDs in a wide array of such spaces at the University of Michigan where questions of culture, power, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and history come together.

DO YOU HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A GRADUATE STUDENT IN THE DEPARTMENT? IF SO, NEVER HESITATE TO [SHOOT OVER AN EMAIL](#) OR TO PAY THE DEPARTMENT A VISIT!



“[THE FORMAT OF THE CLASS] PROMOTES **ACTIVE, RATHER THAN PASSIVE LEARNING.”**



NEW FRONTIERS IN TEACHING THE HISTORY OF THE U.S. WEST



“IN AN INFORMATION SOCIETY, YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO TAKE INFORMATION, SYNTHESIZE IT, AND **ENGAGE WITH IT.”**



MICHAEL WITGEN COMBINES NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES AND TECHNOLOGY IN A UNIQUE CLASS THAT PREPARES STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE.

Professor Michael Witgen's class used to be a lecture like hundreds of other courses—until he decided to make a change. Now, AMCULT355: The History of the American West is a dynamic mix of traditional lecture, discussion, and online writing.

Students start in small groups where they explore their preliminary ideas about the week's topics. Groups then present their more developed ideas to the entire class. Witgen moderates the 60-person conversation. The unscripted format requires adaptability from Witgen and his students.

In line with the Department's commitment to technological innovation, Witgen uses internet resources to encourage students to develop versatility and critical thought in and out of the classroom. In lieu of a traditional final paper, students have the option of creating a Wiki. This format requires students to contribute their own thoughts rather than passively repeat names and dates; Witgen makes it clear that, just like a more traditional final project, the Wiki the student produces must form a cogent argument with a clear narrative. Students in Witgen's class learn to make original arguments in non-traditional ways, a skill becoming increasingly important in students' lives.

In every class, Witgen pushes students to deepen their understanding of the material and the world around them to prepare them to handle the varied challenges of post-college life. He name-checks Kim Kardashian and Daniel Boone in the same sentence, and the discussion of the New Deal spans decades and touches on three presidents' tenures and policies. He asks them one vital question again and again: “How would you map that to a parallel today?”

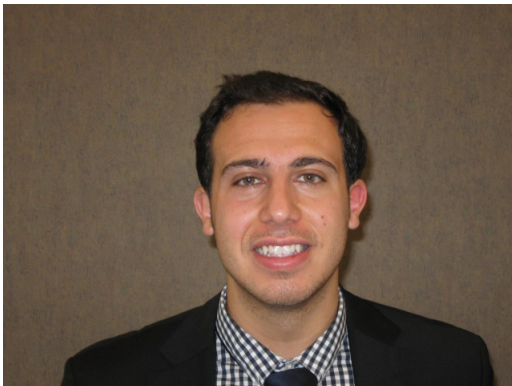
Learn more about Michael Witgen's flipped class [here](#) or watch an interview with him [here](#)!

INTERNSHIPS IN ARAB AMERICAN STUDIES

BY EVELYN ALSULTANY

The Department of American Culture has been partnering with a number of community organizations to offer internship opportunities since 2007. Arab American Studies students, in particular, have had the opportunity to explore career options that would draw on their Arab American Studies training, particularly in legal, social, and cultural professions, and the arts. Recently, the departments of American Culture and Near Eastern Studies formed a partnership to enhance these internship opportunities. One result of this new partnership is that students majoring in Arabic Language have the option to use their Arabic language skills at an internship placement. Internship opportunities are available at the [Arab American National Museum](#), the [Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services](#), the [Arab Studies Institute](#), the [Council on American-Islamic Relations](#), and the [Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project](#).

We asked two recent Michigan graduates to share their experiences of being an intern within Arab American Studies. Jaber Saad, who earned a BS in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience and a Certificate in Arab American Studies, interned at the Arab American National Museum. Caroline Logan, who earned a BA in Arabic, Armenian, Persian, Turkish, Islamic Studies (AAPTIS) and in International Security, Norms and Cooperation was an intern at the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS).



JABER SAAD

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN 2013

**BS BIOPSYCHOLOGY, COGNITION, AND NEUROSCIENCE
CERTIFICATE IN ARAB AMERICAN STUDIES**

This past spring I interned at the Arab American National Museum (AANM) under the supervision of Matthew Stiffler, himself an American Culture Ph.D.

I never understood the importance of the AANM until I began my work as an intern. In a time when Arab Americans are stereotyped and broadly blamed for the actions of a few, the museum serves as a place to educate and enlighten people. Sometimes this is achieved through art or music, other times through educational tours, and other times just by meeting Arab Americans at the museum. In my time at the museum I saw mostly non-Arab Americans tour the exhibits. Some of these people have never met an Arab or Arab American, and now they were being given a tour by an Arab American. I believe the museum helps to humanize Arabs and Arab Americans in the eyes of people who may only see Arabs or Arab Americans on the news or in movies.

My main tasks included commenting on and editing a journalist's guide to Arab Americans and being trained as a tour guide at the museum. One of my favorite tasks at the AANM was working on StoryCorps, a non-profit organization that records, stores, and shares stories of Americans from all over the country. The museum recorded stories of Arab Americans over the past few years. My job was to take these [\(cont.\)](#)

stories and condense them into 5-6 minute sound clips that could be uploaded to the [museum's website dedicated to battling Arab Stereotypes](#). This gave me the opportunity to hear the amazing stories of Arab Americans from around the community. I believe that there is great power in storytelling; this project showed a shared sense of humanity that cuts across racial or national lines. Interning at the AANM was an extremely rewarding and enlightening experience. This internship introduced me to a great resource and beacon of light in the Detroit community that is actively working for the betterment of Arab American lives.



CAROLINE LOGAN

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN 2013

BA ARABIC, ARMENIAN, PERSIAN, TURKISH, ISLAMIC STUDIES

BA INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, NORMS AND COOPERATION

Through my internship with the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), I gained valuable insight into the Arab American community in the tri-county Detroit area while also learning about the inner-workings of the country's largest Arab American human services non-profit.

This internship provided me with multiple opportunities to use the Arabic language I had studied at the University of Michigan in a practical context, which in turn provided additional motivation to hone and develop my linguistic skills. In addition, I gained important work experience in the field that I have since pursued post graduation—I now work for the United Nation Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Jerusalem.

Interning with ACCESS was both challenging and exciting; ACCESS's programs have served more than 10,000 Iraqi refugees over the past decade through community, psychosocial and mental health services. I was fortunate to assist in one of these programs, the Ethnic Community Self-Help (ECSH) program. This important effort assists refugees through offering comprehensive services to help heal physical and emotional wounds, restore a sense of humanity and successfully integrate them into a new community.

One of my main tasks involved carrying out a needs-assessment for Iraqi refugees in the tri-county Detroit area. In this, I was able to help design and carry out a series of focus groups, which gave me the opportunity to interact directly with the beneficiaries, primarily refugees resettled from Iraq. Hearing their concerns, struggles and opinions enlightened me to the vast challenges faced by forced migrants and refugees even after gaining asylum in the United States. Moreover, I was tasked with analyzing and interpreting this feedback in order to better target the organization's funding and energy in the most efficient manner.

During my work with the ECSH program, I gained important hands-on experience in working with new immigrants and was able to use my Arabic language skills to facilitate communication and program implementation. More than that, however, by speaking Arabic (albeit imperfectly), I provided the friendly, welcoming face that those who seek refuge in the US both appreciate and deserve.

I am immensely grateful to the Arab and Muslim American Studies Program and the Department of American Culture for creating this opportunity. Along with the Arabic Flagship Program at the University of Michigan, Arab American Studies was vital to my experience. I would highly encourage future students to take advantages of such opportunities.

LATINA/O ARTS AND CULTURES



(L-R) Alex Stern, Ashley Lucas, and Anita González

Earlier this year, Latina/o Studies core faculty member Alex Stern sat down with Anita González and Ashley Lucas, who recently joined the program as Latina/o Studies faculty associates, to learn more about their exciting projects in Latina/o arts, theater, and performance. Here are some excerpts from that conversation.

What projects have you brought with you to campus?

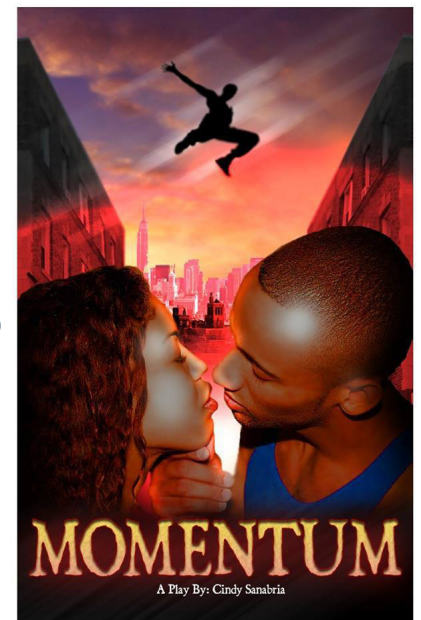
Anita González: I think the biggest thing I'm here to do is to start a new minor in global theater and ethnic studies. I'm transforming a minor program that was in African American studies. The new minor is a series of seven courses that brings together practice and literary analysis. As for what I want to do with Latina/o studies: I've done a lot of work in Latin America with a few Fulbrights, and I want to develop a play series as a part of the global theater minor. The performance project I'm working on right now is staging a piece for the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater called *Momentum* by Cindy Sanabria, which is about youth, parkour, and homelessness.

In general I'd like for next year to focus more on Latino studies—it's a passion for me. The minor in global studies is about the whole world. If I have to choose one part of the world to focus on, of course it's going to be Latina/o.

Ashley Lucas: My PhD work was primarily in Chicana/o theater and Latina/o theater more broadly. I'm very excited about the possibility of collaborating with Anita to bring Latina/o performers to the U.S., to campus to do a series of performances and workshops and lectures and other fabulous stuff that the campus would benefit from. I'm also here as the Director of the Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP), which is a program founded here at the U of M in 1990 by Professor Buzz Alexander. We train students to go into prisons and provide arts programming to people who otherwise wouldn't have access to it. It's not Latino focused, but we do have a number of remarkable Latino artists who are participating in our program and I'm hoping to expand that aspect of our work as I remain here.

AG: Both of us have programs that crossed over from the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance into the liberal arts and sciences. We're both interested in using theater practice to explore social activist issues and cultural issues. I think what's special about Latin America is that there's a lot of protest theater, political movements in contact with performance. There's a lot of work in Latin America that claims public space, forcing people to really engage with present social issues. I have a friend who works a lot with the favela communities on performances that are protests against police riots. Or the companies I work with—like a company in Honduras that uses banana workers to perform an alternative perspective. I think that in Latin America especially, we're often tied to social activism, even with contemporary arts.

AL: Absolutely. And one of the reasons why the arts are such a powerful social organizing tool anywhere, and particularly in the ways that Latin America and Latinos in the U.S. have used them, is that you can start really difficult conversations by using the arts as entrée into those difficult arenas. (cont.)



Promotional poster for *Momentum*



Artwork from the PCAP Exhibition
Belly of the Beast by Omar Brand

How do you mix and match different types of expression or performance, and how do you think about that kind of onstage performance?

AL: We both do some work with the digital humanities in addition to the live theater; or as part of the live theater sometimes. I'm actually working with a former prisoner who did PCAP programming while he was locked up and has now been out for about three years, and he has a fellowship through the MIT digital media lab to create an interactive website that would use the art produced in our PCAP workshops, including performances, as a way of opening up conversations about restorative justice and reconciliation and atonement through the internet.

AG: I have a pending grant for a project, and it's about having students recreate historical performances in order to create video clips that they can then upload into a digital tool for public access. But I think that the thing that you're saying about live performances versus mediated performances is that, especially if you're doing social issues, there has to be dialogue and discussion. It can't really happen in a mediated form. I mean even now, we're talking, but we're on camera; that's different. The kind

of live performances that we do produce a gut reaction, making people think about the problems presented in the play. I think there is a special place, always, for live theater.

What is it like working with students here?

AL: I think it's a critical moment [for social justice] not just on this campus, but everywhere. The cost of higher ed is outrageous, and my students are very concerned about the fact that they're looking at the composition of all their other classes and wondering—who have we shut out here? And the students in the PCAP are bridging a huge divide between what their lives are like here on campus, even the more underprivileged students, and going into the prisons and into the juvenile detention centers—well, our students can't change that reality, but they can create meaningful experiences and a sense of community, and perhaps even a sense of hope that there's something else waiting.

I had a really painful conversation with the students in my documentary theater class about the fact that all of them, at some point in their careers at Michigan, had felt like somebody was trying to weed them out of at least one of their classes. And it makes me wonder, what are we doing if that's the message we're sending to our students at any point, in any class in their college careers? That we admitted you, we thought you were good enough to come here, but we're going to try to weed you out of this major, this program, whatever. And it's antithetical to how we work in theater where we always have smaller classes that we're really invested in.

AG: But I had to think about that too, because I went to the provost forum about engaged learning and digital methodologies, and it was a really interesting conversation, because—well, first, I had a lot to say, based on my experience, and then I realized that we really aren't dealing with the same population. They had classes of 1200. Advocating for engaged learning in a class of 1200 or 200 is really different from classes with five students and eight students. I mean, we have really small classes. Also, I think there's a huge difference between the conservatory and the liberal arts and science school in terms of how people think about what a class is. So I think a lot of the issue is bridging the ways that people do education across the school.

Although I have taught online and it was actually pretty successful. Students learn on the web, but they were classes of 20. So, how do you upscale it? How do you upscale engaged learning? I don't have an answer for that yet.

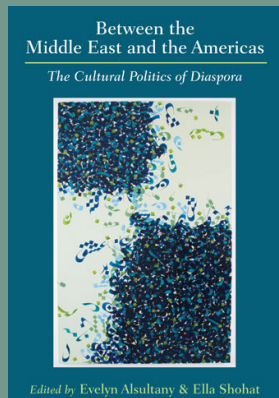
AL: But on a certain level, engagement is about the individual attention that we give our students, and that our students can give themselves by being in community with other people they normally wouldn't be in contact with.

AG: You know what would be cool? If people are interested in issue-based work, to have play readings—paired play readings and discussion around issues. I bet we could find a play on almost any issue. Like if you wanted to do environment, if you want to do police brutality, if you want to do uprising—there're plays about this. So it'd be interesting to have readings around social issues.

AL: I just think more work in performance and the arts generally speaking would be awesome and we could easily bring people in; we could do an exhibition of some of the Latino artists from different creative arts project. There are all sorts of great ways we could move more into acting and arts activity.

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

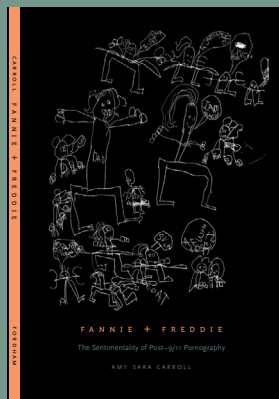
THE PAST SIX MONTHS HAVE SEEN FOUR INCREDIBLE RELEASES FROM OUR FACULTY!



Evelyn Alsultany

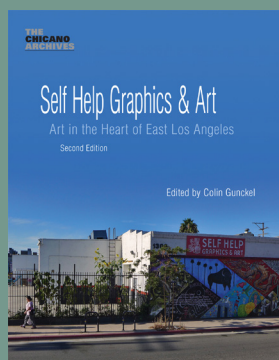
(Co-edited with Ella Shohat)

*Between the Middle East and the Americas:
The Cultural Politics of Diaspora*



Amy Sara Carroll

*Fannie + Freddie: The Sentimentality
of Post-9/11 Pornography*



Colin Gunckel

*Self Help Graphics & Art:
Art in the Heart of East Los Angeles*



Larry La Fountain-Stokes

Abolición del pato

AWARDS

SEVERAL DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS YEAR!



Rabia Belt

Graduate Student

2013 Gene Wise-Warren Susman Prize

The Gene Wise - Warren Susman Prize is awarded each year for the best paper presented by a graduate student at the annual American Studies Association's meeting. Her prizewinning paper is entitled "What Does Citizenship Mean for People with Mental Disabilities?"



Scott Lyons

Associate Professor and Hunting Family Fellow

2014 Henry Russel Award

Department of American Culture and Native American Studies Program Professor Scott Lyons was recognized for his scholarly research and creativity, and his excellent record of contribution as a teacher.



Magdalena Zaborowska

Professor

Michigan Humanities Award

This award is given to LSA tenured, full-time faculty engaged in major scholarly and creative projects in the humanities and interpretive social sciences. This award will allow Professor Zaborowska to pursue a scholarly project.

THE JOEL S. SIEGEL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Each academic year, two scholarships are awarded to American Culture undergraduate students who show outstanding merit and also have financial need. Congratulations to Nicole García and Erica Gehringer!

Nicole García

Nicole García will be graduating this year with a major in American Culture in Latina/o Studies. She has been well known within our department as a serious, ambitious, and committed student. For the past two years, she has served as the undergraduate representative on our Latina/o Studies Advisory Board. Nicole's ultimate goal is to earn a Masters degree in health behavior and health education. She will then take that training to improve access to preventative screenings for cancer for low-income Latino communities. Nicole really represents what an American Culture education can do for a student interested in health and science.

Erica Gehringer

Erica has enjoyed a long and direct engagement with our Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies Program. Currently, she is hard at work on a rigorous senior thesis on transnational and transracial adoption. Upon graduation, Erica plans to continue with that interest by pursuing a joint PhD and Master's of Social work. She hopes to devote her career to working with the adoption community. Erica, we have no doubt, will go far in a career in Social Work. Her time in American Culture has given her a deeper appreciation of her own experiences and a wider view that will serve the many families she will help in the future.

RECAP

Most of what we have accomplished this year has been directed toward making American Culture the leader of a new liberal arts education. As you might imagine, though, the Department regularly takes stock of its past accomplishments and the changes it has witnessed over many decades. Indeed, the past year has given us opportunities to reflect with some nostalgia. As Chair June Howard mentioned in her letter, the careful investigation of an erstwhile graduate student revealed that we actually have a longer history than we first imagined. It is a bit embarrassing, we admit, that a department filled with professional historians could get the date so wrong! Nonetheless, we have taken the revelation as a new source of pride. More than one hallway conversation has centered on just how much American Culture has changed since FDR was in the White House. We have contemplated the logics of that first program that put courses in English and history together with courses on forestry. Such decisions made sense given the economic and political climate of the era. Decades later, American Culture again adapted to changes that gripped the nation. We are proud that we became the first home for Women's Studies at the University before it launched as a program, then department, in its own right forty years ago. So, also, three decades ago American Culture answered the call from students to bring organized ethnic studies curricula to this campus. Over the past year, we witnessed our campus engage in lively debates about international policies, a renewed activism among students, and a joint effort among faculty and staff to keep our campus a fair place to work. Through it all, American Culture's students and faculty have continued to provide leadership, perspective, and support for change on our campus just as our predecessors did before us.

This year also marked Gregory Dowd's last semester as Chair of the Department. We enthusiastically welcome June Howard and her dynamic energy, but we also pay respect to Greg's many accomplishments in his six-and-a-half years as the caretaker of our many programs. Under his stewardship, the Department revamped both its graduate and undergraduate programs. He also oversaw 31 hires and promotions of faculty. That is an average of five per year! That hard work more than doubled the percentage of underrepresented minority faculty in our department. Since most of these professors have joint appointments, American Culture's successes in hiring and promotions have been felt across LSA. We wish Greg well as he returns to his regular duties of teaching and research in American Culture, Native American Studies, and the History Department.

Greg has left the Department's future in good hands. June arrives with an unusual combination of long administrative memory and an eye towards innovation. In addition to her many academic honors as a literary historian, June holds an Arthur F. Thurnau Professorship. This is the University's highest honor recognizing tenured faculty who have an exceptional record of undergraduate engagement and commitment to their intellectual development. In addition to having previously served as the Director of American Culture, she has a wide range of administrative experience, including time as the Humanities Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Initiatives in the Rackham Graduate School. This is a powerhouse combination that promises that American Culture's undergraduate and graduate programs will thrive under her leadership.

To close this letter, I will note that graduation nears. We always become wistful that our brilliant seniors will soon be departing to start their own careers. We think of students like Ari Weinberg, who is about to complete a fantastic Honors Thesis on race and gender in nineteenth-century musical lyrics. We are proud of students like Nicole García, who plans a career in public health, and Abraham Liddell, who is contemplating a longer career in academia. I want to close by praising all of the many great students, including Ari, Abraham, and Nicole, who keep American Culture alive with energy and push us to be at our best. Hopefully they, and you, will return to Ann Arbor in two years for the Department's major celebration of its 80th anniversary.

Sincerely,
Anthony Mora
Associate Chair