Winning Essay Wrestles with Postmodern Depiction of Icelandic/Canadian Identities

Professor Robert G. Gunderson, founding director of the IU American Studies Program, established the Virginia La Follette Gunderson award in 1985; it has recognized outstanding graduate student essays since 1986. This year David Church, a doctoral student in Communication & Culture, won the American Studies Gunderson prize for his essay "‘It All Happened in a Gimli We No Longer Know’: Canadian Postcolonialism, Contamination, and Tales from the Gimli Hospital."

Church's text is Guy Maddin's debut film, a 1988 dark comedy that explores questions of ethnic and national identity in the context of Second World settler colonialism and U.S. cultural imperialism. The frame tale is told from a hospital bed in Gimli, a Canadian town founded by Icelandic immigrants in the late nineteenth century. Church argues that contamination extends beyond corporeal disease in Tales: Maddin uses anachronistic film tropes and mixed narrative forms to undermine notions of pure ethnic identity, autonomous and egalitarian nation-states, and 'independent' artistry.

Inspired by Gimli Saga, a local history compiled in 1975, the film incorporates exaggerated signs of settler nationalism—costume, food, flags, narrative forms, customary behavior (such as glima wrestling) and other performances of Icelandic identity; it also relies on melodrama and the aesthetic conventions of the “part-talkie.” “In a sense,” writes Church, “[Maddin] deploys the imperium’s (past) representational modes in order to partially reclaim the settlers’ impure relationship with colonialism, confronting the paradoxical history of Canada’s own national-colonial project in the process.” He concludes that the film offers a “postcolonial challenge to narratives of cultural authenticity and historical periodization” by rejecting realism and taking stereotypes “to parodic excess.”

This essay joins others Church has written on cult cinema, horror films, and freakery; they have been published in venues that include Film Quarterly, Offscreen, and Disability Studies Quarterly. Last year, he edited Playing with Memories: Essays on Guy Maddin (U of Manitoba Press, 2009).

Research & Funding Opportunities

Women's History Research Grant
Penn State Harrisburg
deadline: 28 May 2010

The Penn State Harrisburg Library will award one $500-$3,000 grant to cover travel, accommodations, and other research-related expenses for a scholar who wishes to make significant and focused use of the extensive Alice Marshall Women's History Collection. To apply, visit www.libraries.psu.edu/pnl/harrisburg/asc/grants.html or contact Heidi Abbey (heidi.abbey@psu.edu).

Scholar in Residence, 2011-2012
Institute for Advanced Study
deadline: 1 November 2010

Each year, the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, sponsors a full year of research for a number of scholars-in-residence (PhD in hand). The School encourages social scientific work with an historical and humanistic bent; the thematic focus for 2011-2012 is “Moralties.” Before 1 November, submit an application online at www.sss.ias.edu.
calls for proposals

Indigenous Performance Research in the Americas

American Soc. for Theatre Research

deadline: 31 May 2010

“Indigenous Performance Research in the Americas: Bodies and Power” is a working session on Indigenous performance and methodologies for the upcoming 2010 American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) conference in Seattle. In keeping with the conference theme of “Embodying Power: Work Over Time,” session participants will grapple with questions of embodiment and power, including:

- How do scholars transcribe embodied memory, mark indigenous bodies, or reveal the ways in which Indigenous bodies have been “marked” historically?
- How does Indigenous performance challenge colonial power relations in the Americas?
- How is the actor-spectator interaction imagined in Indigenous performance?

Applicants should send proposals of 500 words or less (as Word attachments, with affiliation and full contact information) by 31 May 2010 to Ann Haugo (ahaugo@ilstu.edu) AND Tiffany Noell (tiffany.noell@asu.edu). For full information, see www.astr.org.

Women’s Studies

Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association

deadline: 15 June 2010

The Women’s Studies section of the Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association (MAPACA) seeks papers, panels and roundtables to discuss convergences of gender and popular culture at the annual MAPACA conference in Alexandria, VA, October 28-31, 2010. Interdisciplinary projects are welcome, and students (graduate and undergraduate) are encouraged to apply. By 15 June 2010, submit 250-word abstracts to Althea Tait (atait@odu.edu). For more information, visit www.mapaca.net.

“The Art of Language”

American Studies Assoc. of Turkey

deadline: 30 June 2010

The American Studies Association of Turkey will host the 34th International American Studies Conference November 3–5, 2010, in Alanya. Confirmed Speakers include Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, Cherrie Moraga, and Celia Herrera Rodriguez. The Association invites transdisciplinary proposals that consider the art of language as a cultural expression, broadly conceived. Possible themes include, but are not limited to: music/food/body adornment/domestic arts/architecture/speech behavior/verbal art as languages of cultural expression; language revitalization efforts; the visual word (graphic novels, political cartoons); language and identity; intercultural languages; political manipulations of language; ecologistics; self-writing; and the limits of language, especially for cultural expression. By June 30, send a 250- to 300-word abstract, as well as a 1- to 2-paragraph biographical description for each participant, to Tanfer Emin Tunc (asat2007@gmail.com). For the complete CFP, visit http://simplifyurl.com/4b0.

“Peoples, Publics, and Places of the Souths”

Southern American Studies Assoc.

deadline: 15 September 2010

The SASA 2011 conference “Peoples, Publics, and Places of the Souths” takes place in Atlanta, GA, February 17-19, 2011; proposals for interdisciplinary papers and panels that investigate interconnections among the U.S., hemispheric, and global Souths are now being accepted. Graduate student participation is welcome. Topics of inquiry might include post-plantation cultures; maritime/transoceanic networks; African American return South migrations; foodways; monuments, museums, and vernacular architecture; queer communities; performance traditions; contested terrains; etc. By 15 September, send a 150- to 200-word abstract and a one-page CV for each participant on an individual or session proposal to Christine Skwiot at cskwiot@gsu.edu.

Latin American and Caribbean Section

Southern Historical Association

deadline: 1 October 2010

LACS welcomes proposals for the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association, held this November in Baltimore, MD. Papers and panels on all aspects of Latin American and Caribbean History, including the fields of the borderlands and the Atlantic World, are welcome. All panelists must be members of LACS; for information, see www.tnstate.edu/lacs/. By 1 October, submit a 250-word abstract for each paper and a brief CV for each presenter to Dr. Ben Vinson (bvinson2@jhu.edu).

“Representations of the Urban & Suburban West”

Western American Literature

deadline: 1 January 2011

For a special issue, Western American Literature invites original interdisciplinary submissions examining the urban and suburban West in literature, film, television, memoirs, and other forms. Essays should not exceed 35 pages double-spaced, including endnotes and Works Cited. For complete guidelines, see www.usu.edu/westlit/submissions.htm. Send questions and submissions to guest editor Neil Campbell (n.campbell@derby.ac.uk).
American Magic Lantern Society convenes in Bton

For more than two hundred years, the Magic Lantern held sway over the Western popular imagination. This projection device eventually lost out to cinema, but at its height during the Victorian era it was a fixture in public institutions and in many middle-class homes. These early “slide shows” were accompanied by live music and narration; a form of social spectacle, they provided entertainment but also augmented political crusades and public education campaigns. In May, Bloomington will host a number of magic lantern events. Stop by the Lilly Library to peruse “The Magic Lantern & Victorian Culture,” or attend any of these intriguing events:

- Thursday, May 20: “Nickel Madness: A Nickelodeon Show” (Fine Arts Auditorium, 8 pm)
- Friday, May 21 - Sunday, May 23: Magic Lantern Convention (Bloomington Convention Center; day passes available at the door)
- Friday, May 21: “Magic Lantern Extravaganza” (Buskirk-Chumley, 7:30 pm)
- Saturday, May 22: “Picture the Songs,” a performance of American popular music and illustrated slides (Fine Arts Auditorium, 8 pm)

American Magic Lantern
Society convenes in Bton

Fall 2010

Undergraduate Courses

A100 What is America?

A200 Comparative American Identities
Interacial Romance and the United States (Amine)
Arabs in Hemispheric Literature (Halloran)

A201 U.S. Movements and Institutions
Computers in American Life and Culture (Abnet)
American West in Myth and History (Paddison)

A202 U.S. Arts and Media
Wear It to “Work It” or Wear It to Work: Sartorial Symbols in Late 20C America (Carter-David)

A275 Indigenous World Views in the Americas
Native Americans of the South (Snyder)

A298 Special Topics
Faulkner, Spanish American and Caribbean Authors (Cohn)

A300 The Image of America in the World
The Kennedys: An American Dynasty (Cullather)

A350 Topics in Interdisciplinary AMST
Song, Slams, Slogans: Poetry as Social Force (Christensen)
Playing with Difference: Popular Cultures of Asia in America (Inouye)
Sex, Lies, & Diaries: Untold Southern Stories (Myers)

A351 AMST in Transnational Contexts
Global Tourism (Selka)
“Chiropractic and Christianity: The Power of Pain to Adjust Cultural Alignments,” an article by Professor Candy Gunther Brown (Religious Studies), was published in the March 2010 issue of Church History.

Elizabeth Cafer du Plessis (History/American Studies) has published the essay “Alice French and the Indiana War Mothers: From World War I ‘kitchen soldiers’ to Postwar Immigrant Reformers” in Feminist Frontiers: Women Who Shaped the Midwest. The volume was edited by Yvonne Johnson and published by Truman State University Press.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, Ed Chamberlain (Comparative Literature/American Studies) taught “The Modern Novel in World Literature” and “American Literary Movements” at the University of Washington, Tacoma. In March 2010, he presented “Testing the Limits of Domesticity: Dissident Sexuality in Makeda Silvera’s The Heart Does Not Bend” at the Cultural Studies Association meeting in Berkeley, California.

Professor Denise Cruz (English) and Jordan Blackman are happy to announce the birth of their son, Nathaniel Warne Blackman. Born on April 12, Nathaniel weighed in at 7 lbs and 19.5 inches.


Professor Raymond J. DeMallie (Anthropology/Folklore & Ethnomusicology/Native American & Indigenous Studies) was chosen as the Fulbright keynote speaker for the biennial Maple Leaf and Eagle Conference at the University of Helsinki in May. The title of his presentation is “Black Elk’s European Adventure: A Lakota Explores the World of the White Men.” Begun in 1986, the Maple Leaf and Eagle has become one of the largest and most prestigious conferences in Europe for American and Canadian Studies.

In late June, Professor Ellen Dwyer (Criminal Justice/History) will travel to Paris to give a paper at the 15th annual meeting of Colloque internationale d’histoire des neurosciences. Her topic is neurological research after World War II.

In May, Education and Culture: The Journal of the John Dewey Society will publish an article by Professor Jesse Goodman (Education) entitled “Rorty’s Social Theory and the Narrative of U.S. History Curriculum.”

In April, Professor Colin Johnson (Gender Studies) presented “Overwhelming Minorities, Left and Right” at the joint meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society and North Central Sociological Association in Chicago. Later that month he delivered a paper entitled “Homosexuals From Haystacks: Gay Liberation and the Specter of Queer Majority in Rural California” at the Fifty-Second Annual Meeting of the Western Social Science Association in Reno, Nevada, where he also facilitated a roundtable discussion of J. L. Anderson’s book Industrializing the Corn Belt: Agriculture, Technology, and Environment, 1945-1972 (NIU Press, 2008). In April, he also learned that he had won the Trustees’ Teaching Award. Finally, he and co-conspirator Professor Mary L. Gray (Communication & Culture) were awarded a grant from the College Arts and Humanities Institute to support an upcoming workshop dealing with the future of rural queer studies.
Professor Michael Kaplan (Communication & Culture) has published *Friendship Fictions: The Rhetoric of Citizenship in the Liberal Imaginary* as part of the University of Alabama Press Series in Rhetoric, Culture & Social Critique. Teri Klassen (Folklore & Ethnomusicology) has received a Dissertation Fellowship from the American Association of University Women for the 2010-2011 academic year. She’ll use the funding to complete work on her dissertation, a study of quilting and interracial social relations in rural western Tennessee.

Standing Bear (Brad) Kroupa (Anthropology) received the 2010-2011 Native American and Indigenous Studies Fellowship. The award carries a stipend of $18,000, plus $500 in travel funds. In the fall, Kroupa will begin editing the Native American and Indigenous Studies newsletter, a position held this year by NAIS Fellow Joseph Stahlman.

During AY 2010-2011, Professor Jason McGraw (History/AMST) will be on leave at the Institute for Historical Studies, University of Texas at Austin. He’ll use the time away to finish his most recent manuscript, “The Work of Citizenship: Labor, Politics, and Race in Caribbean Colombia, 1850-1920.”

Kate Netzler (Religious Studies/American Studies) presented a paper entitled “Green Faith: Richard Cizik and Evangelical Environmental Rhetoric” at the IUB Religious Studies Graduate Student Symposium held in February.

In March, as part of a panel on urban landscapes, Ruth D. Reichard (History) presented “Infrastructure, Separation, and Inequality: The Streets of Indianapolis from 1890–1930” at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Environmental History in Portland, Oregon.

Shira Segal (Communication & Culture) received a travel grant to present a paper on representations of homebirth advocacy on the Internet. She attended the Consoling Passions Conference on Television, Audio, Video, New Media and Feminism at the University of Oregon at the end of April.

"The Indian Gentlemen of Choctaw Academy: Status and Sovereignty in Antebellum America." And she survived the Indy Mini-Marathon on May 8.

Professor Ellen Wu (History) was awarded an academic year residential fellowship by the Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Texas, Austin. During her time in Austin, Wu will complete her manuscript “The Origins of the Model Minority: Race and Asian American Citizenship in the Mid-Twentieth Century.” A Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship will also support this work during 2010-2011.

Check out the NAIS Newsletter

The PhD minor in Native American & Indigenous Studies allows students to focus on the histories, cultures, and literatures of Native American and Indigenous peoples in the Americas, within the broader context of colonial settlement and global contact. The NAIS newsletter, inaugurated this year, features NAIS student and faculty profiles, resource updates, and other information; find it online at www.indiana.edu/~amst/NAIS/newsletter.shtml. The April 2010 issue includes a discussion with IU Professor Serafín M. Coronel-Molina, a sociolinguist who specializes in Andean indigenous languages. In the interview, Coronel-Molina shares his perspectives on language revitalization efforts.
Support American Studies

No gift is too small!

Your charitable contributions will help develop resources necessary for a vibrant intellectual community and environment by adding books to our resource library, developing programs to encourage and support student research, creating a student travel grant, and implementing program activities and events.

Please support American Studies by donating to the AMST Foundation account. As a gift to a tax-exempt educational institution, 50% of your contribution can be deducted from the amount of your total state income tax. Note that this is a credit against taxes, not merely a deduction!

Contributions of any amount are appreciated. Please make checks payable to American Studies Foundation Account and send to: IU Foundation, Showalter House, State Road 46 and the Bypass, Bloomington, IN 47405.

American Studies salutes a talented class of 2010 graduates:

**Undergraduate Majors**
- Jason Baker, Alyssa McMath (double major in Criminal Justice), Justin Searle, Charles Siegel

**Undergraduate Minors**
- Eva D’Ambrosio (Political Science), Lindsey Potkanowicz (History), Annie Raeder (English), Sarah Renkert (International Studies, Spanish), Sarah Severe (Journalism), Ashley Urben (Sociology, Psychology)

**Combined PhDs**
- In April, David Higgins completed a combined PhD in English and American Studies. His dissertation is entitled “The Inward Urge: 1960s Science Fiction and Imperialism.”

Undergraduates showed up in force for the American Studies year-end pizza party; caught on camera were (from left to right) graduating AMST majors Charles Siegel, Alyssa McMath, and Justin Searle. We wish you well!

H-Amstdy list; 2010 Graduates

Join H-Amstdy! Since June 1993, the History and Humanities On-line Initiative (H-Net) has sponsored a moderated American Studies list called H-Amstdy. This forum focuses on the cultures of the United States and offers reviews of recent scholarship, as well as international perspectives on the study of American culture abroad. H-Amstdy facilitates discussions about cross-disciplinary approaches to research and teaching in American Studies, promotes professional networking, provides storage and retrieval of resource files, and fosters global communication among scholars. To subscribe, visit http://www.h-net.org/~amstdy/.