

american studies

Newsletter

Spring 2011

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Note From the Chair

Dr. Alex Lubin

2010-2011 has been a productive and busy year for the Department. Although we have faced a serious budget crisis at UNM, requiring departments to consider and take significant budgetary cuts during the year, the American Studies Department weathered the financial storm and even built on areas of excellence.

Allow me to highlight a few areas I think are especially exciting.



1) International American Studies. As the discipline of American Studies grows internationally, with new Departments emerging throughout Europe, the Middle East, and China, UNM's Department has begun the process of thinking through what this means in Albuquerque. We have long been interested in how the world shaped local and regional cultures. But we are increasingly interested in building international connections with scholars and programs abroad. To that end, last summer I traveled to Shanghai, China to discuss an exchange agreement with Shanghai International Studies University. This year, the Department hosted a Fulbright Visiting Scholar from Algeria, Kebir Mustapha Ammi. We also hosted a graduate student from Shanghai, named Lin Sun. Beginning this summer, American Studies affiliated faculty, Peter White, will teach a UNM Summer graduate course in Graz, Austria. In the coming years, we will continue to think about how we can best engage American Studies globally.

As soon as graduation ends, I, along with UNM Anthropology Professor, Les Field, will be leading a group of 18 graduate and undergraduate students to Israel/Palestine for a 10-day field school. The goal of the class is to understand the roots of the conflict as well as to document the various ways that different groups in the region make meaning out of the conflict. We will travel throughout the occupied territories and Israel in order to see all that we have been studying in the weeks leading to the trip. The class is evenly divided between American Studies and Anthropology students and it is also evenly divided between graduate and undergraduate students. American Studies has participated in past Field Schools to Mexico, but this is the first American Studies Field School outside of the Americas.

2) Department recognition and student success. This year the National Research Council (NRC) released long-awaited data on doctoral student rankings. For the first time, American Studies doctoral programs were included in the rankings. There will be ongoing scholarly debate about the utility and accuracy of the rankings. While I don't want to invest too much meaning into statistical measures of graduate programs, I do want to draw attention to the fact that American Studies received the highest ranking, in one measure, of any PhD program at UNM. In one statistical measure we rank fifth in the nation, placing UNM's program in the top-25% nationally.

In addition to the excellent outcome of the NRC rankings, we also witnessed clear outcomes of our admissions and graduate education mission with the success of many of our graduate students this year. As you will see in this newsletter, two American Studies PhDs won the prestigious Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship. Only 40 awards were granted nationally. In addition, American Studies graduate students found placements in a tenure track job at UNM, a post-doc at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, and in staff positions at the University of Florida and Brown University. In addition, one of our graduate students won the outstanding TA of the year award. These accomplishments are due to the hard work of our students; but I hope they are also a reflection of the level of talent we attract to our graduate program.

3) Faculty hiring. Any Department Chair will tell you that hiring new faculty is a priority. This is especially true in the case of American Studies at UNM, which is a small program. I'm pleased to report that we have been able to fill a vacancy in the area of Environment, Science, and Technology. We hired, Dr. David Correia, who has published widely and has been teaching as a visiting professor for the last year. There may be additional joint-hires forthcoming by the time Fall 2011 begins.

On a personal note, I am grateful to my colleagues for working collaboratively as we dealt with the budget crisis. I am taking a two-year leave of absence from UNM beginning this Fall. My family and I are moving to Beirut, Lebanon, where I will direct the Alwaleed bin Talal Center for American Studies and Research at the American University of Beirut. This experience will be personally and intellectually enriching. I look forward to witnessing the "Arab Spring" from Beirut, and I hope that my book, *Liberation Geographies* is in bookstores in the next year or two.

Dr. Amy Brandzel

This has been an interesting, if not challenging, year at UNM. On a personal level, I've continued to maneuver through the recurring body pain as a result of breast cancer treatment, learning first-hand how much our society closes off from the health disparities and pain that folks endure on a daily basis. Yet I'm pleased to report that, despite all of the budget cuts and so-called "crisis" at UNM, the gender and sexuality studies programs have continued to grow in the past year. Thanks to the new LGBTQ Resource Center, the Women Studies program, and queer graduate student activists in American Studies, we've started laying the groundwork for a Queer Studies undergrad minor, and hopefully a PhD minor as well. No doubt American Studies will play an extremely important role, as our classes in sexuality and gender studies continue to bring in students from throughout the University. I've also been especially fortunate to participate in the Postcolonial Queer Studies Reading Group, and while we all struggle to make time for the group, it is nothing less than an inspiring and fun opportunity to connect with like-minded American Studies folks. I've had the pleasure of teaching our Sexuality and Culture course (soon to be renamed "The Politics of Sex,") and a graduate seminar on Feminist Methodologies this Spring. I've presented at two conferences this year, including the American Studies Association Conference in San Antonio (presenting a creative/theoretical piece on the gender trouble of breast cancer), and the Critical Ethnic Studies Conference in Riverside (presenting on queering Asian American Studies). And lastly, while I'll miss the students, I'm looking forward to cocooning this summer in order to finish my manuscript, *Against Citizenship: Queer Intersections and the Violence of the Normative*.



Dr. David Correia

As many of you already know, I have accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the department beginning the 2011-12 academic year. For the past year I have served as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the department and I look forward to making this temporary position permanent. While securing the position makes this a very good year, I am also pleased to be nearing the completion of a book I have been working on for the past three years. The book traces the colonial histories and contemporary struggles over nature and property in northern New Mexico. In addition I have begun work on a new project that seeks to examine what I call *bourgeois primitivism*. In this work, I am interested to understand the shifting terrain of environmental politics in terms of its implications for environmental justice scholarship and activism. Environmental justice politics has ceded ground, or perhaps more accurately, has been undermined, by a politics of consumption that has come to dominate liberal, green politics. What's emerged is not a critical politics of nature and society, but rather one focused on consumer



subjectivities. This is the by now familiar bourgeois politics of “selling nature to save it.” This troubling logic suggests that we can somehow resolve intractable environmental problems and social and environmental inequality through our roles as consumers by making better consumer choices. While I challenge my students to scrutinize the logic of green capitalism and refuse to valorize the politics of nature as ultimately an atomized politics of consumer subjectivities, there are interesting political struggles around consumption that promise to inform environmental justice struggles broadly. Look for me around the department. I’ll be the one with the broad smile on my face.



Dr. Jennifer Denetdale

Jennifer Denetdale was off to a good start as new faculty in the American Studies. She began the 2010-11 school year with a reception to open the show, *Hastiin Ch’ilhajíni dóo Diné bi Naat’áanii Bahane’/Chief Manuelito & Navajo Leaders* on August 27th. As a guest curator for the Navajo Nation Museum, she worked with Clarendia Begay to create the exhibit, which is based upon her research on Diné leaders, government, and gender. Over the year, in addition to teaching courses in Native American Studies, including a graduate seminar on Native women, gender, and tradition, she also brought Native scholar Joanne Barker to UNM to share her new study on questions about Native peoples and questions of tradition and gender discrimination and in the spring of 2011, she worked with UNM West and Native students to host a day of Native filmmakers, including special guest Apache/Diné filmmaker Dustinn Craig. Craig shared his work in progress, “Apache Scouts,” which was a hit with the audience. Finally, the fast-paced two semesters brought forth enough opportunity and time to read over galleys for a Navajo history for young adults, to be published in July 2011, and complete two articles for publication and a book proposal for an anthology of Native feminisms.

Dr. Alyosha Goldstein

This year I have continued working with Julian Go (Sociology, Boston University) co-editing a book on comparative formations of U.S. colonialism.

We have all the contributor chapters in hand and are in the midst of the editorial process. During the fall, I presented a paper on “The Force of Disavowal: U.S. Political Prisoners and the Uses of Clemency” as part of a panel I organized for the American Studies Association annual meeting. This spring I had the opportunity to participate in the “Critical Ethnic Studies and the Future of Genocide,” University of California, Riverside. My brilliant colleague Jennifer Denetdale and I were on a panel together, and I spoke on “Eminent Domains, Sovereign Immunity, and Colonial Dispensation,” which examined the settler colonial conditions of property rights claims, Oneida Nation self-determination, and economic development in northwestern Wisconsin during the past decade. Several weeks later I was back in the Los Angeles area for UCLA’s

Critical Race Studies symposium on “Race and Sovereignty,” where I presented a paper entitled “Colonial Genealogies of Racial Difference and the Claims Resettlement Act of 2010.” This was an initial



foray into what I am now conceiving as my second book project. Specifically, I'm interested in the ways in which this legislation brings together, among other things, the egregious aftermath and present-day consequences of the 1887 General Allotment Act for American Indians, the future terms of indigenous water rights litigation in the western U.S., and the articulation of policies that contributed to dispossessing African American farmers in the post-Reconstruction South with U.S. colonialism and chattel slavery. In addition to expanding the aforementioned conference papers for journal submission, the summer and my sabbatical this fall will provide me with the time to do further research and writing for this book manuscript. Many thanks to Liza Minno Bloom for her work as my GA this year.

Dr. A Gabriel Meléndez



The recent flurry of superb accomplishments by the graduate students in the department has made all of us very proud. Seeing MA and PhD students succeed even in the wake of an economic downturn is the best recompense I can imagine receiving. My year was a fulfilling, rewarding endeavor and was especially busy last fall. In early October, I traveled to Valladolid, Spain with three other UNM colleagues to do a series of scholarly talks in conjunction with Miguel Gandert's photo-exhibit "Rutas en Cuerpo y Alma." Our travel to Spain was sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of State and the exhibit was hosted at the MUV (Museum of the University of Valladolid). Around this time my co-editor, Francisco Lomeli (UCSB) and I received word that our book, *The Writings of Eusebio Chacón* was slated to appear in the fall (2011) UNM Press catalogue. In November, I made two presentations at scholarly meetings in

Texas. The first was at the biannual meeting of the Recovering the U.S. Latino Literary Heritage Project and consisted of the roundtable titled "Eusebio Chacón: Prospecting the Landscape of una literatura nacional for MeXicanos in the United States," an event I organized with the John Nieto Phillips, Director of the Latino Research Center at the University of Indiana. A week later many of us attended ASA in San Antonio. My paper, "From Tejas to Taos: Critical Regionalism, Sociocultural Indices and Subjectivity in John Collier's Photographs of Mexican Americans," was part of a panel organized by Professor Michale Trujillo. In April, I participated in "Latino Literary Imagination Conference," a bi-regional meeting that took place in New Jersey at Rutgers University and in Albuquerque. My intervention was two-fold: first as writer for "Reflexiones del Corazón," an artist folio (with María Baca and Miguel Gandert) that was part of the exhibit "Text and Subtext: Latino Artists at the Tamarind Institute" (this work is still on display) and second with the presentation of a talk for the conference titled "On Chicano/a Life Narratives and Autobiographical Studies." This summer, in addition to, or perhaps as a consequence of tending my garden, I have determined to bring my book on the history of New Mexico Chicanos on film to completion. I think I've hit on the right title for manuscript. I'm calling it "Hidden Chicano/a Cinema in New Mexico," but I'm open to re-scripting this and other matters.

This spring, three PhD students under my direction defended their dissertations, and I am happy to say are all moving into new teaching and research areas. Adam Bubb will continue to do Service Learning classes at UCLA, Eric Castillo has accepted a position as Assistant Director for Multicultural and Diversity Affairs at the University of Florida at Gainesville, and Karen Roybal has received a Post Doctoral Fellowship in the Department of Latina/o Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Starting this summer I will step into the job of Interim Chair of the department. This work will limit my teaching to one course per semester. In the fall I will offer my Seminar in Cultural Autobiography and Life Narratives.” Please look for it in the fall line up of classes. Hope everyone has a great summer!

Dr. Rebecca Schreiber

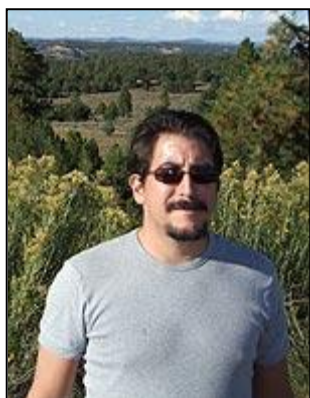
This year has been a busy one! In addition to my role as Director of Undergraduate Studies within the American Studies Department, I’ve served as a member of the working group for the “Latino Literary Imagination” Conference, a collaborative event planned at both UNM and Rutgers. The UNM portion of the conference took place April 14-16, 2011. In addition to my involvement in the working group, I served as a moderator on the “Visual Cultures and Visual Imaginaries” panel, which also included Holly Barnett-Sanchez, Tey Marianna Nunn, Elena Baca and Goldie Garcia.



At the ASA conference this fall in Baltimore, Leigh Raiford (UC Berkeley) and I organized a panel on “Race and the Politics of Visual Representation.” As part of the panel, I presented a paper entitled “Confronting Regimes of Legality in ‘Sanctuary City/Ciudad Santuario, 1989-2009,’” which focused on the work of artist Sergio De La Torre. I gave a lengthier version of the paper at a talk at UC Riverside in March, which was sponsored by UCR’s Public History Program in collaboration with the UCR Center for Ideas and Society (Immigration Research Group), the Culver Center for the Arts, and the Media and Cultural Studies Department. I also submitted the paper to *Radical History Review* for their upcoming fall issue “Calling the Law into Question: Confronting the Illegal and Illicit in Public Arenas.” This paper will comprise part of a chapter within my book *Migrant Lives and the Promise of Documentation*. Another section of the book will appear as “The Promise of Documentation: Migrant Labor, Self-Representation and the Place of Pictures,” in the collection *Feeling Photography*, which is edited by Elspeth Brown and Thy Phu and is forthcoming from Duke University Press.

In terms of professional service, this year I served as a manuscript reviewer for University of Minnesota Press, Rutgers University Press, as well as for the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*.

Dr. Michael L. Trujillo



I am currently developing a new research project that possesses (1) a theoretical/methodological focus in Critical Regionalism, (2) a geographic focus in both Ciudad Juárez, and (3) continues my interest in ethnographic representation. I plan a book project focused on US and Latin America representations of Ciudad Juárez. It is tentatively titled “City of Violence: Ciudad Juárez in the US and Latin American Imagination, 1994-2011.” That research included a month of first hand observation in Ciudad Juárez in summer 2010. In preparation for this larger project, I am drafting an article tentatively titled “America Profunda: Compelling Symmetries, Critical Regionalism, and Hemispheric American Studies.” This article examines the curious symmetries of two US and two Latin American representations of highly divergent regional/national cultures. I explore the significance of regional specificity and global forces in equal measure and, thus, perform a methodological intervention into common American Studies depictions of

the regional and/or transnational. I am preparing to write an article focused on two fictional mystery novels that depict the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez. One of those novels is written by a US-based Chicana academic and the other by a renowned Latin American writer. Both authors write in explicit dialogue with nonfiction accounts. Finally, my interest in New Mexico continues. As you know, my book *The Land of Disenchantment: Latina/o Identities and Transformations in Northern New Mexico* was released in 2010 and it explored issues of identity and ethnographic representation in New Mexico. Much of my Ciudad Juárez research has a comparative component that enriches my understanding of Nuevomexicano experience.

Congratulations to 2011 Graduates

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Adam Bubb (Spring) “Cashing in on Indian Casinos: The Impacts of Off-Reservation Casinos on Surrounding Communities, Reservations, Tribal Identities, Sovereignty, and the Gaming Industry”

Eric Castillo (Summer) “Expressions of Another Center: Borderlands Visual Theory and the Art of Luis Jiménez”

Melanie Cattrell (Summer) “Gendered Crimes, Gendered Fans: Intersections of Gender, Sexuality and Fandom in the Contemporary American Television Crime Drama”

William Dewan (Fall) *Graduating with distinction*, “Occam’s Beard: Belief, Disbelief, and Contested Meanings in American Ufology”

Patricia Perea (Fall) “Ghostly I(s)/Eyes: The Formation of Mexican American Subjectivity in Life Narrative”

Jeremy Ricketts (Spring) *Graduating with distinction* “Imagining the Saints: Representations of Mormonism in American Culture”

Karen Roybal (Summer) “Land, Politics, and Identity Formation: Uncovering Hispana/Mexicana Voices in the Southwest”

Carmen Samora (Summer) *Graduating with distinction* “Los Tres Grandes, Herman Gallegos, Ernesto Galarza, Julian Samora: Rooted in Community, Guided by Friendship, Cultivating Leadership”

MASTER OF ARTS

Christina Juhasz-Wood (Summer) “Assembling the Poor People’s Campaign (1968): Queer Activism and Economic Justice”

Bianca Paiz (Spring) Comprehensive Exam

Summer Ward (Fall) Comprehensive Exam

Ivan Weber (Spring) *Graduating with distinction* “Miniature Nation Building: Model Rail Roading and the Dialectics of Scale in Post WWII America”

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Renee Chavez (Fall)

Danielle Griego (Spring)

Carmel Romero (Summer)

Ephraim Colbert (Summer)

Annette Lujan (Fall)

Megan Willoughby (Fall)

Melissa Finch (Spring)

Andrea Maestas (Spring)

Christyna Valdez (Spring)

Undergraduate Student News

From the Undergraduate Director, Rebecca Schreiber

Congratulations to the undergraduate senior American Studies majors who wrote theses this spring -- Beverly Akin, Ephraim Colbert, Samuel Gilbert, Danielle Griego, Samantha Luna, Roxanna Momeni, and Deadra Wright. Two of these students -- Danielle Griego and Beverly Akin -- wrote honors theses with faculty mentors in the Department. All of the students (as well as Teresa Marquez) presented their work as part of the Senior and Honors Thesis symposia held on April 25th at the SUB. While we do not have honors funds from the College this year for an Honors Thesis Prize, we will be awarding the Constance Shortlidge prize for excellence in undergraduate studies at the American Studies Department's convocation on Saturday, May 14 to Roxanna Momeni. I'd like to congratulate all of our graduating seniors!



As DUS this year, I promoted the American Studies major and minor in AMST 100 level classes. I would like to thank Eileen Shaughnessy and Lara Hayner who worked with me this year to outreach to AMST 100-level classes regarding the American Studies major and minor. Lara also developed an electronic brochure that was forwarded to students in AMST 100-level online classes. This year I've also worked on our outcomes assessment report for the American Studies undergraduate program.

Beverly Akin, *Running Out the Clock: The Place of Athletics vs. Academics in the University's Mission*

Ephraim Colbert, *Spike Lee's Influence on Afro-Brazilian Cinema*

Samuel Gilbert, *Contemporary Roots: African Diasporic Consciousness in U.S. Virgin Islands Music*

Danielle Griego, *"The Curious Otherness of Taos": A Romantic's Destination*

Samantha Luna, *An Opportunity for Success: Undocumented Students' Pursuit of Higher Education*

Roxanna Momeni, *"Voiceless" Voices: Representations of Middle Eastern Women in Iranian and U.S. films*

Deadra Wright, *Beyond the Rotting Flesh: Metaphorically Dissecting the Zombie*

Bon Voyage to 2011 PhD Graduates



DR. KAREN ROYBAL was raised in Pecos, a small village northeast of Santa Fe. She received her BA in Journalism and Mass Communication from UNM, and her MA in Communication Studies from University of Nevada, Las Vegas. After receiving her Master's, she pursued careers in marketing and technical writing. In 2007, Karen enrolled in the PhD program in American Studies. She taught *Introduction to Southwest Studies* and served as a research assistant for Drs. Meléndez and Trujillo. Karen has also been a Land Grant Studies Fellow, and is currently an Andrew W. Mellon Doctoral Fellow. Her dissertation, “Land, Gender, and the Politics of Identity Formation: Uncovering Hispana/Mexicana Voices in the Southwest,” focuses on women who were actively engaged in social movements centered on land struggles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It argues that by compiling

testimonios herederas, the women reveal their inherited histories as racialized, classed, and gendered subjects. Karen will leave UNM for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to pursue a postdoctoral fellowship in the Latina/o Studies Department.

OSET Outstanding T.A. of the Year Award

DR. JEREMY RICKETTS came to the University of New Mexico for the American Studies PhD program after teaching for two years in Asia. Prior to that, he worked at the University of South Florida and obtained his MA in American Studies from the University of Alabama. Jeremy is originally from Tennessee, and that is where he became interested in the Mormon people and their faith. In the late 1800s, two Mormon missionaries were murdered near his hometown, and upon learning this, Jeremy became interested in religious identity and the cultural forces that could lead to such violence. He decided to write his dissertation on representations of Mormonism in American culture. He successfully defended it on March 28 and is a 2011 graduate.



Jeremy has taught several courses for the American Studies and English departments. In American studies, his courses have focused on surveys of American culture as well as more specific inquiries into the nature and function of religion in American culture. In the English department, Jeremy has taught several writing courses through a lens of cultural studies. He has won several prior teaching awards from the English department, and was the recipient of the 2009 Gerald Davis Memorial Award in American Studies.

In his personal life, Jeremy believes in balance: he strives to consume outdoor activities and popular culture in equal amounts, but admits that sometimes *Mad Men* is just too hard to resist.

“The flexibility inherent within American Studies interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum has allowed me the freedom to explore American life and thought from multiple viewpoints using a diverse array of cultural texts. For example, in my Religion and American Culture courses, I help students navigate this complicated and multifaceted terrain through literary, historical, sociological, and anthropological approaches linked to different theories of religion and culture. This approach allows students to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the many ways in which American culture and religion are intertwined.”

A Thank You Message From Dr. Eric Castillo

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to share with everyone pieces of my academic and professional life that helped ensure my success as a newly minted PhD in American Studies from the University of New Mexico. It’s been an enlightening experience navigating and overcoming graduate school as a first-generation Xicano from a working-class Mexicano family. Many opportunities and obstacles shaped where I am today and, whether good or bad, I must acknowledge them as opportunities that I have overcome and that empowered me.

A culmination of various people and events shaped my experiential knowledge, academic and professional development, and activist philosophy. My most recent memories at the University of New Mexico have been with an incredible organization that helped me “find my center” in academia. Project for New Mexico Graduates of Color (PNMGC) offered me an opportunity to connect to a community – a family – of students who make a commitment to enhancing the experiences of under-represented groups. I met friends, leaders, and role models who shaped my personal and intellectual growth and connected me to a wealth of resources, opportunities, and social justice initiatives such as the DREAM Act.

My faculty mentors have been exemplary examples of what it means to be a person of color in higher education. From day one, Professor A. Gabriel Meléndez taught me the value of critical thinking and community consciousness in developing my research project and professional growth. Professor Laura Gómez was a consistent and empowering supporter of my growth as a person and scholar. Professor Kirsten Pai Buick taught me to honor my personal experience as part of my intellectual growth; her presence in academia reminds me to “never cede the center” and continue the fight toward liberation.

I’m very excited to start my career as Director for the Institute for Hispanic-Latino Cultures "La Casita" and as Assistant Director of Multicultural and Diversity Affairs at the University of Florida. This new endeavor will bring forth new opportunities, new challenges, and new victories for all Hispanic-Latina/o students, staff, and community members and I am looking forward to leading and participating in various initiatives on and off campus.

La Casita will be a reservoir of educational initiatives, social justice actions, leadership efforts, mentoring programs, and networking that promises to make the University of Florida an inclusive, accessible, affirming, and supportive environment for all Hispanics-Latina/os at UF! Go Gators! Go Lobos!



Dr. Eric Castillo, far right, with some of his staff at La Casita.

Graduate Student News



ME

LANIE CATTRELL, PhD Candidate and Project Assistant with GPSA, presented a paper, "Nothing Happens Unless First a Dream": TV Fandom, Narrative Structure, and the Alternate Universes of *Bones*," at the 2011 SW/TX ACA/PCA Conference in San Antonio, Texas. An expanded version of this paper will appear in the forthcoming anthology, *Television and Temporality: Exploring Narrative Time in 21st Century Programming*.

AUORE DIEHL is a first year MA student and the 2010-2011 Thomas L. Popejoy Fellow in the University Archives at the Center for Southwest



Research located in Zimmerman Library. Her job is to scan material from the University Archives collection, create metadata for it according to Dublin Core Guidelines, and upload it to New Mexico's Digital Collections. Aurore presented "Carousel of Color: Comparing Set Designs of Two Productions of *Liliom* by UNM's Department of Drama" as a Zimmerman fellow. To view some of the work Aurore has done over the past academic year, follow this link: http://econtent.unm.edu/cdm4/index_UNMArchives.php and select "Theater Arts Collections."

DINA GILIO-WHITAKER, second year MA student, attended and presented a paper at the Critical Ethnic Studies Conference held at UC Riverside on March 10-12, 2011. The conference was the first of its kind and had been planned and advertised for well over a year, and attracted



over 1,500 scholars from all over the world (including UNM's own Alyosha Goldstein and Jennifer Denetdale). Dina presented her project "Comparative Indigenous Nationalisms in America: Can Native Hawaiians Become Indians?" which analyzes the similarities and differences between expressions of nationalism for Native Americans and Native Hawaiians. The focus of its analysis looks at how the Akaka Bill (aka the Native Hawaiian Sovereignty bill) perpetuates a colonial relationship between Native Hawaiians and the US dressed up in the language of justice and sovereignty, reinscribing a relationship of domination, and ultimately failing to address the issues of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and dispossession Native Hawaiian crown lands.

CHRISTINA JUHASZ-WOOD presented her paper "Citizen's Arrest: Reies Tijerina and the Poor People's Campaign (1968)" at the American Studies Association annual meeting in San Antonio. Christina also had a wonderful experience teaching her first course, Introduction to Environment Science and Technology, in the Fall, and an online version in the Spring. She is also enjoying her fellowship with the Albuquerque African-American Performing Arts Center, where she is researching the history of African-American and Native relations in the Southwest, and curating a photography exhibit. She defended her Master's thesis, which takes a queer studies approach to the Poor People's campaign, at the end of April.

KARA MCCORMACK, PhD candidate, presented a paper entitled "Ensuring Its Future by Celebrating Its Past: Historicity and Preservation at Tombstone's Courthouse Museum" at the Joint Conference of the National Popular Culture and American Culture Associations in San Antonio, Texas, in April. This paper is part of her dissertation project, which explores the ways popular culture, history and heritage, tourism, and economic exigencies converge in modern-day Tombstone, Arizona.

RACHEL LEVITT, a first year PhD student, presented her paper, "Bring Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses Yearning to be Gay" at the National Communication Association Conference in the American Studies Division in San Francisco, CA and presented a paper titled "Gay is the New Black! Seriously?!" at the Western States Communication Association Conference in Anchorage Alaska in the Critical Cultural Studies Division where she was also part of a panel on overcoming obstacles to critical pedagogy in the corporatized university. Within UNM, Rachel served as the Equity and Inclusion Chair of the Graduate and Professional Student Association and was also involved with GET. Rachel taught classes focused on feminist theories; critical pedagogy; how to teach adult learners; environment, science, and technology; and introduction to women studies. Rachel volunteered with the Rape Crisis Center as an advocate trainer in LGBTQ issues, and the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project.

LIZA MINNO BLOOM will have an essay "Popular Culture Representations of Militant Environmentalism and the Disciplining of the Greens" published in the *Journal of American Culture* for their March 2012 theme issue called *The Greening – or not – of America*. Liza organized an event in April called "Radical Sustainability", which brought some of the leading Green Anarchist theorists here to UNM. She is still active as a collective member of the

solidarity group Black Mesa Indigenous Support (blackmesais.org), and is writing an article regarding BMIS's work around climate justice and indigenous self-determination for the June issue of *Left Turn* magazine (leftturn.org). She will spend her summer herding sheep in Black Mesa/Big Mountain, AZ.



CARMEN SAMORA's The Julian Samora Legacy Project was honored with a House Commendation by the New Mexico House

of Representatives for valuable work on behalf of the New Mexico citizenry. JSLP won a New Mexico Humanities grant for \$10,200 for a public symposium and interactive website about five New Mexicans who were active in the Civil Rights Movement. The public event will be June 19 at the National Hispanic Cultural Center from 2-4pm. Carmen, above, defended her dissertation and is now a 2011 graduate.

KRISTEN VALENCIA, a second year PhD student, secured a Fellowship with the Center for Regional Studies at Zimmerman Library for the 2010-2011 school year. The major focus of her position was to take inventory and catalog Mexican film posters ranging in date from 1930 through 2005. In addition, she received the New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED) Fellowship for a second academic year. Aside from her academic work, Kristen has been involved in social activist movements in Southern Arizona in order to resist the forces behind SB1070 and HB2281. As such, she has been able to share her experiences with various AMST courses through guest lectures, providing students with an activist perspective to the political agenda at hand.

American Studies Graduate Student Association (ASGSA)

Rachel Levitt & Melanie Yazzie, Co-Presidents • Eileen Shaughnessy, Treasurer • Sam Markwell, Secretary • Gina Díaz, Funding Officer

ASGSA awarded 12 students total of \$1700 for research and conference activities. We will have more funds for you next fall so keep an eye out for the funding application email sent through the listserv at the beginning of the semester.

ASGSA Events

ASGSA coordinated a recruitment event for prospective students in March, which was a big success thanks to all the students, staff and faculty who were involved.

The ASGSA brownbag series has been kickstarted again. A teaching roundtable was held which has provided some material for future discussion at another roundtable to be held early next fall. Topics discussed included: how to handle confrontations (student-student and teacher-student) in class when teaching about controversial material; techniques for coordinating in-class group activities, and how to utilize a variety of approaches to teaching to engage students with different orientations to learning.

Alex Lubin held a brownbag talk/discussion “Why Palestine Matters to American Studies” on April 15, and Dr. Erika Doss delivered a talk “Memorial Mania: Commemoration and Affect in Contemporary America” on April 29th. Contact Sam Markwell at smarkwel@unm.edu for more info.

ASGSA would like to honor three outstanding members of the American Studies Department for their hard work over the last year: Sandy Rodrigue, Department Administrator, has done more than her fair share of work and we are all entirely dependent on and extremely appreciative of the myriad things she does to keep the Department organized; Alex Lubin, Department Chair, who has been a strong advocate for the Department and will be greatly missed during his two year appointment as director of a new American Studies Department at the American University of Beirut; and Liza Minno Bloom who is featured here. **A big thank you goes out to all three of these hard working and wonderful colleagues!!!**

Liza Minno-Bloom has, on top of her MA coursework and other activism, been instrumental in organizing GET (Graduate Employees Together) and creating a space for graduate students to articulate their interests and concerns in the restructuring of the University that is currently underway. GET was influential in the retention of GA/TA funding lines in the new budget. GET has branched out into coalitional



work with graduates, undergraduates, staff, faculty and community supporters and will continue their work over the summer. ASGSA extends a big thank you to Liza for all her tireless work on behalf of UNM graduate student employees.

Ford Fellowship Winners Speak About Their Research

GINA DÍAZ My intellectual interests are the work of feminist lesbian and bisexual artists and scholars and how their work causes ruptures. I have been paying attention to if/how their work “talks back” – so to speak – to sexism, colonialism, patriarchy, and homophobia. This disruption or problematizing is what I refer to as “queering.” In other words, “queer” can be thought of as a verb – an action, an approach, or a methodology – that questions various issues of inequality and troubles power differentials. I want to apply this queering broadly. For example the fact that Chicana art circulates on the covers of feminist academic texts more than it does in museum exhibitions – even at Latino cultural centers – to me is telling of its potential use as a framework to understand the struggles over identity and representation. This particular art has also helped me critically assess the function of museums.

Before coming to UNM for the PhD program I received my MA in Museum Studies and worked at several different museums. Museum work brought me to New Mexico in 2007 when I became the Curator at the National Hispanic Cultural Center Art Museum here in Bernalillo. Through my research on queer Chicana visual culture, I hope to understand if museums might be potential sites for stimulating critical thinking. They certainly are sites of debate and even intense struggle. These institutions, I think, are in fact spaces where some important work can happen, but from my experiences working in museums I have seen the many challenges that museologists and museum stakeholders are faced with in terms of finances, cultural politics, and the planning and implementation of programming that stimulates and facilitates a dynamic exchange of ideas. I am specifically interested in the role of political art: does it decolonize aesthetics or queer museums? And what is its impact on a broader scale?

MELANIE YAZZIE In my dissertation, I intend to explore everyday Navajo experiences with neoliberal violence, focusing on how Navajos articulate and form subjectivities through intimate and affective connections to ceremony, kin and labor. Arguing that neocolonial violence conditions – and oftentimes predetermines – Navajo cultural and identity formations, my dissertation seeks to understand these dynamics in order to advance effective decolonial projects that address the historical trauma that many *Diné* continue to face.



My interests in critiques of colonialism and modern power, the politics of indigeneity, and interlocking forms of oppression and subject formation began during my first year in the Master’s program in American Studies at Yale. However, it has been the last two years of my time in American Studies at UNM that have had a uniquely significant impact on the direction of my dissertation. The first-year American Culture Studies (ACS) proseminar and exam component – a requirement unique to this department – was especially instrumental in shaping the dissertation project proposal that secured my spot in the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship competition. Because of the ACS component, I was able to establish an informed conversance with some of the most salient critical writings on modern power, and clarify how my project fits into the interdisciplinary milieu to which many of the ACS books belong. As my PhD coursework comes to end, I feel well prepared to embark on the dissertation research and writing phase of my graduate education. Thanks UNM American Studies!

Department News

Visiting Student Lin Sun I'm a PhD candidate in the American Studies program from Shanghai, China, and a member of American Studies Center of Shanghai International Studies University. I am very honored and fortunate to get the state-funded scholarship for a 12-month visit here. My academic interests focus on Afro-American Studies, feminist studies and American religion. Right now, I'm doing my dissertation research on Motherhood in Black feminism that was inspired by Maya Angelou's visit at the Popejoy Hall. This year I took the courses ACS Proseminar, Black Women, and Spanish. I attended many events during Black History Month such as Reverend Al Sharpton's speech and Michael Eric Dyson's speech. And I also attended the event Audre Lorde Tribute and a series of colloquiums held by Africana studies department.



During Spring break, I traveled to enjoy the "soul food" - attending the Critical Ethnic Studies Conference in UC, Riverside, going to Disney Land and visiting San Francisco where I fully experienced the cultural diversity and had authentic dim sum in the big Chinatown. I love traveling, dancing, music and movies. I really enjoy my study and life in Albuquerque, and appreciate the gracious hospitality and generous help from everyone in the American Studies department.

Dr. Jennifer Nez Denetdale and Melanie Yazzie Win Faculty of Color Award!

5 American Studies Teachers Nominated

Project of New Mexico Graduates of Color hosted the 5th Annual Faculty of Color Awards Reception on May 4, 2011. Dr. Laura Gómez and Dr. Jennifer Nez Denetdale were nominated in the All Around category for research, teaching, mentorship, and service. Nick Sanchez, Kristen Valencia and Melanie Yazzie were nominated in the Teaching Assistant category. Dr. Denetdale was one of the two faculty that won. Melanie Yazzie, in her first year teaching, was one of the winners in the T.A. category.



AMST congratulates all of the nominees!

Faculty Workshop with Walter Mignolo



Cultural Critic Walter Mignolo visited UNM February 17 to conduct a public lecture, discussion with students, and workshop co-sponsored by the Department of American Studies. One hundred thirty UNM students and faculty attended his lecture alone. The workshop titled "Decoloniality and the Southwest" (pictured above) explored Mignolo's ideas in relation to the research of nine UNM faculty. Several participants and audiences said that the dialogue and contestation concerning Chicana/o and Indigenous notions of decolonization and colonization were especially generative. AMST faculty member Michael Trujillo facilitated the workshop and presenters included AMST chair Alex Lubin and Jennifer Denetdale. Mignolo said that he hopes these events will spark an ongoing dialogue and he hopes to return. He is the William H. Wannamaker Distinguished Professor of Romance Studies, Literature, and Cultural Anthropology at Duke University and the Director of the Center for Global Studies and the Humanities.

His visit was organized by Michael Trujillo and Southwest Hispanic Research Institute staff. American Studies, the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute, the Division of Student Affairs, and the Institute for American Indian Research co-sponsored his visit.

A Note from the Development Office

As you can clearly see from reading this newsletter, it is an exciting and inspiring time in the American Studies Department at UNM. All of this exemplary teaching, fascinating research and deeply meaningful interaction among our talented faculty and students is being conducted during a time of extreme financial uncertainty. Now more than ever, we invite you to express your philanthropic support for our work. Whether it be scholarship support, a contribution to the American Studies Chairs Fund, a donation to fund faculty or student travel- your tax deductible donation would be a profound gesture of appreciation for what UNM American Studies means to YOU! You can contribute by check to my attention at the address below, or logon to <https://unmfund.org/online-giving> and fill out the online giving form. If you need assistance or would like to speak to me personally about donating to the department or including UNM in your estate plans, call or email me. I'd love to hear from you!"



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