

AMERICAN GRAFFITI

THE AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY • WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

VOLUME 14, FALL 2013



Greetings American Studies students, alumni, and friends,

The academic year 2012-2013 was another exciting one for the Program in American Studies, full of rich events as well as student, faculty, and staff accomplishments.

As many of you know, the Program in American Studies is one of the oldest such programs in the College and, in the fall, we celebrated our 35th anniversary. Professor Carl Smith, one of the original architects, was on-hand to provide a first-hand account of the Program's beginning and shape over the subsequent decades. Beyond witnessing the this history of the Program, it was heartwarming and exhilarating to see different generations of American Studies majors sharing stories about their experiences both in Evanston

and beyond campus (see more about the reunion on page 4).

This year was no different with our special focus and deep commitment to the undergraduate experience within the major. Following the model based on last year's visit by Rebecca Traister (AMST 1994), the Program invited two of its alumni to give talks on campus. Joseph Neff (AMST 1983), who was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in local reporting, gave a talk on non-profit hospitals and Joseph Crespino (AMST 1994), a professor of history at Emory University, gave a lecture about Strom Thurmond, the controversial, long-standing senator from South Carolina. We also brought to campus the scholar and musician Stephen Wade to speak about his recently published book tracing the history of five or more thirteen folk songs performed by ordinary

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY IVY WILSON



THE BEAUTIFUL WORLD ALL AROUND US:
Connections, Community, and Creativity

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Thursday
April 11, 2013
at 5 PM

NOTE LOCATION CHANGE:
Helmerich Auditorium
Annie May Swift Hall

Sponsored by the Northwestern University Program in American Studies.



STROM THURMOND'S AMERICA
AND THE ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN RIGHT

JOSEPH CRESPINO, EMORY UNIVERSITY

Professor Crespino's talk will take a fresh look at the life and politics of Strom Thurmond, the longtime U.S. Senator from South Carolina. Thurmond, the fervent segregationist who recently had a book deal, was one of the last of the old-
Guard Democrats. Crespino connects Thurmond's
Thurmond was also one of the first of the post-World War II
Southern conservatives. He didn't start out as one and
gradually moved into the other. Crespino argues that a critical
inflection point roughly the late 1940s to the 1970s, he was both
of the conservative. Understanding this period has much to
tell us about important transformations in American political
life in the second half of the twentieth century.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2013 AT 5 PM

THE HAGSTRUM ROOM - UNIVERSITY HALL 201

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsored by the Northwestern Program in American Studies, and the Departments of African American Studies, Communication Studies, History, Public Science, and Sociology



Americans and recorded by the Library of Congress between 1934 and 1942.

In addition to these events organized specifically for our undergraduate majors, we also extended conversations with different units and communities at Northwestern. We co-sponsored events with others including Latina/o Studies (with a joint trip to the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood) and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures (which brought out a speaker to give a lecture on the novelist Vladimir Nabokov, McCarthyism, and the U.S.). Two of our newest faculty members (Simeon Man, who was in his first year as the Mellon Post-doctoral fellow in American Studies and Asian American Studies, and Kathleen Belew, who enjoys a position in History and American Studies) organized

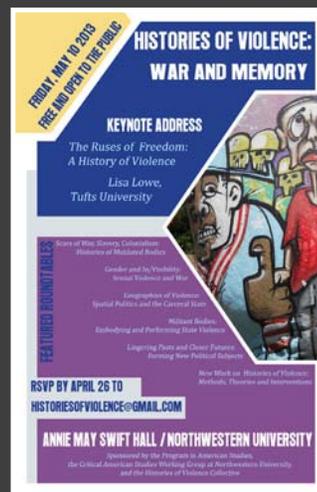
a national conference entitled the "Histories of Violence," which had participants from a number of colleges and universities from around the country. The Program was especially happy to support the scholarship of two of its faculty members in this endeavor and reach out to others inside the College and throughout the University interested in American Studies as a field of study.

Our seniors continue to garner recognition upon graduation with laurels for university distinction, program and departmental honors, and sundry other awards. To complement our student achievements, our faculty and staff were similarly applauded by the University: Professor William Haarlow was promoted; he and Professor Belew were both recognized as outstanding teachers by the ASG, as was Natasha Dennison as a staff

member for her work as our program assistant.

We look forward to the 2013-2014 academic year and the many to follow!

L-R: Musician and scholar Stephen Wade during his April 2013 talk, "The Beautiful Music All Around Us: Connections: Community, and Creativity"; (top) Professor Carl Smith, Stephen Wade, and Professor Paul Breslin; (bottom) Joseph Neff with Professor Carl Smith; Joseph Crespino (Professor of History at Emory University and 1994 AMST alumni) discusses "Strom Thurman's America and the Origins of the American Right"; students have lunch with Joseph Neff, an alumni from the class of 1983, who went on to Columbia School of Journalism and is currently a lead investigative reporter for the *Charlotte News Observer*; field trip to the National Museum of Mexican Art, arranged together by the Program in American Studies and Latina/o Studies Program; the Histories of Violence conference, organized by American Studies faculty Simeon Man and Kathleen Belew, was hosted on May 11, 2013 - Professors Kathleen Belew, Ivy Wilson, and Simeon Man are shown standing on the right.





AMERICAN STUDIES REUNION: 35TH ANNIVERSARY

On a beautiful fall morning on October 28th, 2012, American Studies majors from the classes of 1976-78, along with current majors, recent graduates, and core program faculty (then and now), gathered to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Program. Some things have changed, like moving from the third floor of University Hall to our present location, but our focus on exemplary teaching and mentoring remain hallmarks of the Program. Held during Homecoming Weekend to coincide with other reunion events on campus, we hosted a brunch for friends to mingle during the earlier part of the morning. During the second half, we retired to the seminar room (named after James Levenson [AMST 1985]) for a slide show presentation, featuring images of the many different students and faculty that have been associated with the Program. David Klafter (AMST 1976) shared his memories of what it was like being one of the brave souls to embark upon this new major called American Cultures as an undergraduate.



L-R: Elizabeth Harris (AMST 2010) and Parv Santhosh-Kumar (AMST 2010); Emily Davidson (AMST 2013), Professor Carl Smith, and David Klafter (AMST 1976).

undergraduate activities

DJANGO UNCHAINED

BY BRIDGET ILLING

This past Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Professor Kathleen Belew's AMST 310 seminar "American Vigilantes" attended a showing of Quentin Tarantino's lightning-rod and controversial film *Django Unchained*. While the date we arranged to see the film occurred largely because of scheduling necessity, seeing a film detailing the story of a Civil War-era former slave attempting to rescue his wife from a tyrannical plantation owner on the birthday of one of America's most important Civil Rights activists certainly added an extra layer of critical examination to our class outing. As a whole, the film itself takes many liberties with historical accuracies and was very much in keeping with Tarantino's past use of over-the-top blood and violence.

Whether or not the film represents a realistic experience is an interesting questions, but more central to our class was a discussion about which characters could be classified as "vigilantes" and, importantly, what this means about how we should judge their actions. A common popular culture definition of vigilantes is anyone who takes justice into their own hands—think, for example, about such different figures as the fictional Batman or Teddy Roosevelt. But so much of what makes a vigilante identifiable as such comes from their intentions to uphold the status quo in their community. The character of Django is just one of several characters in the film that could be analyzed for their vigilantism, and our ensuing class discussion was



contentious over who was and who was not a vigilante in the film. As we talked more about Django it seemed as if his vigilante status changed throughout the film and while he may have been a vigilante early in the film, by the end he was merely seeking revenge. In addition to specific debate sparked by seeing the film, the experience as a whole was a great asset for the rest of the class for the remainder of the quarter and our collective effort to learn more about this important topic.

CHICAGO FIELD TRIPS

BY LAUREN BUXBAUM

In a little over a century, Chicago rose from a mere frontier outpost to become one of the foremost cities of the world. American Studies majors and students of Henry Binford and Carl Smith's "Evolution of Chicago" had the privilege of exploring the artifacts of this illustrious history on a tour of the city and its surrounding suburbs. Armed with donuts courtesy

of Professor Smith, students set out on coach buses for on three separate occasions to tour the I&M Canal in Lockport, IL, the historic town of Pullman, and the Northwestern Settlement Home.

In Lockport, IL, we got a taste of the 96-mile canal that enabled Chicago's rise to greatness. When the canal was finished in 1848 a canal trip from Chicago to LaSalle took between 22 and 26 hours. Luckily, our bus ride only took about two hours.

Our second excursion took us to the model industrial town of Pullman, a company town built in 1880 with the intention of providing an environment superior to conditions available to the working class elsewhere, hoping to attract skilled workers and avoid strikes. Unfortunately for George Pullman, only fourteen years after the town's inception, a strike that shut down the nation's railroads actually began in Pullman in response to wage cuts.

Our last trip took us to the Northwestern Settlement House, founded in 1891 by Northwestern University to provide resources to the poor and new immigrants. While Jane Addams' Hull House was the largest settlement home in Chicago, the Northwestern Settlement House is the longest continually operating settlement house in the country, still serving more than 40,000 individuals annually.

As Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade write in *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*, "no single book can possibly encompass the immense scope of [Chicago's] development or convey the endless diversity of the life of Chicago's people." With help from Professor Binford and Professor Smith, American Studies students were able to experience our city's endless diversity first hand, an opportunity that this Chicago native has never found elsewhere in over 22 years.

student profiles



HAILEY KARCHER: South Africa

This past spring quarter, I studied abroad in South Africa as part of the Northwestern's Public Health and Development program. I specifically was enrolled at Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape about 45 minutes outside of Cape Town. As an American Studies and Legal Studies major, I certainly stood out from the group, as most of the other nineteen students were Global Health minors or pre-med, and were much more keen on asking questions about vaccination programs and narrative medicine—ideas to which I had little exposure. For me, this made the trip rewarding, as I was constantly forced to act as some kind of academic chameleon, applying what I already knew in very different and interesting contexts. In addition to the new things I was learning and experiencing, I was able to draw meaningful

connections between what I learned abroad and what I have learned as an American Studies major—perhaps more than I had imagined possible.

As a major in the Program, I have narrowed my focus to American history and literature on racial inequality. More specifically, I have pursued the relationship between policy and race, but have also studied the relationship between American literature and race, law and race, public education and race, and the like. When I was considering studying abroad, South Africa, with its unique post-apartheid context, seemed to offer an entirely new way of viewing race and racism in a democratic, though conflict-ridden society.

While South Africa's political landscape does offer some shocking contrasts to the U.S.—whether it's Kayamandi township jutting up against the posh neighborhood we lived in, or the privacy walls accompanied with ADT signs surrounding every middle- and upper-class home—the similarities between the two countries struck me as most fascinating. For instance, my class "Culture, Language, and Identity in South Africa" spoke specifically to some of the ideas that compelled me to apply for the American Studies program in the first place. I have always been interested in the idea of "real" Americans, and the rest, with this "the rest," always rotating and changing—it could be the Irish, African-Americans, communists, or Mexicans depending on the time period one examines. This group of "real" Americans is abstract and difficult to define, yet absolutely crucial in the imagining communities—to borrow a term from Benedict Anderson—and maintenance of the idea of America as a nation. Additionally, and perhaps obviously, this conception of American belonging is and always has been closely tied to race. I was reminded of these interwoven

concepts in this class in South Africa as the lecturer spoke about the history of the white Afrikaners and the imagining of the country as a white, Afrikaner paradise of sorts they had earned through their struggles against the "natives." This made me rethink the way in which nationhood, nationalism, and race all tied to each other, and the universality of a constructed sense of belonging across national, yet not necessarily racial, boundaries. Fortunately, this moment of understanding led me to what now is my soon-to-be thesis topic.

More generally, and perhaps more important to my experience as in the American Studies program on the whole, it exposed me to the expansive reach of the American Studies program beyond the typical American literature or history course and demonstrated the way in which the program is relevant in a global context.

JACK FOSTER: Italy

For my entire junior year, I had the privilege of studying abroad at l'Università di Bologna. Founded in 1088, it is the oldest continually operating university in the world. I took all of my classes in Italian, read every textbook in Italian, lived with four Italian roommates, and even managed to learn a few recipes. My courses ranged from a survey on colonialism and post-colonialism to a class on twentieth-century Italian literature. Though my course material varied significantly, I grew accustomed to exceptional lectures by my professors and could almost see each of them winning a prize in oratory argument. It was natural to see them (with a book and a microphone in one hand, leaving the other free for gesticulation) constructing hour-long analyses on the fly in some sort of pause-less, spell-binding trance. The full year

allowed me to travel from the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento, Sicily to passes in the Italian Alps. But most important to me is the truth that at the beginning of the year, I was a less than average Italian student who had possibly the worst accent in the program. Language study didn't particularly capture my interest and my understanding of the world was limited to the continental United States. Today I read Italian at a level and pace I never expected to achieve in my life. Skyping my friends who speak Italian isn't only comfortable, it's a highlight of my week.

Yet my fluency would not have been possible without the American Studies Program. When I brought this full-year plan to Professor Wilson, there was never a question of what the technicalities were or how I would be missing out on our own lauded Program back in Evanston. The conversation was immediately about what would benefit my education the most. And that's what makes American Studies truly special. There were only three full-year study abroad students in Italy from Northwestern, and I was one of them.



JOHN SECARAS: Looking Ahead to Senior Year

I am from neighboring Wilmette, IL, and, like other current and recently graduated students, majoring in American Studies and Legal Studies. I am also a member of the Brady Scholars Program in Ethics and Civic Life, rounding out a trio of closely-knit and remarkably specialized programs that collectively have offered a mosaic of unique perspectives throughout my time at Northwestern. My interests in the intersection of law, economics, and society have afforded me the opportunity to conduct research with Professor Bruce Carruthers in the Department of Sociology, and I hope that some of this work will contribute to my upcoming senior thesis.

Outside of the classroom, I serve as Editor-in-Chief of the Northwestern Interdisciplinary Law Review, as an advisor for the ASG Sustainability Committee, and hold various leadership positions in my fraternity. My time in the American Studies Program has driven me to explore many new fields of study. Upon completing my undergraduate degree, I hope to attend law school.

THOMAS ROUSSE: Returning for a JD-PhD Program

It's hard to believe it's been seven years since my last first year at Northwestern! As a freshman in 2006, I never could have guessed I'd be coming back to Evanston for a JD-PhD program after studying videogames for two years in Copenhagen, but here I am. The Program in American Studies has been a tremendous influence: the Games Analysis Master's at IT University of Copenhagen and the Media, Technology and Society program in Northwestern's Department of Communications share American Studies' interdisciplinarity and emphasis on intellectual freedom. Even more, my journey to law school began in the American Studies seminar room, when my future advisor Martin Redish asked if I thought video games were protected by the First Amendment, and my path to becoming a Communications graduate student started in the Director's office, when Kate Baldwin asked during my senior year why I hadn't taken any Communications classes. After two years away from Chicago, I find it looking more like Copenhagen than when I left it, with an energized biking community and a thriving independent game development scene. Meanwhile, as a Science Studies cluster fellow, I'll be seeing plenty of my old stomping grounds, the basement of University Hall. Even in Copenhagen, I kept learning about America, gaining the perspective of Danes, Icelanders, Belgians, Romanians, Germans, Australians, Maltese and others from Europe and beyond. The American Studies curriculum gave me the flexibility to study whatever I wanted as well as the skills and intellectual breadth necessary to make my unique course of study a reality. It's great to be back! | *Class of 2010*



After a year of work, the seniors excitedly hand in their thesis projects on Monday, April 30, 2013.

Select Descriptions

In 1965 President Johnson officially linked the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island as one national monument, but the two sites remained symbolically disconnected. This changed in 1982 when President Reagan appointed Iacocca as Chairman of the Statue of Liberty- Ellis Island Foundation. In order to fundraise, Iacocca created an adoptive narrative between the two sites. An adoptive narrative refers to the symbolic blending of two entities in which both entities take on characteristics of the other one. In this thesis, the adoptive narrative suggests that Ellis Island became a symbol of liberty and the Statue of Liberty became a more representative symbol of immigration and American identity. I am grateful to have been a part of the 2013 American Studies Cohort. American Studies has been one of my communities on campus and I so glad that I had the opportunity to get to know the students, faculty, and staff.

As my thesis topic suggests, I have a love for New York and will be moving there this fall.

SAMMIE OFFSAY

CLASS OF 2013 SENIORS

AHSIM AZIM

Breaking the Iron Triangle: Unchanging PL 480 from 1985-2013 (Adviser: Professor Jeff Rice, WCAS Advising & History)

WILL BLOOM

“To War, Not to Court”: Changing Understandings of Terrorism, 1998-2001 (Adviser: Carl Smith, English & History)

EMILY DAVIDSON

Novus Ordo Collegiorum: The History of the Decline and Fall of the Classics in the New Order of American Higher Education (Adviser: Professor William Haarlow, WCAS Advising & American Studies)

HYUNGJOO HAN

Alien Citizens to Student Ambassadors: The Relocation of Nisei Students from Internment Camps to College during World War II (Adviser: Professor Jinah Kim, Asian American Studies)

SARAH LOGAN

Obama Ya'll: Localized Political Performance as Electoral Strategy at the 2012 Democratic National Convention (Adviser: Professor Peter Civetta, Office of Fellowships & American Studies)

SAMANTHA OFFSAY

More Than Neighbors: The Adoptive Narrative of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty (Adviser: Professor Robert Orsi, Religious Studies)

CHRISTINA POWERS

Reimagining the Bootstrap Narrative: Vietnamese Refugee Resettlement and Community Formation in Post-1975 New Orleans (Adviser: Professor Simeon Man, American Studies & Asian American Studies)

BEN PURDY

In Living Color: White Racial Impersonation and the Civil Rights Movement, 1957-1964 (Adviser: Nitasha Sharma, African American Studies & Asian American Studies)

During my time at Northwestern, I have received an exceptional education from the American Studies Program (and a minor in Global Health). My experience in the program culminated with my senior project, which was generously supported by Professors Simeon Man and Ivy Wilson as well as a research grant from the Office of the Provost. Outside of the hallowed basement of University Hall, I taught sexual health workshops in Chicago Public Schools and led incoming freshmen on backpacking trips through Michigan's Porcupine Mountains. I even had a five-month stint in Southeast Asia, receiving a scholarship to study at the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. My post-graduation plans have led me to Washington, D.C., to pursue opportunities in education technology.

CHRISTINA POWERS

Before the start of my senior year, I came across an article pertaining to Japanese resettlement in Chicago during World War II, and this sparked my interest in the Nisei student relocation program, headed by the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC), a sub-branch of the Quaker organization, the American Friends Service Committee. The NJASRC facilitated the relocation of over 4,000 Nisei students from internment facilities to colleges and universities across the United States. While a large number of scholarly works already exists on the topic of Japanese American internment during World War II as a whole, very few scholars have studied and very little is known about the Nisei student relocation program. Consequently, I chose to write my thesis on the resettlement procedures and experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Despite their legal status as American citizens, the Japanese American students, a subset of the

interned Japanese population, had to demonstrate their citizenship not only to the NJASRC and the War Relocation Authority before they could leave the camps, but also to the school administrators and the communities in which they were placed, through high scholastic achievement, extracurricular involvements, and by thinking and behaving like an "American." The goal of my project was to facilitate understandings of how the state apparatus treats its own citizens, who in this case were the Nisei students, and how these subjects respond to the difficult situation in which they are positioned.

I am truly grateful to the American Studies Program, the Legal Studies Program, and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship for cultivating my intellectual curiosity and for teaching me the skills in research, which I will continue to hone as I embark on a new chapter in my life as a student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

HYUNGJOO HAN

Choosing Northwestern had everything to do with its distance from my hometown, and nothing to do with politics. If you had asked my high school self what the most influential aspects of my college career would be, the answer might have to do with classes, or friends, not a campaign, thesis, or American Studies. I did not claim in my admission essay that the program was my "academic dream come true," but like many of my classmates, I found American Studies to be my haven while at Northwestern. American Studies fostered and encouraged an interest and passion for the American political system. That interest culminated in my traveling to Charlotte for the 2012 Democratic National Convention—the subject of my senior thesis.

My time in Charlotte, many meetings with Professors Civetta and Wilson, and some probing questions in seminar, led me to examine how national party conventions have, at different times, served varied purposes. More specifically, I came to conclude that modern conventions have used, and more importantly should increasingly move toward, local engagement as a tool to best utilize campaign and convention resources in battleground states for the Electoral College. My thesis asserts that national party conventions should be used as a device to not simply exploit, but potentially create, battleground states in a presidential election. If my hunch is correct, I hope to see a Democratic Convention in Texas sometime in the near future.

I recently moved to Washington D.C., and will be working in the Public Affairs Office at the United States Treasury, continuing a path that I believe was only made possible with the support of the American Studies community.

SARAH LOGAN



Top (L-R): Stephen Wade talk from April 2013; Sean Boss, honorary American Studies major (who graduated in 2013 with a double major in History and Communication Studies); Bottom (L-R): Professor Belew's AMST 310 "American Vigilantes" seminar (Winter Quarter 2013); friends and family at the Senior Breakfast during Commencement Weekend 2013.

awards & recognition



AHSIN AZIM

cum laude

Edwin L. Shuman Essay Award, Department of English
English (Writing) Departmental Honors

WILLEM BLOOM

magna cum laude

Phi Beta Kappa
Certificate in Civic Engagement, SESP

HYUNGJOO HAN

summa cum laude

Phi Beta Kappa (elected Spring Quarter 2012)
Prize for Distinguished Honors Thesis, Legal Studies
Distinguished Undergraduate Essay Award, Asian American Studies
Outstanding Achievement Award, Asian American Studies

SARAH LOGAN

cum laude

SAMANTHA OFFSAY

cum laude

Outstanding Achievement in Yiddish Award, German Department

CHRISTINA POWERS

cum laude



The American Studies Class of 2013 lines up for the WCAS Convocation on June 22, 2013 (top); seniors at the WCAS convocation (middle); Professor Wilson with the seniors before convocation at the American Studies Senior Breakfast (bottom).

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