



## Simpson Center for the Humanities Awards for 2005-2006

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### RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS: SOCIETY OF SCHOLARS

The Society of Scholars is an intellectual community in which humanists of diverse generations, academic ranks, and departmental affiliations contribute to and learn from one another's work. Members are selected competitively and are awarded research fellowships from the Simpson Center in order to pursue individual projects. The group meets biweekly throughout the year to discuss their research in progress and is composed of faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows.

**Robert Abrams** (Associate Professor, English)

*Bad Housekeeping: American Domesticity and the Grotesque*

Abrams explores the way the grotesque lays siege to domestic frameworks and values in 19<sup>th</sup>-century American literature and painting. In works ranging from Lily Martin Spencer's *Truth Unveiling Falsehood* to Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," the grotesque, Abrams argues, opens up a range and depth of existential possibility otherwise banished from mainstream, officially sanctioned representations—often as prescriptive as they are descriptive—of American home and family life.

**Richard Block** (Assistant Professor, Germanics)

*From Classical Weimar to Zion: Remapping a Literary History through Textual Configurations of Homosexuality*

Block's working thesis asserts that race emerged as a privileged category to anchor the shifting modalities of ethnicity and sexuality and serves as well to re-mark the Jew as queer and thus absolutely different. He also examines how Jewish responses to this turn give rise to a literary Zionism.

**Nicole Calian** (Dissertator, Germanics)

*Re-Inventing the Human Being: Kant and the Discourse of Anthropology*

Calian's dissertation analyzes the emergence of anthropology as a science in eighteenth-century Germany as it develops against the backdrop of the process of secularization and the metaphysical void created by this process. Immanuel Kant's seminal lectures on pragmatic anthropology exemplify the new understanding and shaping of this knowledge-based discipline as it takes hold during the Enlightenment.

**Catherine Connors** (Associate Professor, Classics)

*Roman Geographies*

Connors's project examines representations of geography in Roman literary, philosophical, scientific, and visual texts, exploring the ways in which geographical information communicates ideological assumptions about the nature and scope of ancient Roman Imperial power.

**Evelyne Ender** (Associate Professor, French & Italian Studies)

*Imagining Gender*

Ender's project focuses on gender at the crossroads between aesthetics and autobiography in works by H. F. Amiel, Henry James, Thomas Cottle, B. Morisot, and G. Caillebotte. She argues that each of these artists engages in a work of imagination and memory that aims for "goodness" that is an empathetic engagement with forms of experience that are marked by sexual difference.

**Nicholas Halmi** (Assistant Professor, English)

*The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol*

This project conducts an interdisciplinary, comparative study of a distinctive concept of the symbol formulated by German and British writers in the Romantic period (c. 1780-1830). It aims to explain how this concept, which remained significant in various disciplines (literary criticism,

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psychology, theology) into the twentieth century, developed in response to Romantic crises in the understanding of the mind, nature, the organization of knowledge, and the structure of human society.

**Reşat Kasaba** (Professor, International Studies) *Empire, States, and People*

Kasaba's project studies the new policies, institutions, and ideologies that developed in the nineteenth century to establish a close control over the territories and the communities that had been ruled by the Ottoman Empire for more than four hundred years. The study contends that these shifts in state practices and ideologies prepared the groundwork for the transitions from the Ottoman Empire to the new nation states at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Jennifer Ladino** (Dissertator, English)

*Back to Nature: American Nostalgia from the Closed Frontier to the End of Nature*

Ladino is writing a genealogy of nostalgia for nature in American literature and culture since 1980, sketching dominant forms of nostalgia that take nature as an object—such as nostalgia for Edenic, unoccupied landscapes or for the wild, untamed frontier—and also tracking an undercurrent of progressive “counter-nostalgia” for nature that has imagined more productive ends. Her project suggests that counter-nostalgia—as a narrative catalyst, an individual emotional experience, or a source of collective consciousness—can model or facilitate social justice.

**Kara Reilly** (Dissertator, Drama)

*Automata and Mechanical Theatres: A Spectacular History of Machine-Based Mimesis*

Reilly's project explores automata and mechanical theatres as immediate precursors to our digital world; they bear the evidentiary traces of the long history of mechanized spectacle. While we might call the technology of our postmodern world a “digital” culture, and the older technologies of automata “analogue” culture, this study explores specific cultural performances that generated wonder through the spectacle of theatrical technology from the Italian Renaissance to the present.

**Brian Reed** (Assistant Professor, English)

*Cross-Media Exchange in the New York Schools of Poetry and Painting*

Reed's project addresses a fundamental question—what is an artistic medium—by exploring the interzone between the purely verbal and visual arts. It examines a series of collaborations, borrowings, and other exchanges between avant-garde poets and painters who were working in close proximity in the years 1950-1975.

**David Shields** (Professor, English)

*Positions: The Arc of a Body*

Shields' book project is an exploration of the terrors and pleasures of having a body: the animal joy of childhood, adolescence's sexual frenzy, the physical breakdown of middle age, old age's confrontation with oblivion. A major thread is the symbiosis of sex and death; a major goal of the book is to make readers feel, in their own bones, the fact of mortality.

**Nikhil Pal Singh** (Associate Professor, History)

*Exceptional Empire: A Short History of U.S. Imperialism*

Singh's project explores the problematic of U.S. imperialism in comparative historical perspective. Insisting upon the institutional and ideological specificity of U.S. state violence and power projection across time, it also inquires into the historical continuities, legal and philosophical convergences between liberal empire, settler colonialism, and fascism.

**Benjamin Stenberg** (Alvord Graduate Fellow in the Humanities, Philosophy)

*Toward a Linguistic Conception of Thought*

Stenberg's dissertation addresses the relationship between thought and language. Specifically, he is attempting to develop the philosophical foundation for the view that thought depends upon language: in order to think one must be a well-practiced member of a linguistic community because thoughts themselves are in fact constituted by linguistic symbols.

## **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 committed specifically to them. Faculty involved in this initiative devote a 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.

**Gordana P. Crnković** (Slavic Languages & Literatures)

*“Something Strange and Valuable”*: *The Spanish Civil War, Yugoslav Literature, and Visions of Socialism and Anti-Nationalism in the Former Yugoslavia*

This project looks at the ways in which Yugoslav literature “read” and incorporated in its own production a vision of socialism originated in or related to the Spanish Civil War. It also explores how and why the broader Yugoslav-Spanish literary connection enforced the anti-nationalist tendencies of Yugoslav literature and culture and why Yugoslav writers returned to the topic of the Spanish Civil War. Anthony Geist, Professor and Chair of Spanish and Portuguese Studies and one of the foremost American experts on the Spanish Civil War, will be Crnkovic’s faculty counterpart for this project.

**Steven Herbert** (Geography)

*Protest, Space, and Law: The Territorial Containment of Speech*

Herbert’s work will examine the jurisprudential history of key legal cases that address the spatial regulation of speech as a part of a larger project focused on the increased territorial containment of political protest. With the assistance of Gail Stygall, Associate Professor of English, he will read these cases as narratives of place, to ascertain the geographic imaginations in play in legal contests that seek to define whether and what kind of speech is allowable in particular spaces.

**Lucy Jarosz** (Geography)

*Defining Food Security in a Time of Insecurity*

Jarosz’s project examines the power of language in redefining world hunger as “food security” and “food insecurity” within the contexts of mainstream ideologies concern, Professor of English, who will assist her in analyzing how the strategic deployment of language in the service of particular visions of globalization, international development, and poverty have specific political and economic implications as well as material consequences.

## **CROSSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CLUSTERS**

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

### **Critical Medical Humanities**

*Organized by Janelle Taylor (Anthropology), Kelly Fryer-Edwards (Medical History & Ethics), Sara Goering (Philosophy), Lorna Rhodes (Anthropology), Linda Nash (History) and Helene Starks (Medical History & Ethics)*

This research cluster engages scholarship emerging from perspectives that have pushed beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries in seeking to understand medicine in its many dimensions: as a socially authoritative form of knowledge about nature and the body; as a set of social practices; as a congeries of institutions; and as a site for the formation of subjectivities and for the exercise of governmentality. A faculty and graduate student reading group features visits from three outside speakers, once each quarter.

### **Cultural Dialogues in Opera**

*Organized by Shelley Lawson, Nichole Maiman, Stephen Rumph (Music History)*

Opera—with its combination of poetry, literature, drama, music, art, and dance—is the most inherently interdisciplinary of all musical genres. *Cultural Dialogues in Opera* brings opera scholars together from divergent fields by providing space to discuss their own research and to examine the writings of other scholars, organizing talks by guest speakers who will to share their interdisciplinary operatic research, and presenting films about or featuring opera.

### **Modernist Studies Group**

*Organized by Sacha Frey, Matthew Levy, and Matthew Vechinski (English)*

This graduate-student research cluster engages various issues related to modernism as an interdisciplinary formation. The cluster encourages the participation of students working on visual, musical, cultural, or literary modernisms and historical modernity. Two visiting scholars will be invited to lecture and offer small seminars on topics related to modernisms or modernity, and associated reading groups will be scheduled. The cluster will also organize a work-in-progress series featuring current scholarship of University of Washington faculty.

### **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 scholars towards a renewed sense of civic responsibility and participation in the public sphere.

#### **The Living Art of Miguel de Cervantes: A Public Commemoration of the *Quijote***

*Organized by Donald Gilbert-Santamaría (Spanish & Portuguese Studies)*

*The Living Art of Miguel de Cervantes* is a three-day public celebration of the 400th anniversary of the publication of *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, perhaps the best-known literary work in the Spanish language. The commemoration has two main objectives, both of which derive from our understanding of the *Quijote* as a “living” work of art. First, the project will highlight the broad influence of Cervantes’s work on later writers and artists who find themselves reinterpreting the novel for their own creative purposes. Second, the wide range of events that make up this commemoration are designed to encourage public engagement with Cervantes’s novel in new and creative ways, bringing it to life, so to speak, for a new generation of readers.

#### **Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project**

*Organized by James Gregory (History)*

*The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project* is a multi-year research project involving University of Washington students, faculty, community, and labor organizations. Its mission is to collect oral histories, photos, and other materials documenting the long history of civil rights struggles in Seattle and western Washington and to generate new research on the links between labor and racial justice campaigns in this region.

#### **The September Project 2005**

*Organized by David Silver (Communication)*

*The September Project* is a grassroots effort to encourage civic and campus events on freedom, democracy, and citizenship in libraries on or around September 11. Activities include reflection, discussion, and dialogue about the meaning of freedom, the role of information in promoting active citizenship, and the importance of literacy in making sense of the world around us. The project endeavors to increase and enhance participation locally, nationally, and internationally, and to nurture and sustain the project’s information commons.

#### **Silk Road Lecture and Seminar Series**

*Organized by Cynthea Bogel (Art History), Kyoko Tokuno (Jackson School of International Studies), Joel Walker (History), and Daniel Waugh (History)*

This project continues the initiative begun in 2002 with “Silk Road Seattle,” whose reach to a local, national, and international audience continues with its acclaimed website. Co-sponsored by the Silkroad Foundation, the new Silk Road lecture series will bring to campus specialists at the cutting edge of the study of Eurasian cultural history. Each will offer a public lecture and a seminar presentation.

## **LARGE-SCALE COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND/OR PUBLIC PROJECTS**

The following projects forge ties between disciplines and extend the academic work of the university into the community at large fulfilling both aspects of the Center's mission. Diverse University of Washington scholars with shared research interests come together to both seed new activity in the humanities and engage the public in this activity.

### **Cultural Studies Praxis Collective**

*Organized by Bruce Burgett (Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences and English), Kanta Kochhar-Lindgren (Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences)*

*The Cultural Studies Praxis Collective* is a multi-year collaboration of faculty and academic staff at University of Washington, Bothell, University of Washington, Seattle, and Cascadia Community College. It focuses on the integration of diverse projects intended to accomplish three long-term goals: first, to generate and disseminate new research on the multiple locations of the humanities; second, to initiate and institutionalize curricular innovation across the three campuses; and third, to build and develop arts and cultural pathways for community-based research and teaching. *The Collective* will host public forums this year at all three collaborating locations.

### **Latinos in U.S. Popular Music**

*Organized by Shannon Dudley (Ethnomusicology), Michelle Habell-Pallan (American Ethnic Studies), and Marisol Berrios Miranda (Ethnomusicology)*

Latino contributions to popular music in the United States are often either relegated to the margins and footnotes of a narrative dominated by the interaction of African and European Americans, or portrayed as an exotic resource for "American" musicians. This project works in opposition to these perspectives, researching the roles of U.S. Latino musicians as interpreters and disseminators of Latin American genres and highlighting their roles as innovators within genres of music that we understand to be indigenous to the United States, such as rock and roll, R&B, jazz, country/western, and hip hop.

## **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.

### **Cinema at City's Edge: Film and Urban Space in East Asia**

*Organized by Yomi Braester and James Tweedie (Comparative Literature)*

"Cinema at the City's Edge" is an international conference devoted to the historically new urban spaces under construction in East Asia and their representation in film and other media. As it investigates the ways that this transformation of Asian cityscapes is visualized and mediated, the conference will stage an interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars of cinema, architecture, and urban studies, and it will place developments in the PRC, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea within a regional context.

### **Feminist Dialogues on Social Justice: Forging Articulations Across U.S.-based Anti Racist and Transnational Feminisms**

*Organized by Judith Howard (Women Studies and Sociology), Nancy Kenney (Women Studies and Psychology), Serena Maurer (Women Studies), Michelle McGowan (Women Studies), Dipika Nath (Women Studies), and Priti Ramamurthy (Women Studies)*

This interdisciplinary conference will draw on U.S.-based anti-racist and transnational frameworks to conceptualize analytic and political connections across international and intranational perspectives, communities, and movements. The conference will generate analytics for the study of historical and contemporary national and transnational formations of genders, races, classes, sexualities, and other key systems of inequalities. These analytics will be articulated through three general themes: societally sanctioned violences, diasporas and migrations, and transnational sexualities.

### **Literary Vocations, Legal Fictions: A Conversation Across Law and Humanities**

*Organized by Gillian Harkins (English), Vicente Rafael (History), and Naomi Murakawa (Political Science)*

This project comprises a working group that gathers faculty and graduate students across the disciplines to read recent scholarship on national and international theories of race and justice, and a colloquium featuring the work of key scholars in the fields of law, literature, and critical race studies. Through these channels the project will examine the relation between national and transnational legal institutions, philosophical explorations of law and justice, and analyses of economic, political, and cultural systems of violence and redress, focusing on the emergence of critical race studies in these contexts.

### **Is a History of the Cultural Revolution Possible?**

*Organized by Tani Barlow (History and Women Studies)*

This workshop seeks to examine why and how a dispassionate, accurate, richly interpretive history of the Chinese Cultural Revolution might be written. The scholars involved seek ways to examine the historicity of the event and to address new questions to it. The workshop is held in honor of visiting Katz Lecturer Alain Badiou, whose involvement in Parisian Red Guard politics forms a complex strata of philosophy.

### **Public Rhetorics and Permanent War**

*Organized by Keith Feldman, Anoop Mirpuri, and Georgia Roberts (English)*

This year-long symposium invites four prominent scholars, activists, and cultural workers to engage in a dialogue on the production and the role of public rhetorics during what has been theorized as a state of globalized permanent war. Framed within a multidisciplinary, cultural studies perspective, this series will include a broad range of speakers who will engage the problematic of public culture in dialogue with broader debates surrounding globalization, empire, legal violence, and human rights.

### **WPA: Public Arts in a Time of Crisis**

*Organized by Barry Witham, Kara Reilly, Elizabeth Bonjean, Amy Boyce, and Sydney Cheek O'Donnell (Drama), and Sonnet Retman (American Ethnic Studies)*

This symposium will bring together scholars and artists to evaluate, interrogate, and celebrate the achievements of the largest arts funding project in the history of the United States, the Works Progress Administration. The three-day symposium will explore the fundamental issues affecting the arts in times of crisis: censorship, race as a defining characteristic of American national identity, the value of arts funding, and memory in cultural production.

### **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 is unavailable through regular departmental graduate seminars.

### **Postcolonial Visuality**

*Organized by Zahid Chaudhary (English)*

This course will provide students with a genealogy of the newly-expanding field of visual culture studies through a postcolonial optic. Revisiting debates such as the relationships between materiality and the image, history and simulacra, power and looking, the course elaborates the notions of the aesthetic through the specificity of postcolonial histories.