Dionne Blasingame: My thesis argues that the principles of womanism emerge within Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative*.

Emily Dolezal: I’m focusing on the objectification of both U.S. women while abroad and other cultures as presented in the U.S. I will be focusing on some select travel writing to illustrate different ways or degrees to which this happens.

Noah Echols: From “I’m a Mac” to “I’m a Troy Davis.” My project looks at how corporations have built cult-like followings through social media marketing campaigns and argues that human rights organizations can leverage social media marketing tactics to build a social movement.

Richie Essenburg: I am examining contemporary forms of nativism as they relate politically, racially and ideologically to others in U.S. history. I am looking at the construction of white nationalists and Latinos identity in the current “immigration debate.” Using historical and literary sources, I am analyzing the political and racial forms of current nativist sentiments as they relate politically, racially and ideologically to others in U.S. history. I am focusing on the objectification of both U.S. women while abroad and other cultures as presented in the U.S. I will be focusing on some select travel writing to illustrate different ways or degrees to which this happens.

Ralph Joiner: I am writing a creative non-fiction narrative exploring the life of Georgian Charles E. Brown, focusing on his quest to build a hydro-electric dam in Cordele, GA. This will encompass his efforts to break the electric power monopoly through the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of political influence and the exercise of polit...
American Studies, Ethnography and Fan-Culture: The Case of Dragon*Con

At least since the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies began doing studies of mods and punks, American Studies has included ethnographic approaches to popular culture. On Labor Day weekend, MAST program director, Rebecca Hill met with Arizona University Professor of Fine Arts, Carrie J. Cole to discuss her work at Atlanta’s Dragon*Con.

RH: Dr. Cole, tell me about the research project that you’re doing here at Dragon*Con

CJC: My work concludes a research project I began a year and a half ago, which is an ethnographic study of how fans interact with the science embedded in science fiction. I focus on fan interactions at three different "Cons" that have three different fan demographics, locating my study around the interactions between fans and Kevin R. Grazier, the science advisor for the TV shows Battlestar Galactica, Eureka, Zulu Patrol, and, starting with its second season, Falling Skies. Dr. Grazier was chosen as science adviser for these projects because his "day job" for fifteen years was as a research scientist at Jet Propulsion Laboratories, working on the Cassini/Huygens Mission to Saturn and Titan. By narrowing my focus to fan interactions with Dr. Grazier and the shows upon which he worked, I was able to get a "snapshot" of not only how fans engage with the science involved in these shows, and how they communicate their understanding of that science, but how different 'Con contexts affect the ways in which that knowledge is shared.

RH: How does the Dragon*Con context affect how fans and scientists share information? What is unique about the demographic of fans who go to Dragon*Con as opposed to the other Cons you’ve studied?

CJC: As a first time attendee, I had made some stereotypical assumptions about the fans that would participate in Dragon*Con--both because of the dominance of cosplay,* and because its programming is spread through "fan-based" tracks. I had no idea until I attended the sessions how science based the Science Track would be! As an example, Dr. Grazier was sponsored by both the Science and the Space Tracks. One of his sessions for the Space Track was entirely devoted to science, with no connection to the entertainment industry. In it, he discussed the mechanics and dynamics of the space probe Dawn, and its journey to the asteroid Vesta...and the room was packed. Fans not only showed an interest in the actual science, but clearly demonstrated that they were aware of the Dawn Mission--and they demonstrated that knowledge while dressed as Star Trek crew member or a blue-gowned fantasy princess.

RH: What kind of real science influence is there in science fiction? Have you learned anything about the science elements in sci-fi that surprised you?

CJC: Frankly, there’s a surprising amount of science in science fiction film and television--and a concerted effort by both those in the field of science and those in the entertainment industry to make the science as plausible as possible--while still telling an engaging story. There is a great non-profit organization run out of the National Academy of Science called The Science and Entertainment Exchange whose mission is to connect "entertainment industry professionals with top scientists and engineers to create a synergy between accurate science and engaging storylines in both film and TV programming"-- it’s a service they provide for free to anyone from a young screenwriter just starting out to a major producer working with a multimillion dollar budget. What is fascinating about this "exchange" is that often the aspects of a science fiction story that you think are most "fictional" or fantastical are in actuality those most grounded in the science.

RH: You mentioned earlier that science fiction sometimes predicts or prefigures real technological advances. Can you give some examples that you’ve found?

CJC: I think some of the most notable examples of technological precursors can be seen in early science fiction media—certainly in television. Star Trek’s tricorders and communication devices precede the development of all of our handheld media.

*Rosay refers to the practice of wearing costumes based on science-fiction and fantasy characters.
The Kennesaw Graduate Student Association welcomes all the new and current graduate students back to campus for the 2011-2012 academic year. GSA serves as the networking body for graduate students. As the new president, I encourage all students to take advantage of the opportunities presented to you as a graduate student. KSU has many opportunities for graduate students to grow and expand their research and practical skills that go unnoticed by most students. GSA is working hard to link students to the opportunities as we discover them. We provide networking events that connect the 2,000 graduate students across the different colleges and schools on campus. We also offer financial assistance to graduate students looking to attend conferences for academic purposes. GSA hopes to be a place where graduate students can bring their concerns and find solutions. If you are new to KSU, we encourage you to meet some of your fellow graduate students and make some new connections. Please visit our website to find more about GSA and upcoming events and news. http://gsa.ksuclubs.com/about/ We can also be contacted at ksugsa@gmail.com
The Kennesaw Graduate Student Association welcomes all the new and current graduate students back to campus for the 2011-2012 academic year. GSA serves as the networking body for graduate students. As the new president, I encourage all students to take advantage of the opportunities presented to you as a graduate student. KSU has many opportunities for graduate students to grow and expand their research and practical skills that go unnoticed by most students. GSA is working hard to link students to the opportunities as we discover them. We provide networking events that connect the 2,000 graduate students across the different colleges and schools on campus. We also offer financial assistance to graduate students looking to attend conferences for academic purposes. GSA hopes to be a place where graduate students can bring their concerns and find solutions. If you are new to KSU, we encourage you to meet some of your fellow graduate students and make some new connections. Please visit our website to find more about GSA and upcoming events and news. http://gsa.ksuclubs.com/about/ We can also be contacted at ksugsa@gmail.com

Judy Obiofuma, GSA President

I think that’s ultimately what makes events like Dragon*Con so successful—the writers, directors, and performers all refer to themselves as fans and they often actively engage with the fan culture via Facebook and Twitter.

RH: When people talk about Dragon*Con, they often mention stereotypes of sci-fi fans in particular, but don’t stereotypes exist about all fan cultures? One of our students, Kaci Schmitt, finished an ethnographic study of “emo” kids last summer and the stereotype was something she really had to wrestle with: none of her interview subjects would even claim the name “emo”!

CJC: Yes! Yes!—the stereotypes of fans and fan cultures are definitely present—and they make the ethnographic wrestling that much more energetic. I’d love to read what Ms. Schmitt chronicled with her study…Unlike what she found with her interviews, fans of science fiction seem to not only actively self-identify, but have a strong, reciprocal relationship with the producers of science fiction. I think that’s ultimately what makes events like Dragon*Con so successful—the writers, directors and performers

RH: Do you think that these stereotypes affect the way cultural studies research in general is sometimes described? As a final comment - Why do you think this is, and why do you think that studies like yours are important—what would you say to someone who characterizes the study of fan culture as “trivial”? CJC: I do think that the stereotypes of fan culture poses challenges for those critical of this kind of cultural studies research—yet I think more and more inroads are being made as the academy continues to acknowledge work across disciplines—and as businesses, industries, and entertainment continue to see the value in understanding fans as both market and commodity. As for why this research is important—well, I think you can look to the economic success of those industries that market to their fan culture, and see why they feel it is important—and to me, that’s one of the reasons we need to study it in the academy. Ultimately, what we as a culture get “fannish” about tells us a lot about our culture, and connects us to popular modes of entertainment and expression in the past while moving us into the future. Understanding culture through popular media and entertainment forms sheds light on aesthetics, innovations, trends, technology, the marketplace, and economy. None of these things can be considered trivial.

RH: What’s your next step in this project? How will it relate to your work in theater?

CJC: First, I’m completing an article that focuses on fans and the science in Science Fiction. I have also begun conversations about blogging for an established website along those lines. The second, long-term project brings my work back to the theatre by shifting the lens through which we view theatre audiences from reception studies to fan studies. In reception studies, the audience is engaged at the end of the creative process (with the product). Fan studies acknowledges more interactivity with the process and product, more engagement—and more investment in the “performance” beyond the time it takes to watch.

RH: What’s your next step in this project? How will it relate to your work in theater?

CJC: I do think that the stereotypes of fan culture poses challenges for those critical of this kind of cultural studies research—yet I think more and more inroads are being made as the academy continues to acknowledge work across disciplines—and as businesses, industries, and entertainment continue to see the value in understanding fans as both market and commodity. As for why this research is important—well, I think you can look to the economic success of those industries that market to their fan culture, and see why they feel it is important—and to me, that’s one of the reasons we need to study it in the academy. Ultimately, what we as a culture get “fannish” about tells us a lot about our culture, and connects us to popular modes of entertainment and expression in the past while moving us into the future. Understanding culture through popular media and entertainment forms sheds light on aesthetics, innovations, trends, technology, the marketplace, and economy. None of these things can be considered trivial.
AMST 7100: American Studies Methods - Rebecca Hill, Tuesdays 6:30 – 9:15 p.m. - This course introduces students to current methods in American Studies research and public practice and provides a pragmatic and theoretically sound introduction to methods for doing work in American Studies. What questions do practitioners of American Studies ask? What methods do they use? What objects do they study? And toward what end? We will become practiced in designing and implementing research and interpretive projects. And we will consider the various professional and personal contexts for “doing” American Studies, such as professional organizations and journals, classrooms, the workplace, public settings, and civic organizations.

AMST 7210: Historical Period: Radicals, Rascals and Redemption: Canada and the U.S. during the Great Depression (T) - Elsa Nystrom, Thursdays 6:30 – 9:15 p.m. - This class will compare and contrast the effect of the Great Depression in the US and its neighbor to the North between 1929 and 1939. Taking a look at scholarly works, fiction and film from the period, we will look at the efforts Americans and Canadians made to cope with or change society during these difficult years as well as the impact the Depression had on both countries. This course may be repeated provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7310: Regional Studies: Writing the Environmental South - Beth Giddens, Wednesdays 6:30 – 9:15 p.m. - The course will explore questions about the intersections of nature and culture: How have geography and climate influenced the social history, economic development, and culture of the South? How has the South’s social history, including Native American culture, slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Depression, and the Civil Rights Movement affected its forests, rivers, fields, and coastlines? What do the rainfall and warm temperatures of the region have to do with the species that thrive in the region, the agriculture that has developed here, the outdoor pastimes that Southerners have traditionally pursued as well as its tales, music, and handicrafts?

AMST 7500: PRACTICUM (Internship or Applied Research Project) - Rebecca Hill, Prerequisite: AMST 7000 and AMST 7100 - This course requires students to apply American Studies knowledge, concepts, and theory to practical issues, non-academic environments, or to new research questions. The practicum may be offered as an internship; applied research project; teaching practicum; or other applied experience as approved by the MAST Program Director.

AMST 7900: Capstone Experience (1-6 hours Credit Hours) - Rebecca Hill, Permission of the Director Required. - The Capstone Experience consists of a major research project or a project using interdisciplinary methods from American Studies to investigate questions consistent with the program’s mission and the student’s professional goals. Students work with faculty advisors to develop a proposal, carry out research related to their topic or project aims, and complete a product drawing on the content of program courses.

American Studies in the World
Graz, Austria
Study Abroad
Summer 2011

by Richie Essenburg

My participation in the International Summer School on the Americas: "Inter/AmERICAN Studies" study abroad sponsored by the Center for Inter-American Studies at the University of Graz, Austria greatly expanded and informed my knowledge of the Americas and American Studies.

Going back for the second time, I gained an objective, global, and diverse perspective on the Americas by participating in interdisciplinary lectures from various fields every morning and by taking a smaller seminar on identities in the Americas each afternoon. Both the lectures and the seminar supported my international approach to American Studies since I was surrounded by students and faculty from over 25 countries who each brought their own views along with them.

As my second time participating in the summer school, I knew that my experience and my scholarly perspective would be even greater than the last. I knew that I would get to know people with different lived experiences and that I would learn from their different approaches to American Studies. Whether in the classroom or outside of it, our dialogue and our cultural exchanges greatly added to the experience. Spending time with students in other modules (Literature, economics, film, etc) and talking to them about their area of study made me wish I could take all of the classes and stay even longer.

The summer school is a two-week long, intensive program. I enjoy this format because it allows you to become completely immersed in the class material and subject matter. I’m also grateful that I was able to experience the study abroad with two of my colleagues, Mary-Elizabeth Watson and Ralph Joiner. Next year, the program will be called International Summer School on the Americas: “A Window into the Americas,” and I would encourage anyone involved in American Studies to consider participating in this unique opportunity to study the Americas from a truly global perspective.