

# American Graffiti

Volume 23 ■ 2022-2023

**“How do you tell a  
story that has been told  
the wrong way for so long?”**

– Clint Smith  
*How the Word Is Passed*

Northwestern | American Studies



# A Message from the Director

We've had a great beginning of the new school year, welcoming a new President to the university, and, even more important, a new cohort of American Studies majors as well as returning juniors and seniors. After a couple tough years, campus is abuzz and almost feels like normal times.

Another thing that's new to American Studies is me. I just began a three-year term as Director of American Studies, succeeding the irreplaceable Shana Bernstein. I'm new to the Director's role, but not really new to the Program. I've served on the faculty governing committee for most of the years that I've been at Northwestern, and have worked closely with past Directors including Kate Baldwin, Shana Bernstein, Jay Grossman, Robert Orsi, and Ivy Wilson. Still, this is the first time I've seen it up close.

To those of you who don't know me—which I presume means most of you!—let me tell you a little bit about myself. At Northwestern, I teach and write about Latino, borderlands, immigration, and U.S. political history. I'm originally from Tucson, Arizona, and I received degrees from Dartmouth College and Yale University. At this point, though, I've lived in Chicago longer than I've lived anywhere else, and it's home. I also believe in interdisciplinary scholarship, and the power of approaching issues from many different angles in order to understand them in their fullest sense. This makes American Studies a great fit for me.

And we already know about the amazing students, teachers, and staff in American Studies. They're the stuff of legends. Our ten 2022 graduates have ventured to great pursuits across the country from graduate school to environmental work to government positions to the fashion industry and even to Broadway. We are excited to keep up with them and all of our remarkable alumni. As in years past, this year's newest majors come from a range of personal, intellectual, and disciplinary backgrounds. The juniors are immersing themselves in American Studies courses, and the seniors are hard at work on their theses. Kevin Boyle, Nicolette Bruner, Lane Fenrich, and Ivy Wilson are teaching our core courses. Julie Lavin and Tom Burke are the heart and soul of the program, and American Studies wouldn't run without them.

The year has already begun with a bang, and we're not going to relent for the rest of the year. We hosted a meet and greet with outstanding alumni who returned to campus for homecoming weekend. They were from the classes of 1987 forward, and they liked holding the bound copies of the theses they wrote when they were students. We attended a play at Steppenwolf Theatre, visited the DuSable Museum, continue to host dynamic alumni speakers who will tell us about their career paths, and planning an exciting spring break trip to New Orleans to explore sites there that were part of Clint Smith's book, *How the Word is Passed*, which was the book for "One Book One Northwestern" this year.

Thanks as always for your support! Please keep in touch with us. We're always looking to make the American Studies Program an exciting place to think, learn, and build community. And let me plant this little seed in your minds: the 50th anniversary of American Studies at Northwestern is right around the corner, in 2024. Send along your ideas for how to make it the most celebratory and memorable occasion you can dream of. We hope to welcome many of you for those events.

Sincerely,

Geraldo Cadava

# 2022-23 Core Faculty and Staff



## Geraldo L. Cadava

(Ph.D., Yale University) is an historian of the United States and Latin America. He focuses on Latinos in the United States and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Originally from Tucson, Arizona, he came to Northwestern after finishing his doctoral degree.

Cadava is the author of two books:  
*The Hispanic Republican: The Shaping of*

*an American Political Identity, from Nixon to Trump* (New York: Ecco, 2020) about the history of Hispanics and the Republican Party since the 1960s; and *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Harvard University Press, 2013) about the Arizona-Sonora borderland since World War II.

*The Hispanic Republican* was named a book of the year by *NBC Latino*, and *Standing on Common Ground* won the Frederick Jackson Turner Award from the Organization of American Historians. He is currently writing a third book, a sweeping history of Latinos in the United States, tentatively titled, *A Thousand Bridges*. It will be published by Crown in 2026. He has received fellowships from the Stanford Humanities Center, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, and the Ford Foundation. His essays have been published by the *Journal of American History*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Boston Globe*. He has appeared on the *Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, *MSNBC*, *PBS* and *C-Span*.



## Kevin Boyle

(Ph.D., University of Michigan, 1990) William Smith Mason Professor of American History is a historian of the twentieth century United States, with a particular interest in modern American social movements.

His most recent book is *The Shattering: America in the 1960s*.

His other books include *The UAW* and the *Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968*; *Muddy Boots and Ragged Aprons: Images of Working-Class Detroit, 1900-1930* (with Victoria Getis); *Organized Labor and American Politics, 1894-1994*; and *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights and Murder in the Jazz Age*, which received the National Book Award for nonfiction, *The Chicago Tribune's* Heartland Prize, and the Simon Weisenthal Center's Tolerance Book Award. It was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

He teaches undergraduate courses on modern United States history, the civil rights movement, and racial violence and graduate courses in twentieth century American history, working-class history, and narrative history.

# 2022-23 Core Faculty and Staff



## Nicolette Bruner

(Ph.D., University of Michigan; J.D., University of Michigan Law School) is Assistant Professor of Instruction at the Center for Legal Studies and the Program in American Studies. Prior to joining Northwestern's faculty, she was a postdoctoral fellow with the Stevanovich Institute on the

Formation of Knowledge at the University of Chicago and taught in the Department of English at Western Kentucky University.

Bruner's research explores how the law shapes the way humans understand and interact with the nonhuman entities and systems around them. Her current book project, *Thing People: Living with Corporations and Other Nonhumans*, examines how the legal doctrine of corporate personhood offers a framework for articulating the rights and responsibilities of other nonhuman entities, including animals, plants, rivers, and robots. She also teaches and works in American literature, corporate law and policy, jurisprudence, and the environmental humanities.



## Lane Fenrich

(Ph.D., Northwestern University) is Distinguished Senior Lecturer in Gender and Sexuality Studies and Assistant Dean for First-Year Students. Fenrich is a cultural historian of the twentieth-century United States, specializing in the period since the Second World War. He has received a number

of major teaching awards, including the Arts and Sciences Alumni Teaching Award in 2000 and the Weinberg College Student Advisory Board Community Building Award in 2007. He was also named the Charles Deering McCormick University Distinguished Lecturer in 2008. Lane Fenrich regularly teaches one of Gender and Sexuality Studies' gateway courses, "Sexual Subjects: Introduction to Sexuality Studies" as well as a very popular course on "U.S. Gay and Lesbian History."

## ■ 2022-2023 Core Faculty and Staff continued



### Ivy Wilson

(Ph.D., Yale University) teaches courses on the comparative literatures of the black diaspora and U.S. literary studies with a particular emphasis on African American culture. His book, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Nationalism* (Oxford University

Press, 2011), interrogates how the figurations and tropes of blackness were used to produce the social equations that regulated the cultural meanings of U.S. citizenship and traces how African American intellectuals manipulated the field of aesthetics as a means to enter into political discourse about the forms of subjectivity and national belonging. Along with recent articles in *ESQ*, *Arizona Quarterly*, and *PMLA*, his other work in U.S. literary studies includes two forthcoming edited books on the nineteenth-century poets James Monroe Whitfield and Albery Allson Whitman. His current research interests focus on the solubility of nationalism in relationship to theories of the diaspora, global economies of culture, and circuits of the super-national and sub-national.



### Tom Burke

Senior Program Administrator. Tom received a B.A. from Union College and an MFA in creative writing from UMass Amherst. In the past, he has worked for the Chinua Achebe Center at Bard College, the Summer Literary Seminars in Russia and Kenya, and Words without Borders, which advocates for literature in transition. Tom also teaches creative writing at Northwestern, and his novel, *Eastbound into the Cosmos*, was published in April 2019 from MadHat Press. [www.tsburke.com](http://www.tsburke.com)

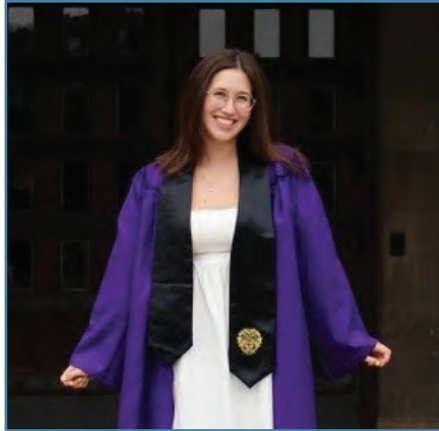


### Julie Lavin

Program Assistant. Julie received a B.A. from University of Kansas in Journalism and has worked in a variety of nonprofits in the Chicagoland area including the Evanston Community Foundation and The Chicago Botanic Garden.



# Class of 2022



## Margot Bartol

*Who's Afraid of Huawei? The Case of Huawei Technologies as an Exemplar of How Techno-orientalism and Techno-nationalism Have Permeated American Policy Making*

**Advisor:** Melissa Macauley (History)



## Thomas Bentsen

*QUEENS: Pop Female Divas and the Performance of Queerness, a Close Reading of Britney Spears' "Womanizer" and Beyonce's "Diva"*

**Advisor:** Susan Manning (English)



## Caleigh Bell-Rosof

*"We're on the outskirts of the possible, following the trickles to who knows where": Radical Imagination, Queer Politics and Abolition in Steven Universe*

**Advisor:** Hannah Chaskin (English)



## Maggie Cheever

*Clearing the American Conscience: American Identity, National Interest, and the Clinton Administration's Inaction for the Environment in Somalia*

**Advisor:** Galya Ben-Arieh (Political Science)

## ■ Class of 2022 continued



### Daisy Conant

*Come out Fighting with Truth, Beauty and the Womanly Way: Reading Lesbian Newspapers as Discursive and Physical Tools of Community Building in Chicago, 1971-1980*

**Advisor:** Steven Thrasher  
(Journalism)



### Jack Jordan

*Participating in Change: An Oral history of Community Climate Action Planning in Evanston*

**Advisor:** Mérida M. Rúa  
(Latino Studies)



### Kate Hader

*"its not a fucking sin": Negotiating Teenage Girl Masturbation in the Pages of 1990s Girl Zines*

**Advisor:** Janice Radway  
(Communication Studies)



### Thea Showalter

*"Respectable Independence": Women's Work at the Northwestern University Settlement House, 1893-1917*

**Advisor:** Michael Allen  
(History)



## ■ Class of 2022 continued



### Danielle Spitz

*"Corseting the Corsetless Figure";  
Mixed Messaging on Body Image  
and Lifestyle in 1920s Women's  
Magazines*

**Advisor:** Kate Masur (History)



### Caleb Young

*Sanctuary and Sovereignty  
in the Pacific: Asylum Policy  
as Imperial Control in the  
Mariana Islands*

**Advisor:** Daniel Immerwahr  
(History)



Fall field trip  
to Steppenwolf  
Theatre to see  
their production  
of 1919



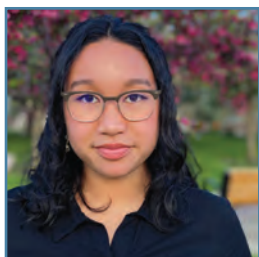
# Current Majors

## ■ Class of 2023



### **Maddie Brown**

Maddie is an American Studies major with minors in Legal Studies and English Literature. Her thesis is about nineteenth-century girlhood, focusing on girls' diaries and representations of self. She is a consultant at The Writing Place, a NU Votes Ambassador, and has worked on faculty research projects as a Leopold Fellow and a Baker Fellow.



### **Dori-Taylor Carter**

Dori-Taylor is an American Studies major with minors in French and Sociological Research with a research focus in the U.S. Census. She researches community organizations' relationship with state-sponsored racial data collection and pan-ethnic racial categories. She is a Posse Foundation Scholar and a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow.



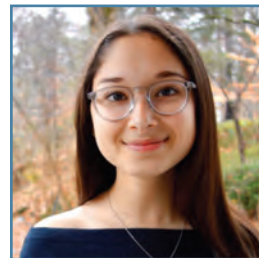
### **Alex Chun**

Alex is a senior studying journalism and American Studies. His thesis is about social media, policing and surveillance during 2020 demonstrations for racial justice. He serves as the Wildcat Welcome Director for Medill in the Office of Student Transition. He is a research fellow with Northwestern's Council of Race and Ethnic Studies.



### **Sunnie Eraso**

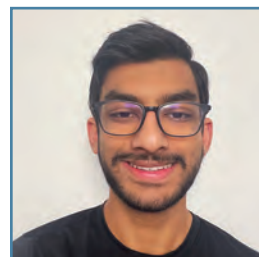
Sunnie is an American Studies and Theatre double major also pursuing the Music Theatre Certificate. She is studying how artistic creation and representation can affirm the mixed race identity and experience in America. Sunnie is a board member of Vertigo Productions and is a performer and director in the theatre community.



### **Eva Herscowitz**

Eva Herscowitz is an American Studies and Journalism double major with a minor in English. Her interests include media studies, gender and sexuality studies, and religious studies. On campus, she writes for *The Daily Northwestern* and works as a research assistant.

## ■ Class of 2024



### **Armaan Ajani**

Armaan is a SESP second-year double majoring in Social Policy and American Studies and minoring in Economics. Armaan hopes to study the experiences of marginalized communities in the entertainment industry and their abilities to advocate and mobilize using their platforms.



### **Olivia Alexander**

Olivia is an American Studies and Journalism double major. Her research interests are in K-12 education, religious communities and media agenda setting in the U.S. She is a Peer Adviser for Wildcat Welcome, an editor at *The Daily Northwestern*, and is a member of Canterbury Northwestern.



### **Jane Clarke**

Jane is an American Studies and History double major and Political Science minor. Her interests are focused on Americans' interaction with the world, American exceptionalism, and social movements. She is a Leopold Fellow with the Chabraja Center for Historical Studies, a consultant at The Writing Place, and a supervisor at ARTica Studios.



### **Jordan Muhammad**

Jordan is an American Studies and Theatre double major in the Civic Engagement Certificate Program. Her focus is studying how systems of oppression can be dismantled and replaced by looking at domestic and foreign case studies. She is a Tour Guide, Peer Adviser and member of Fossil Free NU, DefaultVegNU, University Christian Ministry, SOLR, BMP, and the Books.



### **Isabel Podolsky**

Isabel is an American Studies major pursuing additional study in Economics and Data Science. She is exploring interdisciplinary approaches to urban spaces in theory and practice, focusing on housing, community, and economic development. She is involved with NU Model UN, Office of Undergraduate Research, and Delta Sigma Pi Business Fraternity.



### **Noah Seth**

Noah is an American Studies major and legal studies minor. He is studying the relationship between American Federalism and the creation and protection of civil rights in the United States. He is also pursuing a commission as an officer in the United State Marine Corps.



### **Lauren Walcott**

Lauren is a Social Policy and American Studies double-major pursuing a certificate in Civic Engagement. She hopes to study education inequality and community building. Aside from academics, she is an organizer for DefaultVeg, a member of Christians on campus, NU Archery Club.



### **Kaili Wegener**

Kaili is a Political Science and American Studies double major with a minor in Legal Studies and a certificate in Integrated Marketing Communications. Her interests include criminal justice reform, prison gerrymandering, and the community and public health effects of mass incarceration. She serves on the executive boards of the Northwestern Prison Education Partnership, and C.O.P.E..



### **Emily Zou**

Emily is interested in learning about technology through the humanities and the humanities through technology. She's always on the lookout for humans that 1) are thinking about similar questions and 2) are willing to humor her.



## ■ Class of 2025



### **Mariam Adesiji**

Mariam is a first-year American Studies major planning to double major in Sociology or Legal Studies and minor in dance. She is exploring immigration, mass incarceration, and/or U.S. foreign policy towards Africa. Outside of class, Mariam is a dancer with *Boomshaka*—a drum, dance, and rhythm group at NU.



### **Audrey Bannister**

Audrey is an American Studies major with hopes to study History and French as well. On campus, she is involved in the comedy student group, *the Blackout*, in addition to being an athlete on the varsity cross country team.



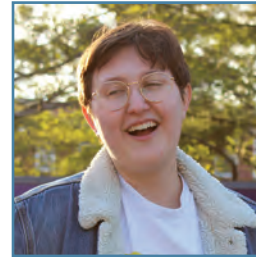
### **Vivian Bui**

Vivian is an American Studies and English Literature double major with a minor in Legal Studies. She is studying U.S. immigration and wants to understand how colonization has contributed to mass migration. She is involved in Mock Trial and with Arch Scholars programs. She volunteers in Chicago teaching ESL and helping immigrants prepare for Naturalization.



### **Jessica Ma**

Jessica Ma is an American Studies and Journalism double major with a Political Science minor. She is exploring the role of media in social movements, the interactions between communities of color, and the aesthetics of the American Dream from the perspective of marginalized voices. She competes for the NU Mock Trial team, writes for *The Daily Northwestern*, and is involved with Supplies for Dreams.



### **Elliot Oppenheim**

Elliot is an American Studies and Communication Studies double major. His research interests include Yiddish theater, patterns of immigration and assimilation, and online community building. He is a member of the Northwestern Marching Band, *North by Northwestern*, and is Production Manager for Spectrum Theatre Ensemble.



### **Kara Peeler**

Kara is an American Studies and Journalism double major. She hopes to study the ways that religion and religious institutions affect marginalized communities. Outside of the classroom, she writes for *The Daily Northwestern*, works as a copy editor, and is a volunteer for the NU Thrift Store.



### **Ellie Solomon**

Ellie is an American Studies and Political Science double major. Ellie is interested in the intersection of American religious communities and voting patterns. Ellie plays on the Women's Club Lacrosse team and is involved with Dance Marathon.



### **Mia Xia**

Mia is a Social Policy and American Studies double major with a minor in Data Science and a certificate in Civic Engagement. She's studying political participation and civic engagement within BIPOC communities. Mia is involved with the Institute for Policy Research, Associated Student Government, the NU Undergraduate Law Journal, and Supplies for Dreams.

# 2022 Awards

## American Studies Program Awards

### ■ Carl Smith Prize for Outstanding Student Essay in American Studies

**Daisy Conant**

*Come Out Fighting With Truth, Beauty and the Womanly Way: Reading Lesbian Newspapers as Discursive and Physical Tools of Community Building in Chicago, 1971-1980*

**Caleb Young**

*Sanctuary and Sovereignty in the Pacific: Asylum Policy as Imperial Control in the Mariana Islands*

### ■ Jay Rosen American Studies Scholarship

Jane Clarke



**2022 Grad Group with Tom Burke and  
2019-2022 Director Shana Bernstein**

## Other Noteworthy Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

### ■ Fulbright Canada – MITACS Globalink Internship Council for Race and Ethnic Studies Fellowship

Alex Chun

### ■ Leopold Fellowship – Department of History

Jane Clarke, Eva Herscowitz and  
Maddie Brown

### ■ Center for Civic Engagement Fellowship

(NU Votes Program)  
Maddie Brown

### ■ Northwestern Summer Internship Grant Program

(Raskin for Congress Fellow)  
Lauren Walcott

### ■ Farrell Fellowship – Department of Political Science; Coelho Law Fellowship – Loyola Law School; Elevate Ambassador – National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship

Kaili Wegener

### ■ Phi Beta Kappa

Maddie Brown, Dori-Taylor Carter  
and Jack Jordan  
(PBK Centennial Prize)



# Curriculum 2022-23

## Seminars for Majors

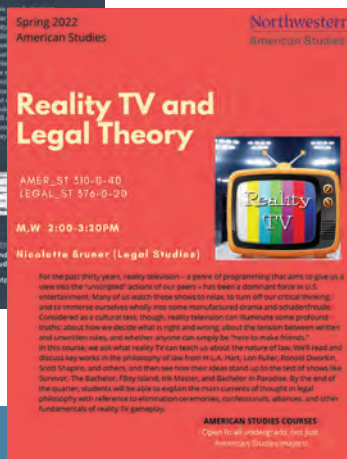
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Sweet Home Chicago</b> Kevin Boyle (History)
<b>Winter</b>	<b>True Love and Perfect Union</b> Lane Fenrich (History)
<b>Spring</b>	<b>Work, Labor, and Social Formation in the U.S.</b> Ivy Wilson (English and American Studies)
<b>Fall/ Winter</b>	<b>Senior Seminar</b> Nicolette Bruner (Legal Studies and American Studies)

## Other Courses Include:

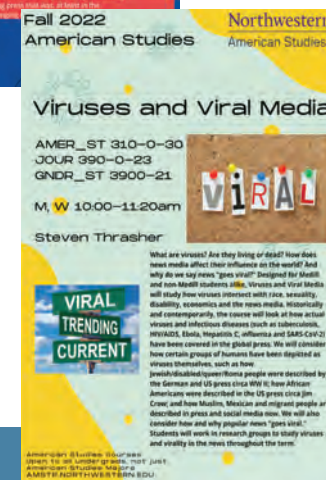
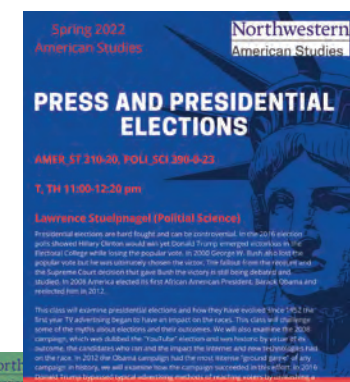
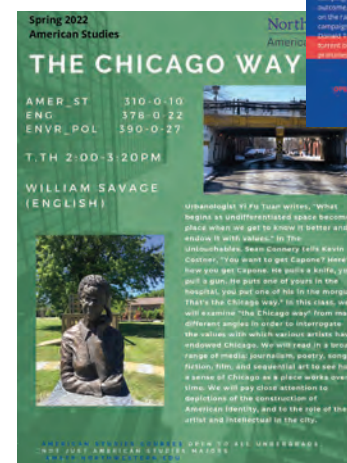
<b>Viruses and the Viral Media</b> Professor Steven Thrasher (Journalism)
<b>Jazz Age</b> Professor William Savage (English)
<b>The Chicago Way: Urban Spaces and American Values</b> Professor William Savage (English)
<b>Intro to Critical Mixed-Race Studies</b> Nitasha Tamar Sharma (African American and Asian American Studies)

<b>Bad News</b> Professor Larry Stuelpnagel (Journalism)
<b>Press and Presidential Elections</b> Professor Larry Stuelpnagel (Journalism)

## 2021-2022



## 2022-2023



# Alumni Events

■ By sharing their post-Northwestern career paths, American Studies alumni offer current majors networking opportunities and conversations about how the major nurtures curiosity and skills that students carry with them after graduation. This past year, we heard from Alumni Tim Mulvey and Dan Schwerin who spoke with students in January sharing their political experiences.



## Tim Mulvey

Tim serves as communications director for the U.S. House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol. Tim was the longtime communications director for the Democratic staff of House Committee on Foreign Affairs. During the Obama Administration, Tim held an appointment at the U.S. Department of State, working as a speechwriter for Secretaries of State Clinton and Kerry and as communications director in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. From 2009 to 2011, Tim was communications director for Representative Steve Driehaus (OH), and earlier worked as deputy press secretary in the office of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (NY). Tim holds a Master's Degree in the History of International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a Bachelor's Degree in American Studies from Northwestern University. He lives in Washington, DC.



## Dan Schwerin

Dan Schwerin is a co-founder of Evergreen Strategy Group, which provides strategic advice, policy development, and communications services to values-driven companies and organizations. He recently served as a senior advisor in the Biden White House, working on implementation of the American Rescue Plan. Previously, he was Hillary Clinton's longtime director of speechwriting, book collaborator, and policy advisor. Dan graduated from Northwestern in 2004, majoring in American Studies and serving as opinion editor at *The Daily Northwestern*.





# American Studies in Action



With pandemic measures lifted we were thrilled to be able to gather in person and experience a myriad of events from a tour of Bronzeville, to an all day outing in Chicago with an architecture boat tour, tour of Old Town and theatre outings. We were also able to celebrate our Seniors in person for their thesis presentations and graduation. Experiences outside of the classroom are foundational to the American Studies Program.





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# American Graffiti

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**Northwestern University**  
**Program in American Studies**

1880 Campus Drive  
Kresge Centennial Hall 5-530  
Evanston, IL 60208-2245

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