

THE AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALIST

WILLIAM AND MARY AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER VOL. 3 FALL 2012

ACADEMIC BENCHMARKS IN AMERICAN STUDIES AT W&M

JAN HÜBENTHAL

ASGSO is very pleased to announce that the following students have achieved academic benchmarks and milestones this semester, and we would be remiss not to acknowledge them here:

- **Christian Wilbers** presented his paper “Race and Trans-Nationalism in German America: The ‘Horror on the Rhine Mass Meeting’” at the 17th Annual Focus on German Studies Conference of the Max Kade German Cultural Center in Cincinnati, OH, in October 2012.
- In October 2012, **David Camak Pratt** passed his comprehensive exams.
- **Lita Tirak** presented her paper “The X-ray Lady: Look Through Me Please” at the Northeast Popular Culture/ American Culture Association at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY, in October 2012. Lita is also curating “X-RA*DI*ANCE: An Exhibition,” which will have its opening reception at the Linda Matney Gallery in Williamsburg, February 10th, 2013, 2pm-6pm and will run through April 13th.
- In October 2012, **Janine Yorimoto** defended her M.A Thesis, “‘To draw pleasure and instruction’: Robert Gilmore, Jr. and Collecting the Early Republic.”
- In November 2012, **Jan Hübenthal** defended his M.A. Thesis, “‘Quick! Do Something Manly!’ – The Super Bowl as an American Spectacle of Hegemonic Masculinity, Violence, and Nationalism.”
- **Meghan Bryant** served as on-site curator for the exhibition, “African American Art: Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Era, and Beyond,” which opened at the Muscarelle Museum of Art on September 28th, 2012.
- In September 2012, **Sarah Stanford** presented her paper, “The Eyes of Texas are Upon You’ Walker Texas Ranger and the Revisionist Western”

THIRD ISSUE

On behalf of the American Graduate Student Organization (ASGSO), we welcome you to the third edition of *The American Exceptionalist*. The newsletter presents student perspectives on program news to keep alumni informed, current students involved, and prospective students interested in our program. We hope you enjoy this issue and we welcome your feedback.

Thank you for reading.

JAN HÜBENTHAL
ASGSO SOCIAL CHAIR
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

at the *Film and History Annual Conference* in Milwaukee, WI.

- **Ed Hunt** had his article, “US Government Computer Penetration and the Implications for Cyberwar” published in *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 34, no. 3 (July-Sept. 2012): 4-21.

NEW FACES I: MICHELLE LELIÈVRE

STEPHANIE MAGUIRE



Michelle Lelièvre, Assistant Professor of Anthropology & American Studies

Can you tell me about your academic career? Where did you study, what did you study?

It's kind of a long and winding road. As an undergrad I studied at McGill University in Montreal. I went in wanting to do political science and economics and changed my mind right away almost. I ended up doing a joint honors program in anthropology and classical archaeology, which was in the art history department. Immediately after that I did a one-year master's program at the University of Cambridge in archaeology. That program has three different strings -- one in Archaeological Science, one in World Archaeology, and another in Archaeological Heritage and Museums. I did [Archaeological

Heritage and Museums]. It looked at things like the politics of the past, cultural resource management, and museum exhibitions. Then I came back to Canada and worked as a curator at a provincial museum in Nova Scotia for two or so years. I applied to do my PhD at that point and was happily accepted at the University of Chicago. I finished this past spring and now I'm here, and I'm very excited to be here.

Well how do you like Williamsburg so far? Do you live in Williamsburg?

I do, I live very close by. It's been a bit of an adjustment from Chicago, but I really enjoy the green space and being so close to campus is really helpful.

What are some of the current research projects you're working on?

There are actually quite a few loose ends from my dissertation that I really want to follow up on. My project was focused on a small island in Nova Scotia that's part of the reserved land of a group of Mi'kmaq, a First Nations people that I work with. I looked at that place very intently and some of the things that came out of my dissertation were how their social relationships on the island extend out beyond the island to other Mi'kmaq communities. That's something I'd like to follow up on, so that would

involve some ethnographic work and possibly some archival research as well. Another thing that I wrote about in the dissertation was a phenomenon of Mi'kmaq people participating in the trade of archaeological artifacts. They would go to known archaeological sites and excavate artifacts and sell them either through middle people or directly to curators or private collectors in the area. I made this argument in my dissertation that this is part of one of many different types of mobile activity that helped Mi'kmaq make a claim to sovereignty over their land. Even though they no longer legally had access to these places, they continue to visit them over long periods of time to do different things. So, I sketched the contours of that and I want to investigate that more closely.

If you had to choose only one junk food to eat for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Swedish Fish. I mean, that's real junk food. I have a sweet tooth, but I categorize baked things differently than junk food. I'm a bit of a connoisseur of cookies, and you can't really be a connoisseur of Swedish fish.



NEW FACES II: ALAN BRADDOCK

FRANK FUCILE



Alan Braddock, Ralph H. Wark Associate Professor of Art History & American Studies

Dr. Braddock grew up in Iowa City and attended Grinnell College before going on to study at Johns Hopkins, the University of Maryland, and the University of Delaware. He has held fellowships and residencies at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, and Harvard. His dissertation and first book were on Philadelphia artist Thomas Eakins, and his fields of expertise include American art history, ecocriticism, and museum history.

What does American Studies mean to you?

I’m an art historian, but as an Americanist, I’m accustomed to thinking in interdisciplinary terms. When I was first beginning to explore ecocriticism and the relevance of

environmental history to a new kind of art history that I wanted to write, I proposed a conference on this to the College Art Association. They rejected my proposal, so I resubmitted my proposal the next year to the American Studies Association, which promptly accepted it, and that turned into a book, *A Keener Perception: Ecocritical Studies in American Art History*, which is one of the first of its kind. I have American Studies to thank for making that possible. There’s still a bit of a glass ceiling in Art History for this eco-critical discourse, and I’m hoping to crack that.

What kind of research are you doing now?

I have a book project in progress called *Gun Vision: The Ballistic Imagination in American Art*. It’s a kind of pre-history of the avant-garde, which explores the ways the gun provided a technological model for artists to reimagine the effects of a work of art as being instantaneous and dynamic.

Is there one book you think every graduate student should read?

I think Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* stands out for me. The way he brings creative work, like poetry and literature, into conversation with the history of warfare is still a great model for interdisciplinary cultural studies.

Would you like to say something about vegetarianism?

I’ve been a vegetarian for ten years now. It’s a health issue, but it’s also an environmental issue and an ethical challenge that relates not just to how we treat animals but how we treat ourselves. By no means are my hands clean. By no means have I purified myself by becoming a vegetarian. But I do think that it’s a kind of ethical act that is important and I’m happy to have undertaken.

Do you have a favorite Pixies song?

By far, “Bone Machine.” It’s the first song of theirs I ever heard, and I just can’t resist that song. I’m not even quite sure what it’s about. I can *imagine* what it’s about. I played “Monkey Gone to Heaven” in class because environmental issues were clearly on their radar by the 1980s.



PARTY AMSTAM STYLE!

JAN HÜBENTHAL

Every now and then, even the most studious of graduate students must take a break from the books. This semester, we had the great pleasure of putting together a few events to alleviate the stress of grad school and party it up, Amstam Syle!

To kick off the new academic year, we congregated at Professor Maureen Fitzgerald's house for our annual **Year Opener Party**. In spite of less-than-ideal weather conditions, a great time was had by all! Special thanks to Professors Leisa Meyer, Chandos Brown, and Arthur Knight for grilling hamburgers in the rain. What troopers!

Our annual **Halloween Party**, hosted at Chez Stamanda, the mansion of our very own Sarah Stanford and Amanda Stuckey, was a smashing success! The festivities were attended by many V.I.P.'s such as Annie Leibovitz, Susan Sontag, and Steve Jobs. (Too soon? Nah!) We were also delighted to welcome Clippy, the annoying paper clip of Microsoft Word fame, and two Tetris puzzle pieces.



If for nothing else, ASGSO is known for its singing chops. Madonna, Will Smith, and all the other "famous" singers got nothin' on us! One fine October evening, we gathered at the ever-charming Hospitality House for **Karaoke** and general merry-making. Touching renditions of classics like "The Prince of Bel-Air" and "Like a Virgin" brought tears to the eyes of all onlookers. (Tears of joy, of course. Jeez!)

This semester concludes my tenure as ASGSO's Social Chair. With the gregarious Janine Yorimoto taking the reins in the spring, American Studies is sure to see many more exciting outings and events next semester!



ASGSO HOSTS FALL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

SARAH STANFORD

This fall ASGSO hosted the first of several graduate student professional development workshops. At these events, grad students were able to gain important real-world advice from seasoned faculty.

The first workshop, held in College Apartments Room 5, featured Professors Kara Thompson, Alan Braddock and Hiroshi Kitamura speaking on the ins-and-outs of the **academic publishing** process. The event opened with Prof. Thompson offering some general advice about publishing and provided insight into the process of moving a project from a seminar paper to a journal article. Prof. Kitamura offered encouragement to discouraged potential publishers. He also suggested book reviews as a good way to begin the publishing process, with a quick review article providing great networking potential. Prof. Braddock provided a list of promising publication venues and spoke about common hurdles when using visuals in journal articles.

A second workshop was held in conjunction with the History Graduate Student Association (HGSA) in the Cohen Career Center. Designed to give students information and tips about the **grant writing** process, the workshop featured three professors from the history and anthropology departments. All three gave an extensive list of potential grant sources and provided advice about successful grant applications.

Students were advised to begin grant applications well in advance with the understanding that project ideas can evolve during the writing process. Applications should be designed with the granting organization in mind and jargon should be tailored to the applicable discipline. After applying students should seek feedback from the granting organization.

Transcripts of these workshops, as well as copies of all handouts will be made available on the American Studies Blackboard site by the end of the semester.

ASGSO would like to offer many thanks to the faculty and graduate students who donated their time and knowledge to make these events a success. We are currently planning the spring workshop schedule and any programming suggestions or advice is much appreciated. Please contact Sarah Stanford-McIntyre at ssstanfordmcin@email.wm.edu with any comments.



**WILLIAM & MARY
AMERICAN STUDIES**

© Zoey Larson

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you to all contributors and special thanks to Neeve Kelly for creating the layout and providing editorial assistance.