The Fourth Annual Graduate Student Multidisciplinary Conference

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

Brought to you by:

Graduate Student Council
and
Graduate School

Honorary Speaker
Professor Robert J.S. Ross, Ph.D.

“Combining Political Activism with an Academic Career”

Dr. Ross received a B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1963, and an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1966 and 1975, respectively. He has been at Clark since 1972. He is Director of the International Studies Stream and among the founders of the program in Urban Development and Social Change. He is affiliated with the programs in Peace Studies, Urban Development and Social Change, Ethics and Public Policy, and Race and Ethnic Relations.

Conference Schedule of Events

9:30 a.m. Refreshments
Abrahms Gallery*

9:50 am  Dr. Nancy Budwig, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
          Opening Remarks
          Grace Executive Conference Room

10:00 to 11:00 am  Paper Presentations
          Grace Executive Conference Room
          Lurie Executive Conference Room

11:00 to 12:30 pm  Poster Presentations
          Abrahms Gallery

11:15 to 12:15 pm  Paper Presentations
          Grace Executive Conference Room

12:15 to 1:00 pm  Lunch Break**

1:00 to 1:45 pm  Honorary Speaker
          Dr. Bob Ross, Sociology
          Grace Executive Conference Room

1:45 to 2:00 pm  Presentation of Graduate Student Travel Awards
          Grace Executive Conference Room

2:15 to 3:15 pm  Paper Presentations
          Grace Executive Conference Room
          Lurie Executive Conference Room

3:15 pm  Refreshments
          Abrahms Gallery

3:30 to 4:30 pm  Graduate Student Discussion Panel
          Grace Executive Conference Room

4:30 to 6:30 pm  Graduate School Reception
          Harrington House

* Abrahms Gallery is directly outside of Grace and Lurie Executive Conference Rooms on the 1st floor of the Higgins University Center
**Graduate Student Presenters, Organizers, and Alumni are invited to a luncheon in the Rosenblatt Room.
Bullying, Victimization, and Self-Esteem in Low-Income, Urban Adolescents
Alisha Pollastri (Psychology, Advisor: Esteban Cardemil)

Most research on bullying classifies children into three categories: bullies, victims, or non-involved, though recent studies have used a fourth category that describes children who are both bullies and victims. Research indicates that these “bully-victims” are more likely than other children to have behavioral, social, and psychological adjustment difficulties. Despite our growing understanding of this topic, there is a lack of such research in low-income, urban, and racial/ethnic minority adolescents. Such children may have different ways of engaging in and/or coping with bullying than their middle-class, Caucasian counterparts. The current study investigates the relationships among bullying, victimization, and self-esteem in a sample of 158 children from four schools in urban, low-income areas of Worcester. Results will be discussed, as well the implications for bullying prevention in urban schools.

Teaching Tomorrow: Political Literature for Children
Amber Vayo (English, Advisor: Meredith Neuman)

Children’s literature has until recently, been overlooked by many scholars. Since its beginnings children literature has taken on the difficult task of exploring political issues among these, slavery, conformity, government control, and, terrorism. Examining a few works from this century, The Witch of Blackbird Pond, A Wrinkle in Time, and the Harry Potter series, in their historical/political context shows how children are taught to cope with the vastness of the political crises that face them as they come of age.

The Second Generation – Suburban Asian American Teenagers in Their Formations of Identity
Katja Kurz (English, Advisor: Betsy Huang)

The conflict between first and second generations of Asian Americans that is usually caused by a break of tradition involving assimilation into U.S. mainstream society has been a major theme in Asian American fiction. I will apply Werner Sollors' terminology of “consent” and “descent” to explore identity formations of suburban Asian American teenagers portrayed in Gish Jen's novel Mona in the Promised Land and Justin Lin's film Better Luck Tomorrow. My analysis will reveal how the textual discourse on Asian American teenagers seriously challenges nativist WASP-only definitions of American identity such as formulated by scholars like Samuel P. Huntington, and instead suggests that the heterogeneous “ethnic” experiences determine the American overall experience. Lin's and Jen's redefinition of what it means to be “Asian” in America thus simultaneously implies fresh possibilities for being “American”.

An exiled German Jew persecuted as a Nazi? In search of Arnold Bergstraesser
Sebastian Liebold, Fulbright Scholar (English/History, Advisor: SunHee Gertz)

The focus of this paper is the German emigrant Arnold Bergstraesser, a Jewish professor from Heidelberg (school of Max Weber). He came to the US only in 1938, after his Jewish grandmother was discovered. In 1933, however, he was involved in a spectacular case at Heidelberg, when he helped to dismiss a colleague, who was a Jewish pacifist. In this time, he supported the Nazis with several publications, but considered himself as just “conservative”. Teaching in California after 1938, the FBI Enemy Control Unit was informed about his background, and consequently Bergstraesser was arrested two times – suspected to be a Nazi spy. Later, he taught as a professor at the University of Chicago and from 1954 on, back to Germany, he founded a well-known school at Freiberg. By this time, he was seen as reliable democrat. However, his past is not remembered in Germany and shall be revealed here.
Evaluation Different Development Scenarios for Santo Amaro Do Maranhao, A Fragile Landscape in NE Brazil  
Hicham Maalouf (IDCE, Advisor: Duncan Earle)

This case study compares and evaluates different development scenarios for the region of Lençóis Maranhenses, particularly in the community of Santo Amaro. This pristine area attracts more visitors each day due to its natural beauty. However, some potential dangers, such as the pavement of a short sandy road, might undermine the long-term viability of any tourism project there. I argue that tourism development should be constrained if it is to have long-term sustainability. This thesis aims to (1) present an assessment model to be used by different stakeholders when comparing development scenarios for the region, (2) identify tourism destinations with constraints (e.g. with difficulty of access) that were essential to their long-term development, and (3) make recommendations that scholars, infrastructure developers and policy-makers can use in the planning of the region. Given the assumptions underlying each scenario, results support the argument that paving the road is not the scenario that might lead Santo Amaro to long-term sustainable development.

Ecologically Significant Diversification Of Gene Function In The Evolution Of Nitrate Transporters In Fungi And Plants  
Jason Slot (Biology, Advisor: David Hibbett)

Fungi perform many ecological roles in the environment, and each role poses unique nutritional challenges. Through evolution, as fungi diversify and adapt to unique ecological niches and interact with other organisms, enzymes also change to accommodate nutritional challenges posed by those niches. We are investigating the evolution of an enzyme that is involved in the uptake of nutritional nitrogen from the environment. Patterns of changes in these enzymes can provide clues about how these enzymes function and how powerful a driving force in evolution nitrogen nutrition can be. Nitrogen pollution has been implicated in the loss of fungal diversity. Understanding how nitrogen has influenced the evolution of extant species improves our ability predict how certain pollutants from agriculture and industry may shape future ecosystems.

Carbon Capture and Storage technologies (CCS) and Perspectives of Environmental Advocacy Groups  
Preeti Verma (IDCE, Advisor: Jennie C Stephens)  
1st author: Jennie Stephens

As the idea of carbon capture and storage (CCS) has evolved during past fifteen years from a relatively obscure concept to an increasingly recognized approach to stabilize atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentrations, environmental advocacy groups have had limited, but growing interest in the advancement of CCS technologies. While several organizations have strongly opposed the idea of injecting CO₂ in the oceans, most of them have been hesitant to voice a position on geologic CO₂ storage. The lack of strong position results, from an attempt to balance the hesitancy of this “end-of-pipe” approach with the acceptance that such technologies will be necessary to stabilize atmospheric CO₂. The possibility of CCS being supported at the expense of existing energy alternatives is another major concern. This paper reviews the position of environmental advocacy organizations related to CCS and makes connection between limited action within the environmental community and low public awareness on CCS technologies.

Photoreceptor Morphology  
Kringle Daly (Physics, Advisor: Ranjan, Mukhopadhyay)

The human eye consists primarily of two photoreceptor structures, rods and cones. Cones are used for color and fine detail, while rods are responsible for vision at low levels of light. Rods are small cylinders that are composed of a stack of pancake like structures, with between 500-1000 pancakes in a human rod. Each individual pancake can be thought of as an individual sac with an enclosing membrane, a structure known as a vesicle. The shape of these vesicles is very important, where the mis-shaping of the vesicle can lead to disease. A study of energy minimizing, thermodynamically stable shapes was conducted using the Metropolis algorithm.
Maternal Responses To Toddler’s Verb Constructions: Their Relations To Early Verb Generalization
Juan Hu (Psychology, Advisor: Nancy Budwig)

Existing studies on the relation between caregiver input and children’s construction development focus on caregiver input prior to children’s production. No studies to date have tapped the effect of caregivers’ response after children’s constructions. The present study begins adding this important missing piece by examining caregivers’ responses to their 2 and 3 year-old children’s verb constructions. Analyses draw upon videotaped naturalistic interactions of 25 caregiver-child dyads during play scenarios and children’s performances in novel verb experiments (see Smith & Budwig, 2005; Ono & Budwig, 2005). Results examine several aspects of caregivers’ responses: 1) verb overlap; 2) altering construction type; 3) changing argument structure; 4) length of frame. Discussion focuses on the distinct characteristics of caregivers’ responses for these two age-groups and for the children who can generalize versus non-generalizing children, showing why an examination of caregiver responses after the child’s production is important.

Comparing regional land-cover trends and conservation efforts in central México
Zachary Christman (Geography, Advisors: John Rogan & Billie Turner)

Since its initial protection in the mid-1980s and recent expansion of the core reserve and buffer zones in 2000, the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve has faced continual pressure from local agriculture and the timber needs of expanding urban centers. The monarch winter habitat straddles the border of the states of México and Michoacán in Central México and is situated in the middle of the rapidly-changing Río Lerma watershed, stretching from the outskirts of México City west to Guadalajara. Through the use of coarse-resolution MODIS vegetation indices and classified land-cover products, this study questions whether the conservation effort faces unique challenges or if the types of land cover experiencing change in and around the delineated area of protection are the same as the changes occurring across the watershed.

Exploring The Nature And Outcomes Of Stigma Attached To War Babies
Sandina Begic (Psychology, Advisor: James Laird)

Civilians are increasingly becoming targeted by armed conflicts, and consequently protection of civilian victims of war is becoming one of the most prominent topics on global agenda. However, it appears that one group of civilians has been systematically omitted from this agenda, namely children born of wartime rape. In fact, it was only a decade ago that wartime rape has been recognized as war crime. The number of children born from wartime rape living in the world today is alarmingly high (conservative estimate is around 500,000), and they are often subjected to stigmatization, ostracism, and discriminatory treatment. Some of them do not even have a right to citizenship and hence are denied access to medical treatment and education. For these reasons it is important to assess and address their needs and the circumstances surrounding their existence in their communities and construct ways to ensure protection of their human rights.

Experience Induced Increase In Taste Discrimination
Kristina M. Gonzalez (Biology, Advisor: Linda M. Kennedy)
additional authors: Adiba Hassan and Linda M. Kennedy

Experience with fructose induces increased taste discrimination ability for glucose in humans. To investigate potential peripheral loci for the induction, we tested the effects of experience with acesulfame-K or Na-cyclamate on discrimination for glucose. Subjects briefly treated their tongues at home each day for 10 days with either blue-colored isosweet concentrations of Na-cyclamate or acesulfame-K or distilled water. On day 11 or 12, they tasted paired samples of green glucose and water in the laboratory and identified the “sweetener” in each pair. There was a significant difference in glucose discrimination among the groups. Subjects experienced with Na-cyclamate discriminated glucose as sweeter at lower concentrations than those experienced with either water or acesulfame-K. There was no difference in discrimination ability between water and acesulfame-K experienced subjects. The differential effects support a peripheral locus for the induction.

The Development of Verb Constructions: An Examination of Head Start Children
Prior studies on the language development of children from low income families have focused on children’s rates of vocabulary development. The majority of these children lag behind in vocabulary development in comparison with their middle class peers; however, children from low income families who are enrolled in Head Start programs are normative in their vocabulary productivity rates. The present study is the first to examine the development of verb constructions in Head Start children and to compare it with existing norms for middle class children. Results suggest that although Head Start children may look similar to middle class 3 year olds in their vocabulary, they are not able to be as productive with verbs as their 3 year old middle class peers. Discussion explores the implications of these findings with regard to the role of input in construction development and the ability of measures of verbal skills (e.g. PPVT) to assess rates of verb construction development.

Evaluating Different Development Scenarios for Santo Amaro Do Maranhão, a Fragile Landscape in NE Brazil
Hicham Maalouf (IDCE, Advisor: Duncan Earle)

This case study compares and evaluates different development scenarios for the region of Lençóis Maranhenses, particularly in the community of Santo Amaro. This pristine area attracts more visitors each day due to its natural beauty. However, some potential dangers, such as the pavement of a short sandy road, might undermine the long-term viability of any tourism project there. I argue that tourism development should be constrained if it is to have long-term sustainability. This thesis aims to (1) present an assessment model to be used by different stakeholders when comparing development scenarios for the region, (2) identify tourism destinations with constraints (e.g. with difficulty of access) that were essential to their long-term development, and (3) make recommendations that scholars, infrastructure developers and policy-makers can use in the planning of the region. Given the assumptions underlying each scenario, results support the argument that paving the road is not the scenario that might lead Santo Amaro to long-term sustainable development.

Phylogenetic Analysis of Glutamine Synthetase in Rhodophytes
Sohini Ghoshroy (Biology, Advisor: Deborah L. Robertson)

Photosynthetic eukaryotes are extremely diverse. They are found in four of the five recognized eukaryotic lineages and morphologically include unicellular and multicellular organisms. Photosynthesis in eukaryotes evolved via primary and secondary endosymbiotic associations. Rhodophytes hold a pivotal position in endosymbiosis; they arose via primary endosymbiosis and were the source of secondary endosymbiotic plastids in chromalveolates. Genes involved in metabolic pathways provide insights into the timing of endosymbiotic events and post-symbiotic gene reorganizations. Glutamine synthetase (GS; an essential enzyme involved in nitrogen metabolism) is well conserved and present in all organisms. Phylogenetic analyses of GS provided strong support for the monophyly of the photosynthetic eukaryotes. Within the rhodophytes two distinct GS clades were resolved suggesting an early divergence of the rhodophyte genes. We are currently sequencing the entire open reading frame to identify the cellular function of the gene products. This study will contribute to our understanding of nitrogen metabolism in rhodophytes and the endosymbiotic history of photosynthetic eukaryotes.

Graduate Student Reception

The Alumni Association and President and Mrs. Bassett cordially invite graduate faculty, graduate students, and alumni to a graduate school reception at Harrington House after the graduate student discussion panel.

4:30 to 6:30 pm
122 Woodland Street
This project introduces a geographic-epistemic approach to examining environmentally-related cultural texts. I develop the concept of 'intimate knowing', roughly equivalent to the Greek 'gnosis' or the Spanish 'conocer.' I model 'intimate knowing' as an analytical tool in a way that incorporates yet supercedes ideas of religion and spirituality; the idea of spirit-in-nature is discussed as an ever present ontological grounding for care of the land. What is most in focus in this new way of analysis is the development of an attentive relationship with the greater physical world. I apply an analysis on samplings of the written and spoken word from one local region, the Pinelands and adjacent parts of Southern New Jersey. By exposing and exploring such local people's expressions of 'intimate knowing,' I seek to show how individuals and communities might strengthen their own abilities to detect, evaluate, and enhance human embeddedness in natural systems.

Identities in Dialogue: Narrative Discourse as 'Homeless Placemaking' in the International Street Paper Movement

Erin Anderson (IDCE, Advisor: Laurie Ross)

While homelessness has emerged as a distinct category of otherness, silence, and exclusion in large urban centers, so have countless grassroots movements to take back the right to human dignity and a roof over every bed. This paper considers the ways in which such “homeless placemaking” occurs beyond the physical spaces of urban centers at a level of discourse through the street paper movement. Using published narratives of homeless writers as a point of entry, it analyzes street papers as a new social movement. It focuses on selected narratives from Seattle’s Real Change Newspaper, using discourse analysis to explore the ways in which these informal histories construct individual and collective movement identities. Viewing this process as a function of active and negotiated identity formation, this paper demonstrates how street paper narratives ultimately open new spaces for homeless selves in relation to the movement, mainstream society, and a stigmatized “homeless identity.”

Discourses Of Environment In Alaska: Spaces Of Oppression Or Spaces Of Resistance?

Lily Ray (Geography, Advisor: Dianne Rocheleau)

This political ecology paper explores ideas of socially-constructed nature, environmental discourses and governance in the context of interactions between dominant U.S cultures and Native Alaskan cultures. Specifically, this paper asks the questions: Do national and local environmental groups active in Alaska use discourses of environment to portray humans as separate from nature? Do environmental groups oppose Alaska Native subsistence resource use on the grounds of preservation? In order to address this question, I will first conduct a historical overview of land tenure relations in Alaska. In order to understand competing discourses of environment in Alaska and their implications for relations of power it is essential to first situate these discourses within the context of the land expropriations that occurred there. I will then analyze data collected from a snowball survey of the websites of environmental organizations active in Alaska in order to gain insight into popular uses of environmental discourses.

Manufacturing the Body Politic: The Corporate Person as Homo Economicus

Jayson Funke (Geography, Advisor: Richard Peet)

This paper argues that the extension of legal personhood and citizenship (and thus constitutional protections) to corporations resulted from fundamental contradictions between the capitalist laws of value and accumulation (Marx) and the philosophical tenets of political and economic liberalism manifest in the US Constitution. The resulting legal codification of the corporation as person and citizen is necessarily rooted in the Foucauldian conception of the state and its attempt to realize the ideal body politic. The economic crises in the late 19th century necessitated new production and social organizational structures that could provide a basis for renewed capital accumulation, and the railroad cartels play a central role in this process through primitive accumulation and organizational changes that increased efficiency in the pursuit of profits. Furthermore, the necessity to increase the circulation
of capital across space pushed the railroads westward resulting in legal challenges regulating interstate commerce, and ultimately the legal transformation of corporations into persons and citizens.

Join the Graduate Student Council

Be part of a thriving graduate student led organization on campus. By being part of the GSC you have the opportunity to participate in the social, academic, and administrative decisions affecting your life as a student at Clark. For more information go to our revamped website:

www.clarku.edu/students/gsc

2005-2006 Graduate Student Council Members

OFFICERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elisa Dry</td>
<td>Co-President</td>
<td><a href="mailto:edry@clarku.edu">edry@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Obrist</td>
<td>Co-President</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pobrist@clarku.edu">pobrist@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Carlson</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wcarlson@clarku.edu">wcarlson@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Golub</td>
<td>Communications Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jgolub@clarku.edu">jgolub@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Wally</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mwally@clarku.edu">mwally@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahesh Ramachandran</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mramachandran@clarku.edu">mramachandran@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Marvakov</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jmarvakov@clarku.edu">jmarvakov@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camilo Khatchikian</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ckhatchikian@clarku.edu">ckhatchikian@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shlomit Klopman</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sklopman@clarku.edu">sklopman@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benoit Parmentier</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bparmentier@clarku.edu">bparmentier@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Marriott</td>
<td>History</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amarriott@clarku.edu">amarriott@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Dubois</td>
<td>History</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ddubois@clarku.edu">ddubois@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Coniglio</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wconiglio@clarku.edu">wconiglio@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian Liebold</td>
<td>English</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sliebold@clarku.edu">sliebold@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becky Phillips</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rphillips@clarku.edu">rphillips@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sean Kong</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:xkong@clarku.edu">xkong@clarku.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrated Conservation with Development Projects: 
A Case-Study Based Research in Pu Mat National Park, Nghe An, Vietnam
Hang Nguyen (IDCE, Advisor: Dave Bell)

Biodiversity conservation in Pu Mat National Park in Vietnam faces constant threats from agricultural encroachment, wildlife poaching, fuel wood collection and illegal logging. The Objective of this study is to find the balance between biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development of a community near Pu Mat. It explores whether economic actions reduce pressure on the forest and if conservation intervention alleviates poverty. I collected primary data during in-depth interviews with local households and forest rangers and secondary data from governmental and non-governmental publications. The research result provides important theoretical and practical insights into the ICDP approach. It shows that the ICDP approach in Pu Mat National Park has improved protection of the forest, increased the living standard for so stakeholders and created strong feeling of ownership by beneficiaries. However, the project in Pu Mat failed to provide a market for agricultural products, which caused the living standards of the majority of local farmers remain the same.

Lessons from Kolkata: Community-based HIV/AIDS interventions, Sexual Rights, and Alternative Approaches to "Development"
Tanya Palit (IDCE, Advisors: Kiran Asher and Duncan Earle)

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), an organization operating in the red-light district of Kolkata, India, has operated an innovative community based HIV/AIDS prevention program for fifteen years. Though it began as a health intervention, this program soon shifted its focus "to address structural issues of gender, class and sexuality" in the sex trade and in Indian society more broadly. This study seeks to understand how a this kind of rights-based approach can inform approaches to "development" in India and other Third World countries.

Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Gendered Livelihoods, Gendered Landscapes
Ximena Rueda (Geography, Advisor: Billie Turner)

The purpose of this paper is to provide a conceptual framework to study the differential impacts that sustainable development and conservation policies have had on men and women’s livelihoods in the Southern Yucatan Peninsula, and in the landscapes they transform. To do so, this paper reformulates the sustainable livelihoods approach, based on concepts, epistemological critiques, and methodological innovations derived from feminist geography thought. This framework is proposed to guide research on conservation and sustainable development throughout rural communities living in close dependence with their natural surroundings, illuminating gender differences.

Urbanization and Housing: The Critical Role of Residential Construction and Infrastructure in Economic Development
Bill Carlson (Economics, Advisor: Wayne Gray)

The dynamic start-up problem of accumulating the capital necessary for a city to function properly has received relatively little discussion in the literature. Urban firms pay premium wages, because economies of scale increase the productivity of labor. Land rent, plus transportation and other congestion costs of city living, absorb the wage premium. Spatial equilibrium is achieved when household utility in the agricultural region equals the level in cities. Since workers need a place to live, new housing must be built, together with supporting infrastructure, including roads, sewer systems, and water supplies. Maximizing returns from industrial investments requires complementary investment in residential capital. No existing model provides a coherent integrated view of the urban system that informs decisions about the allocation of capital between business and residential uses. This project aims to take a step towards filling this gap in the literature.
From Southern Belles To Southern Saviors: Virginia’s Educated Women In The Nineteenth Century
Hannah Kelley (History, Advisor: Drew McCoy)

Colleges and universities have existed in this country since the founding of Harvard in 1636. Women eventually gained educational opportunities with the founding of Mt. Holyoke Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts in 1836. By the 1840s women’s colleges were springing up all over the Antebellum South. Southern seminaries offered women a liberal arts education that remained firmly grounded in religious and moralistic studies. This emphasis reminded young ladies that they were bound to a cultural image that viewed the southern woman as moralizer and cultivator of virtue among the southern race. The Civil War caused southerners to question the role educated women would play in the new nation. Examining the symbolism of the southern educated lady provides insight into southern national identity; this discourse provides a window into the cultural implications of being an educated woman in the South in the era of the Civil War.

A Woman in the Water: Nineteenth-Century Shifts in the (Mis)Representation of Female Suicide
Jennifer McCollum (English, Advisor: Lisa Kasmer)

During the Victorian period perhaps the best representation of the prevailing despair and anxiety from industrialization is the image of a woman throwing herself to the Thames. The destabilization of social ideologies transforms the English landscape into an often veneful, tumultuous seascape, sedately seeking dispirited prey. Despite the reality of female suicide by drowning that, although difficult to attribute to felo de se, is a nearly uncontrollable social problem, Victorian authors fail to represent female protagonists taking their own lives via water. Texts like George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss and Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native continue a Romantic tradition of encoding such acts. The shift in the (mis)representation of female suicide by drowning is affected by a rich history of women and water that becomes, seemingly, unmentionable. The sexual, mythic, and gender-related implications conjured by the relationship between women and water is contrary to the ethic and moral system upon which nineteenth-century society is based; the trope constitutes a societal fear which has been overlooked not only by the authors of the primary texts themselves but by critics.

Dance for Development: Uyghur Women in China and Diaspora Creating Self-Empowerment through Dance
Kristie N. Smith (IDCE, Advisor: Cynthia Enloe)

Socio-economic development in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) has significantly impacted Uyghur culture. Albeit contested, proponents of the Chinese Western Development initiatives cite improved quality of life and technological advancements, while critics cite Han in-migration and assimilation has resulted in acculturation of Uyghur identity. As performing arts, especially dance, are essential components of Uyghur culture, Uyghur women employ dance as a reaction to these culturally insensitive policies. Through dance, women send messages of cultural survival, enabling them to negotiate positions of power between themselves and the Han majority. Diasporic Uyghur women interviewed in the United States posit that dancing has resulted in a unique form of self-empowerment, collective resistance and pride in their culture. Uyghur women confirm that the dialectics of dance reasserts their identity and provides a stage in which to reaffirm their cultural distinctiveness.
Contact List of Conference Participants

Presentations:

Erin Anderson  
IDCE  
eanderson@clarku.edu

Bill Carlson  
Economics  
wcarlson@clarku.edu

Kringle Daly  
Physics  
kdalys@clarku.edu

Jayson Funke  
Geography  
jsfunke@clarku.edu

Allison Hayes-Conroy  
Geography  
ahayesconroy@clarku.edu

Hannah Kelley  
History  
hkelley@clarku.edu

Katja Kurz  
English  
kkurz@clarku.edu

Sebastian Liebold  
English  
sliebold@clarku.edu

Hicham Maalouf  
IDCE  
hmaalouf@clarku.edu

Jennifer McCollum  
English  
jmccollum@clarku.edu

Hang Nguyen  
IDCE  
minguyen@clarku.edu

Tanya Palit  
IDCE  
tpalit@clarku.edu

Alisha Pollastri  
Psychology  
apollastri@clarku.edu

Lily Ray  
Geography  
lray@clarku.edu

Ximena Rueda  
Geography  
xrueda@clarku.edu

Jason Slot  
Biology  
jslot@clarku.edu

Kristie Smith  
IDCE  
krsmith@clarku.edu

Amber Vayo  
English  
avayo@clarku.edu

Preeti Verma  
IDCE  
pverma@clarku.edu

Posters:

Sandina Begic  
Psychology  
sbegic@clarku.edu

Zachary Chrisman  
Geography  
zchristman@clarku.edu

Enila Cenko  
Psychology  
ecenko@clarku.edu

Kristina M. Gonzalez  
Biology  
kgonzalez@clarku.edu

Sohini Ghoshroy  
Biology  
sgghoshroy@clarku.edu

Juan Hu  
Psychology  
juhu@clarku.edu

Hicham Maalouf  
IDCE  
hmaalouf@clarku.edu
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