GREETINGS FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

American Studies is one of the youngest departments in Arts and Letters at Notre Dame but one of the most active in terms of engagement with other departments, institutes, and programs. This past academic year two faculty members received joint appointments in History, and several others participated in activities allied with American Studies.

Last fall nearly 90 students--a record number--took "Introduction to American Studies," a sign of continuing vibrancy in the department. In addition, we added new classes to the curriculum.
Since AMST came into existence at Notre Dame in the early 1970s--just as the University wisely welcomed women as students--our Alumni have distinguished themselves in numerous fields--law, education, journalism, public relations, business, and public history, to name a few.

You've probably learned that it's never easy to define "American Studies" when you're talking among others. So be it. You are who you are--with a deeper understanding of America, its peoples, cultures, institutions, and arts. Dare we note that this is valuable preparation for an unpredictable future in an unpredictable world?

We hope you enjoy reading this inaugural issue of the American Studies Newsletter.

Every best wish from campus,

Robert Schmuhl  
Walter H. Annenberg-Edmund P. Joyce Professor of American Studies and Journalism  
Chair, Department of American Studies

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Maria Do - Class of 2016

Study Abroad Program: New College, Oxford University

“I would say that the best parts of my time in Oxford are less grounded in the physicality of the city (although the cobblestone streets, ancient walls and dreaming spires hold such historical charm) than in the intellectual enrichment I have gained from studying here. The independent nature of one’s coursework in Oxford has not only encouraged me to pursue topics in History that suit my personal interests, but also affirmed my desire to become a life-long scholar. While spending a year abroad also meant putting a hold on my American Studies training, my encounters with the internationally diverse community of Oxonians has nonetheless kept fresh the questions that most interest the American Studies mind.”

Tyler Barron - Class of 2015

Tyler is one of 12 students nationwide to win a 2015 Native American Congressional Internship from the Udall Foundation. Barron will complete an intensive, 10-week internship in the summer of 2015. A member of the Bay Mills Indian Community, Barron will be interning in the office of Representative Raul Grijalva in Washington D.C.

“The Udall internship is deeply committed to helping those in the most need, and I think with my educational experiences at Notre Dame, particularly in American studies, I can more deeply understand those people and provide better insight on how to best help.”

Nicole Sganga - Class of 2015

Nicole, who graduated in May, is the recipient of the James E. and Barbara L. Murphy Award for excellence in journalism presented by the Gallivan Program of Journalism, Ethics & Democracy. As a student, Nicole had opportunities to intern at the Cannes Film Festival, the CBS London Bureau, (where she covered the birth of Prince George), and ‘60 Minutes’ in Washington DC.

Passionate about foreign affairs and international journalism, Nicole won a national competition hosted by the New York Times last summer. She was sent to Myanmar alongside Pulitzer Prize Winning columnist Nicholas Kristof to report on ethnic conflict and development. Nicole plans to continue refining her skills as a journalist when serving as a news associate at CBS News in New York, beginning with CBS This Morning. Read her New York Times blog here: http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/author/nicole

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Greg Hadley - Class of 2016

Greg Hadley, former Associate Sports Editor, has been elected to the position of Editor-in-Chief of The Observer for the 2015-2016 academic year. Greg is a double major in Political Science and American Studies with a minor in Journalism, Ethics and Democracy. “This position is both an honor and an opportunity, and I am very grateful to have it,” Hadley said.

The Rockville, Maryland, native has served as both Baraka Bouts and Bengal Bouts editor in 2013-2014 and covered the Notre Dame women’s basketball team and men’s lacrosse team during their Final Four runs last season. Greg has also covered Notre Dame women’s golf, men’s tennis, women’s soccer, cross country and track and field, and spent the past year helping to coordinate all of The Observer’s sports coverage. “We have a great group of people on staff, and I am confident that we will continue to be an outstanding news source for the rest of campus,” Hadley said. “I will continue to look for ways to learn as much as I can.”

Bridget Doyle - Class of 2016

Bridget spent this past spring semester in Washington DC taking courses and working as an intern in the Office of Special Events at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. She was instrumental in the planning of volunteer and docent appreciation ceremonies, cocktail receptions for outside companies, and a series of presentations on different aspects of American culture. “One of the best memories all semester was when Van Halen surprised all the guests with a few songs on the guitar while discussing music and his reinvention of rock and roll,” Doyle said.

Bridget loved the chance to work alongside historic displays of American culture, “the stories that we have built our own lives on” as she describes them. “Walking around the city and thinking about all the classes that I’ve taken and the things that I’ve learned about the politics, history and culture of the country - everything seemed to make so much more sense after experiencing Washington DC. I’m glad to now be back on campus for senior year now, but I wouldn’t trade my semester in D.C. for anything!”

Senior Theses 2015

Meg Handelman - "Headlines and Hashtags: The Story of Michael Brown and Ferguson"

Kelsey Johnson - "Fashioning a Rape Culture: Glamourizing and Resisting Sexual Violence in the High Fashion Industry"

Ted Korolyshun - "The Catholic School Niche: English Language Learners and Vouchers in Milwaukee and South Bend"

Caroline Schuitema - "Literary Environmentalism in the Desert Southwest"

Bailey Stavetski - "Atomic America and Australia: The Emergence of American and Australian Discourses on the Atomic Bomb"

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Thomas Tweed

Thomas Tweed, the W. Harold and Martha Welch Professor of American Studies and professor of History in Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters, was elected to lead the American Academy of Religion. He is currently serving as president in 2015. “It is a deep honor to lead the academy,” he says, “because it is the largest organization for scholars of religion in the world, with approximately 9,000 members.”

As president, Tweed will guide the strategic direction of the academy. He has chosen a theme for the year, Valuing the Study of Religion, which will be incorporated into the academy’s annual meeting, plenary sessions, and the work of some of its program units. Tweed’s research includes six books and a six-volume series of historical documents. His most recent book, America’s Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation’s Capital, received the American Academy of Religion’s 2012 Award for Excellence. In addition, Tweed will serve as the new Departmental Chair of American Studies, beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Robert Schmuhl

Robert Schmuhl, Walter H. Annenberg-Edmund P. Joyce Chair in American Studies and Journalism, was among the international scholars that contributed to the documentary television series, “1916: The Irish Rebellion,” produced by Notre Dame’s Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies. The series was broadcast worldwide during the centenary, which memorializes the events in Dublin on Easter Week a century ago, when an insurrection started a process that culminated in an independent Irish state and accelerated the disintegration of the British Empire.

The three-episode series, directed by award-winning Irish documentary maker Pat Collins and narrated by Oscar-nominated actor Liam Neeson, follows a chronological narrative while presenting the historical, political and cultural events of the uprising and the new and lasting relationships among the United States, Ireland and Britain that it brought about.
Sophie White

Sophie White, associate professor in the Department of American Studies, received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for her book project, *Voices of the African Diaspora Within and Beyond the Atlantic World*. As one of two winners from Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters for 2015, White continues the University’s record success in earning NEH fellowships. Arts and Letters faculty members have been awarded a total of 53 NEH fellowships since 1999—more than any other university in the country.

“I was thrilled to receive the grant,” White said. “It is a validation of the work I’m doing and also motivation to complete the project.” Her research is centered on the analysis of an extraordinary body of testimony by enslaved Africans in colonial Louisiana and beyond, and seeks to give voice to the verbal and non-verbal stories which enslaved individuals, forced into a global African diaspora, sought somehow to narrate. This is Professor White’s second N.E.H. fellowship. She also received one for her first book, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

Erika Doss

During the 2014-2015 academic year, Erika Doss was a Marta Sutton Weeks Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center, one of nine external fellows chosen from a highly selective pool of 400 applicants. During the fellowship year, Doss worked on her new book *Spiritual Moderns: Twentieth-Century American Artists and Religion*, a case study of five American artists that examines the significance of religious belief in the making and meaning of modern American art. Looking at American moderns ranging in stylistic diversity from Joseph Cornell and Andy Warhol to Agnes Pelton, Mark Tobey, and Mark Rothko, Doss’s new project considers why religion was largely excluded in the history of modern American art, especially as that history was shaped in the early through mid-twentieth century. Now back at Notre Dame, Doss hopes to complete *Spiritual Moderns* by summer 2016.
Conversation with Wil Haygood

An award-winning reporter for The Washington Post, Wil Haygood is the author of six books, including The Butler: A Witness to History. His articles about Eugene Allen, a White House butler, served as the basis for the screenplay of the popular film The Butler, which was released in 2013.

Haygood visited Notre Dame as this year’s Journalist-in-Residence of the John W. Gallivan Program in Journalism, Ethics & Democracy, discussing his ascent as a journalist and author. During his time on campus, he also spoke in classes and talked to students and faculty about journalism and writing.

Ferguson, MO: Open Forum

Jason Ruiz, associate professor of American Studies, and Dianne Pinderhughes, professor of Political Science and Africana Studies, hosted an open forum last September on the events in Ferguson, Mo., to discuss the implications of these events for racial justice in America.

Ruiz said the forum’s timeliness supplemented discussions people should have in and out of the classroom. “I’m teaching this class, Mixed Race America, and I thought Ferguson was an obvious place to start a critical exploration of race relations,” Ruiz said.

Several hundred people came to discuss the circumstances in Ferguson, which were still unfolding at the time. “Students, faculty, administrators, and staff discussed racial justice and police brutality in this interactive and open forum,” Ruiz said. “The event was folding into courses across several disciplines.”

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Field Trip to the Eiteljorg Museum

This February, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies Annie Coleman collaborated with American Studies Affiliate Professor Brian Collier on a trip to the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis for students in each of their classes: AMST 30185: Making the American West and AMST 30191: The Novel West, respectively.

The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art was founded by Indianapolis businessman and philanthropist Harrison Eiteljorg. The Eiteljorg collects and preserves high-quality Western art, Native American, and cultural objects. Its collection includes artists such as T.C. Cannon, N.C. Wyeth, and Georgia O’Keeffe. The institution is the only museum of its kind in the Midwest, and one of only two museums east of the Mississippi that explore both Native America and the American West. Students toured the exhibits and engaged in a panel discussion with three of the museum’s curators.

American Studies Graduation Reception

The Department of American Studies and the John W. Gallivan Program in Journalism, Ethics, and Democracy hosted its annual Senior Recognition and Graduation Reception this May in the O’Shaughnessy Great Hall. Faculty and parents gathered to recognize graduating seniors and their achievements in scholarship and service.

Award Winners:

- The Hugh O’Donnel Award for Academic Achievement in American Studies, Bailey Stavetski
- The J. Sinnott Meyers Award for Outstanding Service to the University Community - Scott Copa
- The Professor James Withey Award for Notable Achievement in Writing - Bailey Stavetski
- The Paul Neville Journalism Award for Excellence in Journalism - Ann Marie Jakubowski
- The James E. and Barbara L Murphy Award for Exceptional Journalism - Nicole Sganga
- The R.V. Ley Journalism Award for Achievement and Promise - Samantha Zuba
This spring, students in JED 30109: Multimedia Journalism had the opportunity to work individually with Tom Bettag, a Class of 1966 alumnus and member of the Gallivan Program Advisory Committee.

Bettag was executive producer of daily network news broadcasts for the past 19 years, 14 as executive producer of ABC News Nightline. Prior to joining ABC News in May 1991, Bettag spent 22 years at CBS News, serving as executive producer of CBS Evening News with Dan Rather from 1986 to 1991. During his tenure as Evening News executive producer, Bettag spearheaded the network’s critically acclaimed coverage of the Chinese student uprising in 1989 and, along with Rather, gained the first television interview with Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait.

Throughout the semester, students scheduled one-on-one conferences with Bettag via Skype to discuss their individual projects and aspirations as future journalists. Later in the spring, Bettag came to campus and met with each student in-person to continue the mentorship process.

Bettag’s expertise and advice has been integral to the success of the Gallivan Journalism Program. The program is fortunate to be able to financially sponsor summer intern experiences at several news organizations throughout the country.

**JED Summer Internships 2015:**

American Studies Abroad

Notre Dame’s Study Abroad now offers the opportunity to study in England through an exchange program for a semester or a year at the University of East Anglia. The University welcomes students from all over the world.

The UEA School of American Studies is recognized as one of the best American Studies departments in the United Kingdom, ranked first for student satisfaction in the 2012 National Student survey. The School also has a special reputation in creative writing. The School houses the Arthur Miller Centre for American Studies, which hosts an annual international literary festival that in the past has featured such notables as Arthur Miller, Normal Mailer, and Tony Morrison. This past academic year, University of East Anglia student Claudette Gaia studied at Notre Dame through a exchange program. Next spring, Notre Dame juniors Evelyn Trejo and Katie Laskey will enroll in the UEA School of American Studies.

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