From the Chair

Welcome to a new issue of the USF Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies Newsletter! In a recent New York Times editorial Nicholas Kristof wrote that in a digital age the humanities are more important than ever. “Our world is enriched when coders and marketers dazzle us with smartphones and tablets, but, by themselves, they are just slabs,” he wrote. “It is the music, essays, entertainment and provocations that they access, spawned by the humanities, that animate them – and us.” We hope that you will agree that the humanities are vitally important to living a meaningful life in the modern world.

As the new chair of HCS, it is with great appreciation that I thank Dr. Dan Belgrad for his excellent work and service as department chair for the past six years. He has given us a strong foundation to build on, and as you will read in this newsletter lots is happening this spring in Cooper Hall. We have a thriving internship program, and you will hear about two of our students who won community Service Fellowships in 2014. Former students are publishing in film studies journals, and we have faculty doing fascinating work on Dutch genre painting. Plus a trip to Florence and more! Finally, special thanks too to Megan Orendorf for making this Newsletter happen. Enjoy.

Sincerely,

Bill Cummings

“The humanities are like the great old Paris Flea Market where, amidst masses of junk, people with a good eye found cast away treasures...They are like a refugee camp where all the geniuses driven out of their jobs and countries by unfriendly regimes are idling.”

- Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*
Aisha Durham (Assistant Professor of Communication)

Aisha Durham’s newly published book, Home with Hip Hop Feminism brings together popular culture and the everyday experiences of black women from the hip hop generation to highlight the epiphanic moments when the imagined and real body converge or collide.

To date, there are no books devoted exclusively to black women that integrate performance auto/ethnography and media studies from a hip hop feminist perspective. This book serves as a three-sided intervention against a textually dominated feminist media studies, a white-centered feminist third wave theory, and a masculinist hip hop cultural project.

Aisha is currently serving as an advisor for the Smithsonian Institution to work with the National Museum of African American History and Culture on a multimedia project called, the Smithsonian Anthology of Hip Hop and Rap. In the spring, Aisha will teach an undergraduate course that will explore the performance of blackness from vaudeville to hip hop popular culture.

Silvio Gaggi (Emeritus Professor of Humanities)

During Spring Break, 2015, Dr. Silvio Gaggi will teach a course in Florence, Italy, where the European Renaissance began! Students get first hand experience of some of the most important works of the Italian Renaissance with visits to museums, such as the Accademia and the Uffizzi; and churches, such as the Santa Maria del Carmine.

Dr. Silvio Gaggi has participated numerous times in the USF/UF summer program in Florence, Italy, as well as in sessions at FSU’s Florence Study Center. He has also participated in USF’s summer program in Ireland and Florida Consortium of Colleges and Universities program in Cambridge, England.

Programs like this one provide students with once-in-a-lifetime experiences and are an invaluable part of the engagement with the humanities.
Dave currently works as an adjunct instructor with the HCS Department teaching several sections of “American Culture in the Twentieth Century.” He is also the assistant editor with The Historian, a peer-reviewed journal that is produced through Phi Alpha Theta (National History Honor Society) and USF’s Department of History.

Dave’s area of interest is Germany and the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century. He has two bachelor’s degrees, one in Business Finance and a second in History. He received his master’s degree in Humanities in May 2014. His master’s thesis “Sobering Anxieties: Alcohol, Tobacco, and the Intoxicated Social Body in Dutch Painting During the True Freedom, 1650-1672” focused on images of alcohol and tobacco consumption in seventeenth-century Dutch genre paintings. His paper juxtaposes depictions of alcohol and tobacco in Dutch painting with concepts of the ideal man and woman as described by moralists and ministers. Dave concludes that “for the seventeenth-century Dutch, images of alcohol and tobacco represented an insidious infection in a pristine community. But these condemnations tell us much more about the anxieties of seventeenth-century Dutch society than about the inherent evils of intoxication.”

Dave presented research at two conferences in the fall 2014. In September, he presented his paper “Neptune’s Trident: The Rhetoric of Johann Aldenburgk, a German Mercenary in the Service of the Dutch West-India Company, 1623-1626” at the 15th Annual Conference on Transatlantic History, University of Texas in Arlington. Then again in September, he presented “The Surplus Population: The Performance of Protest in the Occupy Movement” at the Popular Culture Association in the South & American Culture Association in the South (PCAS/ACAS) that was held in New Orleans.
Jonathan Hendricks and Julia Poholek have won the prestigious USF Community Scholars Fellowship 2014 for their research projects, “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Social Media Initiatives for TBBCA” and “WUSF: An Oral History of Key Figures from the First 50 Years,” respectively.

The Fellowship supports undergraduate students conducting research carried out in partnership with community organizations. Each Fellowship recipient is spend at least 150 hours during the term conducting research under the guidance Dr. Christie Rinck. The winners received $750 as a stipend and can receive an additional $250 to help defray research costs. As their faculty mentor, Dr. Rinck also receives $250 (per student) as an honorarium to oversee the research. All Fellowship winners present their research at the annual Undergraduate Research and Arts Colloquium and are encouraged to present at conferences throughout the region.
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

TWO FILM STUDENTS PUBLISH WORK IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

"Chasing the Millennium Actress" by Janine Villot (M. L. A. Film Studies, 2013), explores the ways in which Kon Satoshi's 2011 anime, Millennium Actress, presents an analogy between filmmaking and memory. Because it is animated, Satoshi's work brings out less objective—what Villot calls "plastic"—relationships to the past, which, she argues, approaches to film and memory typically overlook. The result gives viewers new ways to think about the subjectivity of history, including Japan's relationships with its own past and its historical encounters with the West. Villot's work will appear in an upcoming special issue of the peer-reviewed journal SCIENCE FICTION FILM AND TELEVISION. https://www.facebook.com/pages/Science-Fiction-Film-and-Television/170461972992879.

"Ontology of the Cinematic Lamella," by HCS senior Jonathan Hendricks, uses the work of experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage to complicate conventional understandings of cinematic representation. Coupling Brakhage's film MOTHLIGHT (1963) with the theories of French critic André Bazin and French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, Hendricks explores how cinema removes objects from physical reality yet also transposes them to another dimension within which it gives them new life. The result, he argues, gives us new ways to think about cinematic representation, particularly in an era when digital animation increasingly removes images from their bases in physical reality. Hendricks's paper will appear in FilmMatters, a peer-reviewed journal for undergraduate film scholars: http://www.filmmattersmagazine.com/.
Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies Mission

The mission of the Humanities & Cultural Studies department is to foster an interdisciplinary understanding of how the arts contribute to the cultural construction of social realities: (1) to educate students in the social and aesthetic values embodied in visual, literary, musical, and other texts of the world’s civilizations, from the archaic to the present era, using an interdisciplinary approach; (2) to teach students the methods and sources for conducting research in humanities and cultural studies, and to give them applied practice in doing and presenting such research; and (3) to train students in the skills of critical thinking and written communication that are central to a liberal arts education.
USF Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies has a new Facebook Page

Like us on Facebook!

If you’d like to be featured in our Alumni or Faculty spotlight in future newsletters, please contact Megan Orendorf. orendorf@mail.usf.edu