



Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities Awards for 2003-2004

October 15, 2003

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS: SOCIETY OF SCHOLARS

The Society of Scholars is composed of ten to fifteen UW faculty and graduate students holding research fellowships from the Simpson Center. The group meets regularly throughout the year to discuss their research in progress and common scholarly and intellectual interests.

Monica Azzolini (Assistant Professor, French & Italian Studies)

The Duke, the Physician and the Stars: Medicine, Power and Prophecy in Renaissance Milan

Azzolini's project explores the diffusion and celebration of scientific culture at the Court of the Sforza and argues for its fundamental role in shaping Italian intellectual history. As part of a book-length work, this project traces the study and practice of medicine and medical astrology at the court of Milan between 1450 and 1499, the year that marks the fall of the Sforza dynasty and the beginning of the French rule over Milan.

Yomi Braester (Associate Professor, Comparative Literature)

Urban Development and the Documentary Impulse in Chinese Cinema

Braester's book project investigates the relation between cinema, space, and memory in Beijing, Shanghai, and Taipei, from 1949 to the present. Based on close readings and on new archival material, his research reveals the architectural and political considerations in specific construction sites, contributes a new understanding of the stakes involved in the filmic representation of these and similar projects, and argues for the active role of cinema in constructing social space.

Sean Cocco (Dissertator, History)

A Garden of Green and Tender Plants: Naples, Vesuvius and the Natural World, 1500-1700

Cocco's project examines the intersection of nature and culture in early modern Italy through the cataclysmic narratives of Vesuvius and the Phlegraean Fields—two sites of sudden volcanic activity in the 16th and 17th centuries. Cocco argues that exploring the response to these assaults on the Neapolitan landscape provides a glimpse into the philosophical, scientific, and classical histories of this restless city.

Susan Glenn (Professor, History)

"Jewish Science": Public Self-Fashioning in the Age of Social Science

Glenn's project explores the tensions between cosmopolitanism and particularism in the public construction of Jewish identity in 20th-century America. Focusing on the work of Jewish social scientists, journalists, intellectuals, and writers, including refugee scholars from Europe, she examines the intellectual and theoretical frameworks through which Jews explained and interpreted their predicaments to each other and to the larger non-Jewish public.

Nina Goss (Dissertator, English)

The Struggle to Manage the Mandates to Both Speech and Silence in Holocaust Literature

The central agon of Holocaust studies is the representability of the kinds and degrees of the events' unprecedented destructions. By demonstrating different experiences of meaning in a range of Holocaust literature, and evaluating these experiences according to the reader each demands and prepares, Goss hopes to help her readers appreciate that this agon—and any crisis of historical meaning—must be confronted through individual encounters with the representations that will be the only available experience of the past.

James Gregory (Associate Professor, History)

The Southern Diaspora: How Black Southerners and White Southerners Rearranged Twentieth-Century America

Gregory's book project examines the "great migrations" of black southerners and white southerners to the cities and suburbs of the North and West between 1900 and 1980. Using a "binocular" strategy, the book compares experiences and examines the many ways that the Southern Diaspora changed America, especially the culture and politics of race and class.

Louisa Mackenzie (Assistant Professor, French & Italian Studies)

Landscape, Poetry, and Power: The Case of Sixteenth-Century France

Mackenzie's work on poetic representations of landscape in 16th-century France inscribes itself in a broader history of the relationship between landscape and ideology. Specifically, she reconsiders the articulations between poetic landscapes and the shifting national and regional sentiments of the French Renaissance, proposing that poetic landscapes perform important ideological work in the redefinition—and often in the challenging—of the notion of a French nation.

Andrew Nestingen (Assistant Professor, Scandinavian Studies)

Criminal Scandinavia: Genre, Imagined Belongings, and the Consequences of Globalization

Nesting's book project studies ways in which crime fictions were used to revise dominant notions of ethnic belonging in the Nordic nation-states during the 1980s through 1990s. The study employs the context of globalization to argue that these popular genres situate audiences in relation to transnational public spheres rather than bounded national ones.

Cynthia Steele (Professor, Comparative Literature, Spanish & Portuguese Studies)

Shards of History: Subaltern Stories from Chiapas

Steele's book compares conflicting versions of history and myth in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, as written by both Mayan and ladino (non-Indian) writers. It draws on postcolonial, subaltern, and feminist theories to address tensions between government support and political dissidence, Mayan traditionalism and human rights, and conflicting claims to authenticity and authority.

Todd Tietchen (Dissertator, English)

Productive State(s): Radical Democracy in the Globalizing U.S.

Tietchen's project examines Cold War intellectual and artistic production within the context of U.S. post-war political maneuvering. Despite the hindrances of Cold War anti-communism, an oppositional intelligentsia involved in a critical analysis of emerging U.S. globalism was able to generate vibrant oppositional thought and strategies. Tietchen argues that such developments demonstrate that the most potent strains of radical democratic and anti-imperialist thought emanate not from within the boundaries of a national intellectual tradition, but from extranational intellectual formations that work within and across national borders.

John Toews (Professor, History)

Freud, Masculinity and Viennese Modernism 1890-1918

Toews's study examines the problem of refashioning masculine identity in the emergence and evolution of Freud's oedipal theory, especially in terms of the way this theory is shaped in his letter exchanges with significant others and through the narrative constructions of the major clinical case studies. The development of Freud's theory of masculinity is contextually framed by the European "masculinity crisis" of the turn of the century and the emergence of early Modernism in Viennese literature and art.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2003-2004 SOCIETY OF SCHOLARS INCLUDE:

John Chesley (Alvord Graduate Fellow in the Humanities)

Livy's Thucydidean Narrative

Jodi Melamed (Woodrow Wilson Postdoctoral Fellow, English)

Killing Sympathies: Politics of Racial Meaning and Literary Value in the Imperial U.S.

Melamed's project historicizes racial liberalism in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s as a cultural politics, an epistemology, and, increasingly, a discourse of U.S. governmentality. Specifically, she investigates racial liberal reading practices deployed on African American literature in the period, arguing that such practices helped to consolidate liberal whiteness as a new dominant political subjectivity for white America. In addition, Melamed discusses how authors such as Himes, Du Bois, Hurston, and others used literary staging to challenge liberal thinking about literature, racial identity, reform, nation and U.S. global power.

CROSSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH INITIATIVE FOR ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

This grant program is designated for associate professors, who undertake a large share of teaching and committee work but rarely have resources for research and course development committed specifically to them. Faculty involved in this initiative devote Winter quarter of the academic year to a research project that will benefit from expertise in another area. Each chooses a faculty counterpart—in any department, discipline, or school other than the applicant's own—with whom she or he would value regular conversation and guidance. The pairs communicate throughout the year and present their research at the Simpson Center during Winter quarter.

Ellen Garvens (Associate Professor, Art)

An Artistic Investigation into Prosthetics

Garvens' project involves researching, observing and photographing prosthetic devices used at the University of Washington Medical Center. John Fergason, Director of the Division of Prosthetics-Orthotics, is assisting her in a greater understanding of the possibilities and workings of the devices. This research will offer creative solutions to her sculptural works fusing biological and mechanical elements.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Collaborative Research Groups consist of faculty members and graduate students from various departments pursuing interdisciplinary research projects in the humanities. These groups may invite outside guests and speakers and are encouraged to develop a Humanities Graduate Seminar focusing on the subject of the research project.

Cultural Exchange Along the Silk Road: History, Art, Religion

Cynthea Bogel (Art History), Kyoko Tokuno (Comparative Religion, Jackson School of International Studies), and Daniel Waugh (History)

This project is developing web-based material and curriculum dealing with the "Silk Road" to support the expansion of the UW's Silk Road curriculum. The work involves writing web pages, digitizing images, and to the extent possible, translating and editing texts which have not been previously made available to English-speaking audiences.

Literacies of Transnational Migration

Jeffrey Chiu (English) and Kellie Holzer (English)

This year-long series of quarterly panel discussions and reading group meetings examines migrations as new flows of images, ideas and bodies constituted by reconfigured political, social and economic terrains and practices in transnational times. The series seeks to intervene in transnational theory and critique by staging interdisciplinary conversations on the study of migrations, creating collaborative endeavors that synthesize a variety of institutional locations, and generating new knowledge formations.

The Modern Girl Around the World

Tani Barlow (Women Studies), Madeleine Dong (History and Jackson School of International Studies), Uta Poiger (History), Priti Ramamurthy (Women Studies), Lynn Thomas (History), and Alys Weinbaum (English)

This collaborative and comparative project investigates the phenomenon of the Modern Girl as she made her appearance in societies all over the world during the 20th century, with a special focus on international commodity flows, colonial relations, and new media. Following a successful lectures series and presentations of their initial findings at several conferences, the group offered several undergraduate and graduate courses. The next phase focuses on co-organizing an international conference and publishing an anthology.

PUBLIC HUMANITIES: ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

One of the missions of the Simpson Center for the Humanities is to knit together the academic and civic communities through public humanities projects. The following projects combine research, teaching, and public events to share humanistic learning broadly, extend the teaching mission of the university outside the campus to the community and the polis as a whole, and urge on scholars a renewed sense of civic responsibility and participation in the public sphere.

"Icon and Transformation" at the Jacob Lawrence Gallery

Stevan Harrell (Anthropology and Burke Museum) and Christopher Ozubko (Art)

This art exhibit, curated by Charles McKhann (Whitman College), Yang Fuquan (Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences), and Zhang Yunling (Yunnan Museum of Ethnography), showcases both the traditional ritual art of the dongba priesthood of the Naxi people of northwest Yunnan and the contemporary works created by Naxi artists innovating on the basis of the old ritual tradition. In addition to the exhibit itself, the project features two lectures on Naxi arts, a gallery tour by Professor McKhann, and a panel with Naxi artists and Northwest Native American artists.

Reverent Remembrance: Honoring the Dead

James Nason (Burke Museum)

For thousands of years human communities have prepared their dead for the afterlife and honored them in annual community celebrations that host the spirits of the deceased. Opening October 2, 2003, this Burke Museum exhibition explores the ancient Celtic and European roots of Halloween, the colorful and dramatic Mexican Day of the Dead, the roots of mummification and other death rituals in ancient Egypt, Indonesian cliff burials, and modern American memorials, including those following the 9/11 tragedy. This provocative new exhibit explores ceremonies where “the dead are always welcome, even if death itself is not.”

CROSSDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIA, COLLOQUIA, AND CONFERENCES

The following conferences and symposia bring scholars from a variety of disciplines and institutions around the world to the University of Washington. Several of the projects feature a public dimension, such as an art exhibition or performance, which expands their boundaries beyond the campus to the Seattle-area community as a whole.

Conference on Information, Silence and Sanctuary

David Levy (Information School)

In recognition of the emerging problems of the “information age,” this conference explores the current state of information imbalance, begins to map its causes and conditions, and proposes remedial actions. The conference includes a keynote lecture, public forum, and panel discussion at Town Hall in Seattle.

Felliniana: An International Conference Celebrating Fellini's Cultural Legacy

Raimonda Modiano (English), Lance Rhoades (English), Albert Sbragia (French and Italian Studies), and Kari Tupper (Women Studies and Comparative History of Ideas)

Felliniana brings together the world's leading experts on cinema, art history, music, psychoanalysis, and feminist criticism, as well as Italian government officials and celebrated film directors and actors, to present a wide-ranging examination of Fellini's cultural legacy ten years after his death. Highlights include a Fellini film festival, an academic conference, a lecture series, an art exhibit of original drawings by Fellini at the Henry Art Gallery, an exhibit of photographs on the film *8 1/2* from the collection of Tazio Secchiaroli, and musical performances by the Orchestra Nostalgico from San Francisco.

Human Rights From the Bottom Up

Michael McCann (Political Science) and Angelina Godoy (Jackson School of International Studies)

This series of events co-sponsored by the Comparative Law and Society Studies Center aims to examine human rights issues and institutions from the perspectives of the individuals and communities in whom rights are vested—and particularly of those in marginalized communities, whose rights are most frequently violated. Activities include a speaker series in Autumn and Winter 2003, culminating in an international, interdisciplinary conference on this theme in Spring 2004.

Engaging the Culture of Power In and Out of the Classroom

Stacy Grooters (English) and Brooke Stafford (English)

This series of lectures and accompanying workshops aims to investigate the workings of what Lisa Delpit terms “the culture of power” that operates within educational systems. More precisely, the series attempts to illuminate the ways “scholarly” practices and structures outside the classroom serve to perpetuate the influence of the culture of power within it.

Religion, Conflict, and Violence: Exploring Patterns Past and Present, East and West

Kyoko Tokuno (Comparative Religion, Jackson School of International Studies) and James Wellman (Comparative Religion, Jackson School of International Studies)

Recent religious violence in the West and East has come as a surprise to some; yet, as this series argues, violence and religion have long been associated. This series will compare contemporary and pre-modern religious conflict, cross-culturally and across world religions in order to illuminate patterns of violence and their effect on the modern world.

CROSSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CLUSTERS

Simpson Center Crossdisciplinary Research Clusters are intended to bring together, from various departments and disciplines, faculty and graduate students with shared research interests to seed new and vital activity in the humanities. Lecture series and colloquia generally accompany the research clusters.

Early Modern Research Group (EMERGE)

Louisa Mackenzie (French and Italian Studies) and Benjamin Schmidt (History)

EMERGE explores early modernity from a transnational perspective—looking not only across Europe but also to the Americas, Asia, and Africa—and within a generous time frame, producing a more holistic perspective of cultural production than traditionally allotted to the Renaissance and thus allowing a deeper excavation of the period between the Middle Ages and Modernity. The project features lectures dedicated to the exploration of society and culture in the early modern period.

Expanding Disciplinary Representation in Digital Media Scholarship

Kirsten Foot (Communication), Beth Kolko (Technical Communication), and David Silver (Communication)

This interdisciplinary group of scholars engaged with the cultural transformations associated with new media sponsors study groups and presentations and encourages members to collaborate with community members and other disciplines. Activities throughout the year include presentations from scholars within the UW community and three outside speakers. The group also sponsors a series of networking receptions that provide outreach and identify collaboration opportunities for people in various disciplines whose interests include new media.

Science Studies

Monica Azzolini (French & Italian Studies), Arthur Fine (Philosophy), and Simon Werrett (History)

This speaker series addresses the flourishing interdisciplinary field of science studies, exploring the history, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology of the natural sciences, medicine, and technology. Six distinguished scholars whose work is representative of the interdisciplinary nature of the field will present their work over the course of the year, with opportunities for further discussion and interaction organized around each lecture.

Studies in Emotion and Affect

Carolyn Allen (English), Gillian Harkins (English), Jodi Melamed (English), and Kathleen Woodward (English)

The Studies in Emotion and Affect Research Group explores the fault lines of this invigorating interdisciplinary field of study. Rather than presuming the coherence of the field, the group investigates the different and sometimes incompatible objects, methods, and ends of scholarship carried on under this rubric, comparing research methods and hermeneutic models within and across disciplines. The project revolves around a speaker series of distinguished scholars whose work influences, appeals to, and challenges a broad range of scholars in the humanities and the social sciences.

SIMPSON CENTER CROSSDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE SEMINARS

Taught under the rubric of Humanities 596, crossdisciplinary graduate seminars focus on faculty members' current research. The seminars are open to graduate students across disciplines and departments and allow both faculty and graduate students to enrich their work through multi-disciplinary exchange that would not normally be possible through regular departmental graduate seminars.

Letters Writing Novels (Spring Quarter)

Thomas Lockwood (English) and Dianah Jackson (French & Italian Studies)

The Anglo-French cross-channel development of epistolary fiction is one of the vital constituents of the larger history of the modern novel. This course aims to give students an opportunity to study this very important cultural and literary history of the "letter-writing novel" in eighteenth-century England and France and to reflect on its theoretical implications in an interdisciplinary setting .

PROPOSAL WRITING INCENTIVE AWARD

In an effort to encourage the submission of large-scale proposals in the humanities, arts, and humanistic social sciences, the Simpson Center sponsors faculty at any rank who are intending to write proposals to major agencies and foundations, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Ford Foundation.

Texts and Teachers NEH Proposal

Laurie George (English) and Gary Handwerk (English and Comparative Literature)

This proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities is for a grant to significantly expand Texts and Teachers, a national program initiated at the UW in 1999, which is designed to foster ongoing curricular development and collaboration between university literature departments and high school language arts programs.