

This year's Chair's letter should be co-written, with Greg Pfitzer, who superbly administered the American Studies Department in the fall, while I was in London, co-directing Skidmore's First-Year Program in London, along with my colleague and friend Pat Oles of the Social Work Program.

As is our tradition, the Department of American Studies had another productive, fun-filled year, with an unexpected yet welcome twist. More on that in a minute. I am pleased to report that, as usual, the department contributed a great deal to the life of the college. We sponsored or co-sponsored several activities, like Social Justice Week and the screening of the documentary *Bringing MLK to China*. Additionally, in November, Lisa Gill, a Visiting Assistant Professor of American Studies, organized a provocative event, Dark As Ink: Black Artists, Writers, and Fans' Experiences in the Comic Industry, which was well attended and received.

At the end of the Fall semester, we held our annual AM bowling event at the Saratoga Strike Zone (formerly Hi Roc Lanes). The faculty performance improved with my absence. In April, several students in Methods and Approaches, led by me, visited Common Sense Farm in Cambridge, New York, which is a religious commune. It was an enlightening experience on a beautiful spring day (as the photo included in this newsletter attests).

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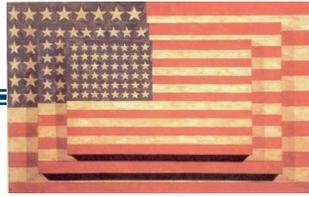
The department was also pleased to grant Zangrando Opportunity Fund monies to support several students (Jesse Garretson, Izzy Kagan, Kathryn Lazell, Ivana Portes, Callison Stratton), and is proud to announce that this year's American Studies Faculty Award winner is Allison Dell Otto, who was one of four AM majors to earn departmental honors. The other three are Kathryn Lazell, Callison Stratton, and Jacob Wolf, all of whom did an outstanding job of presenting their Honors Thesis work at Academic Festival. Soon thereafter, we hosted our annual AM cook-out (in my backyard) to celebrate our senior majors and minors. A good time was had by all.

The unexpected twist mentioned above is that our most excellent colleague Beck Krefting, after two years as a Visiting Assistant Professor, now has a tenure-track appointment. For those of you who have not yet met Beck, she is terrific: a talented, engaging teacher and a gifted, creative scholar. Just as important, she is a warm, caring person, someone we are all pleased to have as a permanent member of the American Studies department and Skidmore community.

Speaking of which, as ever, we look forward to hearing from our alums. Some of you have dropped us a line this year to share some good news. Jacob Freedman '07, for example, will soon be a student in the University of Pennsylvania's Master of City Planning program. In April, Emma Newcombe '10, who is doing graduate work in Boston University's American and New England Studies Ph.D. program, won an award at the Eastern American Studies Association annual meeting for her paper "Camping, Climbing, and Consumption: The Bean Boot, 1912-1945." On the employment front, Claire Solomon '10 has recently been hired as a Program Officer at the Covenant Foundation, which supports innovative Jewish educational programming and honors outstanding Jewish educators.

At this time year, of course, we are focused on our graduates, all of whom we wish the best. Know that we're proud of and are rooting for you. Please stay in touch.

Chair, American Studies Department



American Studies Field Trips

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Professor Pfitzer took a small group of American Studies majors to the Albany Institute of History and Art back in October.



A friendly competition between American Studies Faculty and American Studies students pursued after Senior Seminar was completed. A good way to celebrate the end of Fall semester and to vent out final paper exhaustion!



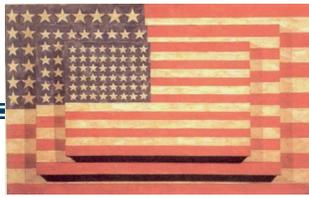
Professor Pfitzer's class visited Fort William Henry and Prospect Mountain in October. Yes, it snowed!



Professor Nathan took his class to the Common Sense Farm in Cambridge, NY this past April. <http://www.commonsefarm.com/>



Photo of Professor Pfitzer's 1960s class taken at Pfitzer's home.



The Seniors



Hannah Ronson
I am graduating from Skidmore an American Studies major and Studio Art minor. Before

my first semester freshmen year, I did not know what American Studies was. I was given an introduction through my first-year seminar, American Memories, taught by Greg Pfitzer. As I took more classes in the department it became clear to me that I wanted to be a major. Last semester I wrote my senior thesis on independent music communities, and how the Internet has changed the way people in these communities become involved, communicate, and organize as a whole. My interest in such communities was blustered through my involvement with Skidmore's Student Entertainment Company (SEC), which I have chaired for the last two years. SEC provides entertainment for the campus by putting on many concerts throughout the year. I am fortunate that the American Studies major allowed me to bring this extra-circular interest into an academic setting. I am going to Israel in June and hope to travel much more, in America and beyond, in my post-collegiate life. I do not know what my future plans are but I know they will be enhanced my time spent with the American Studies department.

Hello! I'm **Jessie Garretson**

and I am an American Studies and Psychology double major hailing from the great state of Minnesota. I started at Skidmore with close to no idea of what I wanted to study but happened to be placed in Professor Pfitzer's American Memories Scribner Seminar. Had it not been for that course and Professor Pfitzer's teaching, I wouldn't be sitting here writing this today. I've had a wonderful experience at Skidmore, due largely to the home I've found in the American Studies department. The AM faculty is truly remarkable and I am eternally grateful for the wisdom they've imparted and support they've provided over the years. I've taken some truly fascinating courses and I know will stay with me long after I leave Skidmore in just a few weeks.

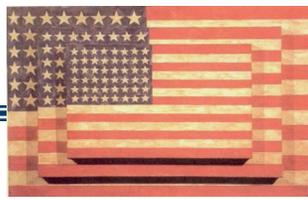
I wrote my senior seminar paper on Mormonism in Popular Culture, most specifically focusing on the new Broadway Musical "The Book of Mormon." I'm not a Mormon myself, but I've always been fascinated by the faith and wanted to explore why Mormonism recently seems to be a successful backdrop for entertainment pursuits. It was a great experience and I even got funding from Skidmore to go to NYC



and see the show! Last spring, I studied abroad in London and studied American history at a British university.

I had an amazing time and felt as if the experience perfectly augmented my Skidmore American Studies degree. I've had a true full circle experience with the AM Department, as I was given the opportunity to be the Peer Mentor for the same Scribner Seminar that first introduced me to American Studies (except this time it was Professor Nathan teaching) last Fall. I loved having the opportunity to re-visit this course and to work with a great bunch of first-year students. In another full circle moment, my last Skidmore coursework was an exam with Professor Pfitzer, not unlike where it all began freshman year....

Not sure quite what the future holds, but I do know that wherever and whoever I may be, I will be grateful for those times spent on the 3rd floor of Tisch!



Seniors



Callison Stratton

I'm pretty sure I have been an American Studies major my whole life—I just didn't realize it until I got to Skidmore. Born and raised in Manhattan to politically active, artistic liberals, my life has been an exercise in interdisciplinarity; most people told me this was a lack of direction, but my Skidmore professors explained that it was perfectly normal, and having diverse interests was something to be encouraged. Ah, liberal arts. The American Studies major did eventually help me to hone my focus, as I became fascinated by topics involving race, diversity, and particularly the Reconstruction era through Civil Rights. These interests culminated in my senior Honors Thesis, "King of the Movement," which discussed the way American public memories of the Civil Rights movement and Martin Luther King, Jr. have been manipulated and shaped by historical museums and memorials.

The beauty of American Studies was that it left a lot of room for me to foster my interest in music, both in the classroom and out. I took classical guitar lessons for 3 years, recorded an album of original music, sang in Gospel Choir, organized a Folk Music Festival, and this fall I got to perform with the faculty band The Rust Brothers in Beatlemania.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xX0YnZEz9c>

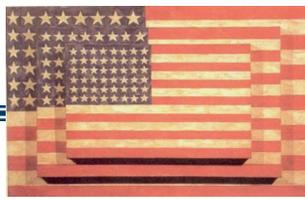
I am so lucky to have had such a solid support system throughout my time here, starting first and foremost with my teachers. I have absolutely no idea where life will take me next (I'm thinking another road-trip across the country), but I'll be content if I have half as much fun as I did in these past four years.



Megan Barlow

I am from Salem, NH and came to Skidmore with two distinct passions, American history and Education. Choosing to double major in American Studies and Education studies has allowed me to study and pursue both of my passions. The classes I have taken in the American Studies department have given me a diverse perspective on American history and culture which has helped shape my view of Education's place in society and American history. Writing my senior thesis on the Common School Era in Boston, MA has allowed me to examine different perspectives on education in Colonial America and find interdisciplinary connections between my two majors. I will attend the University of New Hampshire next year to obtain my Masters of Education in Teacher Leadership.

Thanks!



Seniors cont.d



Rebecca Meyer



Kathryn Lazell

I'm a double major in American Studies and Sociology, with an Honors Forum minor. Last spring, I spent the semester in South Africa working with a local NGO to protect immigrant rights. After I graduate, I'm hoping to work with a non-profit of some sort in either the Bay Area or D.C. and eventually go back to grad school. The American Studies department has given me a diverse education that can be applied to any number of careers. American Studies has helped me realize the diversity of the United States, as well as the commonality in experiences and histories. Most importantly, it has taught me how to think about life in the United States. Whatever I end up doing in the future, I know that American Studies has given me skills that will be helpful in my future endeavors.



D'J Gilmore

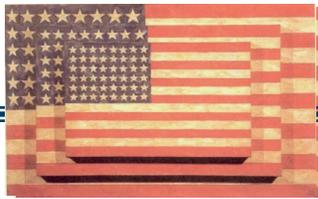
When I first came to Skidmore I had no idea what my major was going to be. I knew that I was going to be pre-med, but was not sure if I wanted to major in Chemistry, Biology, or Exercise Science. During my freshman year I took a class with Winston Grady-Willis, African American Experience, and from then on decided to spend the rest of my college career examining race, culture, gender, and learning about American history along with my pre-med classes. I loved being an American Studies major because you have the opportunity to be really creative. I wrote my senior thesis on Hip-Hop and have also filmed an ethnography. My future plans include attending Physician Assistant school.



Adam Becker



Allison Otto



Gregory Pfitzer

Dear American Studies Students and Alums:

The academic year 2011-2012 has been a very busy and productive one for me. I had the pleasure of chairing the department in the fall while Professor Nathan was overseeing the Skidmore in London program, and, in that capacity, I worked with some new faculty to increase our offerings in the areas of African-American history and regional cultures of the South. I taught a variety of courses myself this year, such as AM 250A: Hudson River Culture, which included field trips to interesting places such as Cooper's Cave, Mt. Prospect, the Albany Institute of History and Art, Fort William Henry, the Saratoga Battlefield, and Speier Falls. In the fall I also taught AM 374: Senior Seminar, the capstone course in the major that requires students to write a substantial (35-40 pp) research paper on topics of their choosing. You can gauge the diversity and range of these papers by consulting the abstracts on the departmental webpage or by checking the white notebook marked "Senior Seminar Papers" in the American Studies department office. The fall term was punctuated by an epic bowling event in which faculty and students competed for bragging rights (no lane records were broken but several lanes were). We then took out our end-of-the-term frustrations on each other in a bumper car event that featured some raucous driving and numerous untoward gestures.

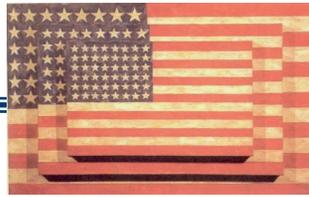
This past spring I taught a new course—AM 241: Mark Twain's America—which considered the complex relationship between Samuel Clemens and his literary persona Mark Twain as well as the connections between the literary characters Clemens created and the American audiences for whom he wrote. Students in the course and I discovered that Twain, like the culture he described, was filled with contradictions. While he tried to warn Americans of the dangers of the period in which they lived, identifying it as a materialistic "Gilded Age," he was also one of its most conspicuous victims. While Twain is most closely associated with a vernacular school of humor deriving from the American West, he spent most of his adult life in cosmopolitan eastern cities and abroad. These contradictions and others like them revealed to us the degree to which Twain was a representative figure in an age of eccentricity, and the study of his life and works taught us much about a nation undergoing profound and rapid change in the form of class struggle, agrarian retreat, industrialization and imperialism. I hope to offer the course again in a few years. This spring, as very spring, I also offered my AM 360C: The Sixties, which included a memorable trip to the WSPN radio station for a student-led "Sixties Revival Show." At the end of the course I hosted a "Happening" at my home in Wilton, pictures from which are featured in this newsletter.

While teaching occupies most of my time during the school year, I have been at work intermittently on a book project tentatively entitled titled *History Repeating Itself: Consensus and Continuity in Popular Historical Literature for Children*. The book deals primarily with nineteenth- and twentieth-century popular historical literature produced for school-age children, addressing questions of when and how young readers absorb lessons of the past. I trace the rise and expansion of a genre of juvenile historical literature from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, focusing especially on how the authors of popular texts originated and then vigorously defended a "master narrative" of the American past for school-age children. These lavishly illustrated works of juvenile popular history provided young readers with religious and patriotic conventions that encouraged a love of God and country. In the book, I analyze dozens of these volumes, noting especially their consistencies across decades. Like-minded authors in this genre borrowed (and sometimes stole) from each other to produce texts that were remarkably similar in subject matter, narrative voice, historical tone, and pictorial effect. It is my thesis that this consistency of approach reveals a psychological aversion to change on the part of popular authors and readers and a resistance to the idea of a contested and revised past, especially when it pertains to educating children. I also explore the original educational context in which these works were created and investigate the recent efforts of various contemporary publishers to reissue such works for home school markets. Over the last two decades dozens of new presses with "throwback" names like Nothing New Press or Dodo Press have reprinted many of these nineteenth century juvenile histories, promoting their value as "pure" texts uncorrupted by the revisionist and professional scholarship of the twentieth century. I identify the positive (but mainly negative) aspects of these recycling projects, challenging their suitability for use among homeschooled children today.

In a few weeks I will be participating in the 2012 CHAViC Summer Seminar ("Seeing the American Civil War: How Visual Culture Recorded, Interpreted, and Remembered the Conflict"). I will present my scholarship on the life cycle of the genre of pictorial history from its inception in the era of woodcut technologies to its demise in the age of photographic reproduction, and I will concentrate especially on the relationships between visual and literary sources and their influence on popular perceptions of the past.

So it's been a busy and highly enjoyable year. Best of luck to all the seniors who have finished up this term, and to the rising classes remember: it's never too early to begin thinking about your senior seminar project.

-Greg Pfitzer



FALL 2012 COURSE OFFERINGS



AM 103: A Humorous (Dis)Course

Beck Krefting

You want to know what's going on in our community? Watch our comedy.

In this course we will use stand-up comedy to think critically about American culture and to explore key moments and transitions in American history. As burgeoning Americanists, we will examine the history of stand-up comedy as the history of the United States—that comedy reflects the institutions and ideologies shaping cultural production; the same institutions and ideologies that prompt us to warfare, that determine who has rights and who does not and that influence our consumptive practices. This course will examine the history of cultural production in America, specifically through the cultural form of stand-up comedy/comic performance and how it has been influenced and shaped by shifts in social consciousness, changing economy, industrial and technological innovations, political events, public/popular discourses and global conflict and relations.

AM 103W 002 Intro: Civil War/ American Memory

Gregory Piftzer

This course considers how Americans have remembered and commemorated the Civil War from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Drawing on depictions of the war in fiction, film, popular history, television, music, and re-enactors' conventions among other cultural sources, it focuses on how memory and history interact in the popular imagination to shape the cultural legacy of the conflict.



AM 232H 001 Hon: New England Begins

Mary C. Lynn

A critical examination of the evolution of culture and society in New England in the seventeenth century. After considering the origins of the Puritan community, the course will explore the ways in which that society changed over the course of the first seventy-five years of settlement, culminating in an investigation of the events of the Salem witch crisis of 1692 as well as subsequent historical, artistic, dramatic, and literary treatments of the witch trials. This is an honors course, and intended to challenge students to dig deeper into the subject and handle complex and difficult ideas.

AM 374: Senior Seminar

Greg Piftzer

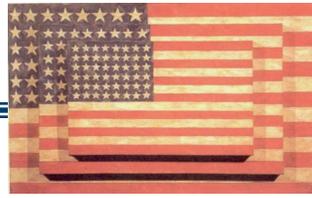
Exploration of primary and secondary sources in the interdisciplinary examination of a particular topic in American culture. Students will pursue a major research project or prepare an honors thesis proposal. Required of all senior majors. Open to majors only; normally taken in fall semester of senior year



AM 260C: African American Experience

Leonard Slade

A study of the African-American experience, 1860s-1980s. Using both primary and secondary source material, the course examines the critical issues and period relevant to the African-American struggle toward freedom and equality. Topics include slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction; the woman's era; the age of Jim Crow and the new Negro; the civil rights movement; and the post-reform period. Sources include narratives, documents, photographs, and films.



FALL COURSES 2012



AM 250C: REGIONAL CULTURE: The South Leonard Slade

An exploration of the development of the distinctive culture of the southern region of the United States. The course examines myths and legends of the Old South including those surrounding the origins of the plantation system, southern womanhood and the development of the slave and free communities of the region in the antebellum period. Topics include the myths and legends of the New South, the legacy of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the imposition of segregation, modernization of agriculture and industry, and the migration of African Americans northward. The course culminates in a study of the civil rights movement, and recent demographic, economic, and political changes.



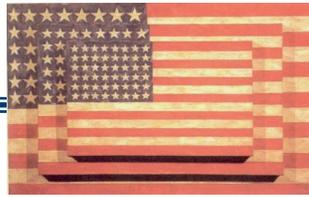
AM 260J: Diversity in the United States Rebecca Krefting

An examination of the ways in which people in the United States try to reconcile the realities of cultural difference with preconceived notions of a unified America and American identity. Students will learn about the United States as a complex, heterogeneous society that has been profoundly shaped by both the connections and conflict implicit in its multicultural heritage. Students will also address interrelationships and tensions that characterize a culturally diverse democracy by examining how accepted cultural traditions intersect with contested themes such as race, the family, adoption, gender, sexuality, and education. (Fulfills social sciences requirement; designated as a Cultural Diversity course.)



AM 360B The 1950s Mary C. Lynn

An interdisciplinary analysis of the decade of the 1950s in America. Using a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, generally including fiction, film, music, biography, autobiography, poetry, sociology, drama, and social criticism, the course explores the distinctive culture of this decade. It focuses on the ways different groups of Americans experienced the period, studying conformity and consumerism, the beatniks, rock and roll, and the silent generation, as well as the roots of the protest movements and the counterculture of the 1960s.



ACADEMIC FESTIVAL

Race, Difference and American Culture: American Studies Senior Theses



**From left to right:
Allison Dell Otto,
Callison Stratton,
Kathryn Lazell, and
Jacob Wolf**

Faculty Sponsor: Daniel Nathan, American Studies

Presenter: Allison Dell Otto '12

What if Malcolm X was queer? This paper examines the responses in the Black community to suggestions made in two biographies that Malcolm X engaged in Same-sex activity. Most of these reactions were negative, and through an investigation of them, and of the life of openly gay Civil rights leaders Bayard Rustin, we can gain a new understanding of X's legacy, homophobia and hyper-masculinity, and the potential for mending divisions between black and queer identities.

Presenter: Kathryn Lazell '12

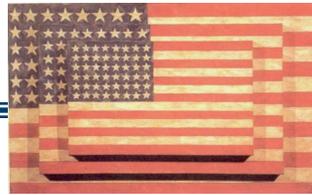
Tourism has been an essential element in the development of several American town, including Saratoga Springs, New York, and Martha's Vineyard. For nearly as long as Saratoga and the Vineyard have drawn crowds, they have also drawn African Americans who worked in the tourist industry. The different attitudes towards black history in Saratoga and the Vineyard have affected African Americans' ability to gain equal status and opportunity.

Presenter: Callison Stratton '12

This paper discusses how museums and memorials have played a role in shaping American memories and options about the Civil Rights movement and its recognizable figure, Martin Luther King, Jr. Through an examination of the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, and the new MLK Memorial on the National Mall, I explore the impact of romanticized history on public memory and its potential repercussions in the future.

Presenter: Jacob Wolf '12

This critical reading of National Basketball Association (NBA) race relations dispels the myth that America is a post-racial society. Through critiques of Ron Artest and the 2004 Malice in the Palace Brawl, the implementation of a league-wide dress code, pre-draft evaluations of White prospects, and the 2012 cultural phenomenon of Linsanity, this paper demonstrates how racial stereotyping by fans, the media, and league administrators remains prominent in the NBA.



Mary C. Lynn

Professor Lynn wrote and read the honorary degree citation for Sue Thomas, longtime and much appreciated member of the Board of Trustees at Skidmore's graduation on May 19. Sue Thomas is rumored to have sung her three children to sleep by singing a lullaby based on the Alma Mater, and Professor Lynn was able to track the rumor down and interview all three children, now twenty-something's, who asserted that yes, their mom had sung them to sleep with the Skidmore alma mater. Any alums out there who can confess to the same practice?



Lynn also connected with several former students during the graduation festivities, one of whom, Oskar Ibru, remembered taking the very first version of Born in America (then called Midwives, Mothers, and Medicine) in its incarnation as a winter term class back in 1981. Lynn is looking forward to meeting with alumni from the class of 1972 to compare memories of that era during the forthcoming Alumni Reunion festivities. She is still fascinated by the Puritans, and planning to teach New England begins—predestination!, King Phillip's War!, and the Salem Witch Trials! in the fall.

Alumni News

Jake Freedman '08 reports that in the fall he will enroll in the University of Pennsylvania's Master in City Planning program

Seniors

Megan Barlow

Adam Becker

Rainey Ferdinand

Jessica Garretson

D'Juan Gilmore

Isabel Kagan

Kathryn Lazell

Rebecca Meyer

Benjamin Mickelson

Allison Otto

Ivana Portes

Hannah Ronson

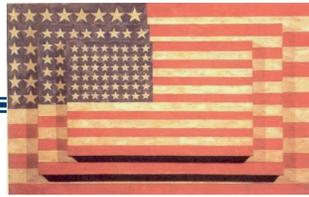
Andrew Schrijver

Callison Stratton

Eric Strebel

Jacob Wolf

Stephen Zapata



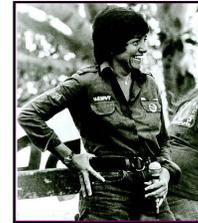
FALL 2012 COURSE OFFERINGS



AM 376G: MAGAZINES AND MODERNITY Janet Casey

The number and variety of American magazines exploded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, leading historians to call this era the “golden age” of periodical development. This course will introduce you to this wealth of primary material and to the theoretical concerns of scholars who study the roles of magazines in reflecting and creating modern culture. We will read magazines as cultural documents in order to explore the rise of modern advertising; the shaping of gendered, classed, and racialized readerships; and the popular advancement, and occasional subversion, of dominant ideological perspectives (of nation, of domesticity, of labor, of consumption). We will also consider the enormous influence of certain turn-of-the-century editors and their business policies, including the sophisticated relations they created among internal magazine elements so as to streamline their cultural messages. In addition to substantial theoretical and historical reading and regular short research and writing assignments, each student will be responsible for a major semester-long project that will involve intensive study of a period magazine in the Scribner collection.

AM 376E Disorderly Women Beck Krefting



Disorderly women focuses on some of the women who have been characterized by the larger society as unruly, disruptive, radical, militant, unfeminine—just generally “disorderly.” Why certain women have been perceived as disorderly is reflective of the society in which they lived. We will examine types of women considered disorderly as well as the experiences of specific so-called disorderly women in the nineteenth and twentieth-century United States. Some of the questions we will consider are: What defines women as “disorderly” in specific time and place; in what ways do some women deviate from the roles and behavior expected of all women; what motivates disorderly women, from their perspectives, to act as they do; what successes/non-successes have disorderly women experienced, and at what psychic cost? We will focus, then, on “disorderly women” as actors within and upon their society and on the response of that larger society to their actions. The course will culminate in an original disorderly project developed in groups or individually.

Rebecca Krefting

Color me thrilled to have just completed my second year here in the American Studies Department at Skidmore College, a year that was busy, productive and exceedingly fun. I taught three courses in the fall, among them a new course (for me) *AM 331: Critical Whiteness Studies*, which yielded among other rewards, scintillating seminar discussions. Over winter break, Director of Gender Studies Leslie Mechem and I revised the syllabus for *GW 101: Introduction to Gender Studies*, updating readings and assignments and generally giving the syllabus a much needed face-lift. In the spring semester, we successfully launched a new syllabus, each with our own section of students. I have enjoyed teaching and working with faculty and students in the Gender Studies Program and look forward to joining the Gender Studies Advisory Board in fall 2012.

As part of my summer research, I traveled to Montreal, Quebec in Canada for the city's annual Just for Laughs Festival 2011, where I interviewed comics and saw many live performances, gathering material for my manuscript-in-progress. I returned to Montreal in November to attend the American Society for Theatre Research Annual Meeting where I presented a working draft of a new chapter in my manuscript: "Hari Kondabolu: Charged Humor in the Age of Modern-Day Minstrelsy." I received invaluable feedback and while the semesters leave little time for progress on writing, this summer, I will continue to write, revise and complete my manuscript, now titled: *All Joking Aside* (under contract at Johns Hopkins University Press). There is much to be done but fortunately, after receiving a Faculty-Student Summer Research grant from Skidmore, I will have assistance from Becky Stern, a bright American Studies major already familiar with my research. Among the many research tasks slated for the summer, we will travel to New York City to conduct research on mid-twentieth century stand-up comics at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

This past winter, two of my publications, both chapters in different edited collections, were published and in print just in time for the holidays. Currently, you can find "Placing Space: Architecture, Action, Dimension—Pedagogy and Practice," co-authored by myself and Ronit Eisenbach, in *Feminist Practices: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Women in Architecture* (Ashgate, 2011) and "Laughter in the Final Instance: The Cultural Economy of Humor" in *The Laughing Stalk: Live Comedy and Its Audiences* (Parlor Press, 2012). Both collections enjoin an impressive ensemble of interdisciplinary scholars and both are available for purchase. Run, don't walk, to your nearest book retailer.

Notably, this spring I had the pleasure of working closely with four students completing senior capstone projects whose topics ranged from investigating public stakes in maintaining Malcolm X as straight or queer, to exploring feminist graphic narratives and memoirs, to the etymology and social violence of the term "slut," to improvised comedy as a reflection of real live with the capacity to comment on social, political and cultural issues. I am ever impressed by the quality of work generated by these seniors. To my American Studies colleagues: Thanks for another amazing year! My message to all American Studies and Gender Studies graduating seniors: Believe in yourself; couple that with hard work, a sense of humor and integrity and you have the recipe for personal growth and success in whatever field you desire to enter. Happy trails!



AMERICAN

SPRING 2012



STUDIES

NEWSLETTER

Daniel Nathan

My tenth year at Skidmore was one of my busiest. After a productive, interesting summer teaching a five-week class for Advanced Studies in England (ASE) in lovely Bath, my family and I arrived in London in early August. We spent a week there, and then visited Finland (Helsinki and Tampere, where our son Ben was born in 2002), and then came back to the U.K., where we spent time in Bath and Cornwall, before settling in north London for the semester. Co-Directing the Skidmore First-Year Experience London Program with colleague and friend Pat Oles was a super experience, extremely gratifying. My Scribner Seminar was about the ways in which the British past has been represented in feature films. In addition to studying films such as *Hope and Glory*, *The Queen*, and *Braveheart*, we also took field trips to the British Film Institute, the Tower of London, and Windsor Castle. Pat and I also led a weekend-long field trip with about 20 students to Edinburgh, Scotland, which included visiting the National Wallace Monument in Stirling. As in the past, the course yielded some first-rate final papers, one of which, written by Eleanor Wood, won a Candace Carlucci Backus '66 FYE Prize. In the fall, I also gave two lectures in London, one at the British Society of Sport History conference and the other at The Institute of Historical Research, which is part of the University of London. My family and I came home in late December, happy to be back but missing our life in London, which was full of adventure and exploration. This past semester, I taught three classes and Chaired the department. That kept me busy. At the same time, I served my first year as the President-Elect of the North American Society for Sport History (NASSH). My main duty in that position was to organize the 2012 NASSH conference, which is this June in Berkeley, California. By NASSH standards, it's a big one. This summer, I will begin my sabbatical, most of which will be spent working on a book about the Negro leagues and memory. And thus I will once again leave the chairpersonship of the American Studies department in Greg Pfttzer's capable hands.



Gregory Pfttzer, Mary C. Lynn, Rebecca Krefting, and Daniel Nathan