The AMST 7500 practicum that I completed this summer was part of a project at the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. This summer and fall, MAST students will be creating vignettes to make connections with park visitors by telling the stories of residents who experienced the events at the time of the Civil War. The people who live in these places may share a cultural memory or not accept the established stories of the past. At this point it must also be understood that a place can hold a different meaning to more than one group at a time.

Counter-narratives in the South come out of commemorative organizations among Southern whites and the Black community centering on church and school. The narrative of the former group sought to extol the virtues of Southern culture and the honor of serving their lost cause. The latter, who had shared many of the same places on plantations, had vastly different narratives. Their narratives would not begin to be explored until efforts were made during the 1930s to record the stories of former slaves. These slave narratives are often left out or ignored at historic sites. In the anthology, Slavery and Public Memory, Viach relates how “accounts of the lives of slaves were shaped by the interpretative ploy of deflection, trivialization, or erasure.” Unfortunately, this response has been common at places like the Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park. Currently, Park personnel are working to create additional vignettes to portray the lives of African Americans and not only tell the stories of white soldiers who fought there. With increased scholarship, the stories of former slaves should become an arena of focus to include more voices to the counter-narrative.

Michael is a Cobb County Social Studies teacher who used the MAST Program to enhance his teaching.

RECERTIFICATION FOR EDUCATION
The Professional Standards Commission of Georgia has recently decided that the MAST Program will now provide teacher certificate upgrades for both History and English in both middle and high school. This is GREAT NEWS and came about by some very hard work by our Director, Dr. Hill. Tell your friends who are in education!

Reflections on an AMST 7500 Practicum
by Michael Irving

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NEW ACTING CHAIR AND CONTINUING SEARCH FOR A CHAIR OF THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES DEPARTMENT
The MA in American Studies program is part of the Interdisciplinary Studies Department (ISD), which brings together seven different programs at KSU. In addition to American Studies, the department houses African and African Diaspora Studies (AADS), Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS), Asian Studies (ASIA), Gender and Women’s Studies (GWST), Peace Studies (PAX), and Religious Studies (RELS). Associate Dean, Dawn Kirby is serving as the acting chair of the department this year as we continue a national search for a Chair. Dean Kirby is on the faculty of the English Dept. and served as the Director of the Kennesaw Mountain Writing Project from 2007 to 2012. Her scholarship focuses on teaching writing and memoir, mentoring faculty, and the effects of high-stakes testing on teaching and learning.

Dr. Robert H. “Robin” Dorff Selected as Next Dean of College of Humanities & Social Sciences
Kennesaw State University President Daniel S. Papp named Robert H. “Robin” Dorff Dean of the CHSS effective July 1, 2012. He succeeds Richard Vengroff, who has served as Dean of the college since 2006. “We look forward to welcoming Robin Dorff to Kennesaw State,” said W. Ken Harmon, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “His vast academic and research expertise, combined with his passion for the liberal arts and his enthusiasm for Kennesaw State, is the perfect mix to lead the college. It is both an honor and an incredible opportunity to serve the faculty, staff, and students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and to be a part of this very special university,” said Dorff. “Even before I first came here, I had a strong impression that Kennesaw State was not ‘just another university.’ But once I set foot on the campus and actually got to meet some of the people, I knew it was unique. The levels of commitment and energy are quite frankly amazing. I am really excited about becoming a member of the team.”

Dr. Dawn Kirby
Potential candidates can find the job announcement at: http://www.kennesaw.edu/facultypositions/
Welcome to New MAST Students

After completing a BA in Political Science and an MA in Liberal Arts, Melvin Cody applied to KSU to gain critical skills to analyze the media and culture industries. He’s also interested in understanding how media technology, broadcasting impacts the opinions and attitudes of American and international workers.

As a KSU graduate with a BS in Communication, Christine DeBord coaches rec basketball for middle schoolers while also working as a marketing manager and a bartender. She is most interested in American Studies’ focus on social movements, gender studies, race, and ethnicity.

A recent graduate of English, Katherine Laine Dixon is especially interested in the fusion of history and literature in American Studies. She has experience as an English Language Teacher in Atlanta. Her poetry has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and she has published several chap books.

Originally from Colombia, David Galban brings an international view to American Studies as he contrasts the individualistic culture of the US with the collectivist culture of his home. David graduated with a degree in Psychology from KSU with a strong commitment to social justice. He has been published in a couple of journals and has presented his work at academic conferences.

Graduating with a degree in English from the University of Georgia, Kelly Hall is most interested in Appalachian culture and literature and how it influences the American identity. She is interested in making a dent in poverty through service, activism, and teaching.

Nykia Hannah graduated from KSU with a BA in English and then joined the telecommunications industry. Her research interests include African American, Caribbean, and Latin American literature in the cultural context. She would eventually love to teach literature from a cultural framework.

Currently an adjunct instructor in KSU’s History Department, John Hooper is pursuing American Studies because that “this program will enrich my teaching and keep me intellectually challenged.” John is also a semi-professional photographer and is pursuing his commercial pilot and flight instructor ratings. John enjoys studying the great ideas (and ideals) in America and will be working on two book projects.

David Marsh graduated from KSU with a BA in English with a concentration in Film. After taking multiple theory classes, David found himself with new tools to understand politics, history, geography, and art are inseparable. He plans to continue with post-graduate work that will culminate in a teaching position at the college level.

As a recent graduate of Liberal Studies from Armstrong Atlantic State University, D. Blaine McCarty is looking forward to understanding what “makes America tick.” His research interests are pop culture and historical discovery. In addition to his research into folklore, such as Big Foot, slave narrative research in Savannah, and the adoption of the Banjo in America, Blaine is looking forward to filling in the gaps in his knowledge about this great country.

Just last year Jonathan Blake Silvers graduated with a BA in American History and Cultures from KSU. He is also a former member of the Georgia Army National Guard who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. “Whether I find myself in a museum, writing for a newspaper, completing my own book, or teaching in a college.” I intend to explore the many options offered by American Studies.

As a recent graduate of LaGrange College with a BS in Political Science and a minor in Spanish, Emmie Trull is planning to pursue her research interests of writing, journalism, and sports reporting. She has shadowed at both Fox 5 Atlanta and 11 Alive, besides being a weather and sports reporter on TV33. She’s a lifelong UGA Bulldog fan. Emmie played college softball and loves both sports. Her goal is to become a college sports broadcaster.

Graduating from KSU with a BS in Psychology, Sean Watkins was introduced to American Studies at a career fair. His research interests include cultural movements, film studies, gender studies, military science, and American forms of music. Sean is a former U.S. Marine who is also a member of the American Legion, Phi Sigma Pi, Marine Corps League, and the Disabled American Veterans Association who volunteers for the annual Marine Toys for Tots Christmas program.

Graduate Research Assistantships - 2012-2013

Mexico City Book Project with Dr. Ken Maffitt. GRA: David Galban
The project is a study of working-class political culture, identity formation, and social movements in Mexico City’s three most important industrial suburbs. The material will be used as a peer-reviewed article, a local website, and an archive of Georgia immigration history.

Great Smoky Mountains Project with Dr. Beth Giddens. GRA: Kelly Hall
The GRA will support ongoing research into the rhetoric and language used to describe the development of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Kelly will work to identify, collect, and summarize local and national newspaper accounts of debates occurring during 1941-1969 regarding wilderness and road building.

Gay Families/Southern Schools with Dr. Ugena Whitlock. GRA: David Marsh
The project will focus on interrelations among gender, sexuality, place, and school experiences—with the added complexity of considering these within family units. This book is unique in that it approaches the topic through the lens of place. Place is also an entry point for thinking about race, class, and ability in the construction of identity; it is a context for lived experience.

Death Penalty Book Project with Dr. Rebecca Hill. GRA: D. Blaine McCarty
The GRA will provide research support to a long-term ethnographic study of the anti-death penalty activists through participant observation in anti-death penalty groups. The final product will be a book-length study ethnography of U.S. social movements, seeking an answer to the question of how activists who oppose the death penalty maintain their work over long periods of time despite frequent experiences of defeat.

AADS Research & Event Project with Dr. Jesse Benjamin. GRA: Mannie Rivers
The GRA will work collaboratively with the AADS Program Coordinator and the Student Growth and Outreach Committee with a focus in newsletter work and video production. The academic project will be collaboratively developed to work on a “Racism 101” pedagogy project, the ongoing Afro-Latino speakers series, and Black Atlantic research.

The Maya Community Heritage Project with Dr. Alan LeBaron. GRA: Juan Trejo
The GRA will assist in the building of a Teacher’s Handbook on Mayan students, a project that has national connections to four Maya communities in the U.S. The goal is to promote academic success of Maya students in the schools. The GRA will be a main liaison between the Maya Project and teachers.

Presenters at the American Studies Assn. Meeting, Nov. 15-18 in Puerto Rico

Wende Ballew, (MAST Alum) panelist - Prison Abolition and Teaching Inside Carceral Institutions

Emron Esplin - “Borges’ Poe Translations” on the panel: Imperial Circulation and Border Anxieties: Empire in Edgar Allan Poe


Ken Maffitt, panelist - Scholarship, Community, and Responses to “Crimmigration” Complexes in the Global Nuevo South: A Roundtable

Nina Morgan, chair of panel - Incantations and Imbrications: Mediascapes of Immigrant Rights